



16 October 2020

## **United Nations Statement on Gender-Based Violence in Belize**

The United Nations in Belize takes the tragic event of the recent femicide of Marisela Guzman Gonzalez from San Pedro Town as an opportunity to reiterate the urgency to prevent, to investigate, to sanction and to provide comprehensive reparation to victims and survivors of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV). GBV is considered one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world, primarily affecting women and girls.

We state our concern and condemnation of the incident and express our solidarity and deepest sympathies to Marisela's family and loved ones. We stand in solidarity with all victims and survivors of GBV as we continue to work together with our partners in the country on eliminating violence against women and girls. Femicide is the most extreme form of violence against women and girls and data over the last decade has shown a steady increase in the number of cases in Belize.

In August of this year, the United Nations, the Government of Belize, civil society partners, and the European Union launched the Spotlight Initiative aimed at addressing legislative and policy gaps, the strengthening of institutions, and the provision of quality services for survivors of GBV and family violence, as well as the promotion of gender-equitable attitudes and reparation arrangements for victims of GBV and their families. It is our commitment that the overall programme will encourage men and boys, women and girls across all sectors to strive and achieve gender equality in Belize. We all have the responsibility to speak up and act against violence to realize a society where all can achieve their potential and live a life free of fear.

**END**

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