



# MANIFEST

## Gender violence and Religions



# CATALAN NETWORK OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE'S ENTITIES

3<sup>a</sup> INTERRELIGIOUS  
CONFERENCE Barcelona,  
27/11/2021

*Meeting in person or online on 27/11/2021 at the headquarters of AUDIR (Lledó 11), representatives of the 19 entities that bring together the Catalan Network of Interreligious Dialogue Entities to participate in the Third Training Day.*

*We are aware of the seriousness, magnitude and widespread growth of attitudes and acts of violence that physically, mentally and spiritually plague many women worldwide.*

*We want to make our concern and total disagreement with these intolerable situations of gender violence that too often occur in forms diverse within our society, even in most religious institutions.*

### **WE WANT TO SHOW THAT:**

Gender-based violence is an international challenge. It is present in many institutions and, therefore, we also find it in the nuns. Gender-based violence is not exclusive or more present in religious institutions than in other institutions.

We believe that it is necessary to build and live alternative values to the domination relations that come from ancestral masculinity that has dominated, for centuries, society around the world, both civil and religious, promoted the violence of certain men against women.

We affirm the need to modify and eliminate violent and discriminatory laws and social habits to strengthen human beings' spiritual attitudes and internal forces to promote the urgent need to establish gender equality everywhere, harmony and peace.

Despite the progress and struggle of the international community for women's empowerment, there is an urgent need to push for the establishment of impartial tribunals that adopt courageous and honest attitudes in the face of the relentless epidemic of violence against women and other gender identities. The violence that wreaks havoc around the world.

We denounce that the attitudes of submission, harassment and abuse against women worldwide are a direct cause of the significant inequalities and marginalization that many women have to endure, including in their religious traditions.

Thus, we unanimously reject the masculinity that subjugates, violates, and devalues women from the religious and spiritual traditions represented here. Without relinquishing our responsibilities, we apologize to the victims for our collaboration.

Victims often do not find the support they need to report. They do not denounce for fear of reprisals, and communities and individuals advocating for victims of gender-based violence are at risk of being subjected to isolating gender-based violence<sup>1</sup>.

The support of the whole community for the victims and the people who support them is essential. Many women and many men, from the diversity of spiritualities, have always and very clearly positioned themselves throughout history in this fight against sexist violence. The silence and complicity must be broken in front of abuse and violence

In the face of these situations of abuse and gender violence, the entities and groups of the Catalan Network believe that it is a priority to promote, with strength and transparency, a strong will for change, self-criticism and transformation of structures. In addition, models of most religious traditions, with special emphasis on all those aspects and areas that refer to women's situation, role, and function within each of the great religious traditions.

We affirm that creating new social, political, and economic structures is urgent and necessary. The aim is to establish safe spaces for girls and women and others affected, where victims can express and cure the ill-treatment suffered and receive the care of physical, mental and spiritual support.

We are convinced that we need to address the eradication of gender-based violence from education in the interior and the personal and testimonial experience of love, offering models of preventive socialization against violence. It is moving towards a joint effort global that can face, with the necessary economic resources, the eradication of this tyranny that destroys the lives of so many girls and women.

It is necessary to break radically with the misogynistic tendencies that, from some religious interpretations, present the woman as a less spiritual being, more sinful, less intelligent and inferior to men, and to walk towards the true spirituality as a common element and meeting place for solidarity, fraternity and mutual care.

However, we see a clear social awareness of the seriousness of this situation, which is gradually emerging from all quarters. Those reactions are emerging to deal with the continuous daily aggression and murder of women - and even children- due to gender-based violence. We also find examples of a clear position against any violence from religious communities.

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<sup>1</sup> This is defined as physical or psychological violence, retaliation, humiliation, and persecution of people who support victims of gender-based violence. The concept has been included as Second-Order Violence in LAW 17/2020, of 22 December, amending Law 5/2008, on the right of women to eradicate gender-based violence, which is reflected in article 5.4. acts that prevent the prevention, detection, care and recovery of women in situations of gender-based violence.

Communities themselves, as environments closer to and more trusted to the victims, can become, and in many cases have become, spaces where the silence of gender violence has been broken, spaces where actions are carried out that support the victims or become safe places where violence has no place.

We strongly believe that advancing towards the complete eradication of gender-based violence requires dialogue and understanding with political, social, religious and economic leaders and the participation and involvement of the media.

We suggest the following as measures to be able to work decisively on the prevention and eradication of gender violence:

- Identify violence, inequality, discrimination and gender-based abuse and work to prevent it.
- That religious and spiritual communities become safe spaces for overcoming and preventing violence. For this reason, interventions are needed from various communities to protect victims, provide them with support in breaking the silence, and protect those who support victims of gender-based violence.
- Collaborate actively with social initiatives, human rights and feminist organizations in our environment to work synergistically with effectiveness and efficiency. So that it allows any institution, also religious, to carry out a reflection on the depth of the causes of gender-based violence and help implement effective actions to detect, support victims, public rejection, and eradicate gender-based violence.

In addition, to promote gender equality:

- Use inclusive language.
- Train believers in rereading sacred texts from a gender perspective.
- Promote equal opportunities.
- Generate horizontal, non-hierarchical organizational structures.
- Break stereotypes and prejudices that harm women.
- Give great importance to values education and training from childhood.

\* This manifesto has been prepared by the member organizations of the Catalan Network of Interreligious Dialogue Entities, coordinated by AUDIR, due to the previous work and the interreligious-training day of the Network on Gender Violence and Religions, held on November 27, 2021.