

# No man, woman should stand family violence: Chief Justice

By **Jennifer Kusapa** - April 14, 2021



Chief Justice Sir Albert Palmer. Photo by RNZ

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"No man, woman, or young person in the society in his right mind should tolerate the increasing surge of crimes of violence against families."

Chief Justice Sir Albert Palmer says this in the face of rising gender and family violence in the country.

Addressing the opening of a four-day workshop on gender and family violence for judicial officers yesterday, Palmer said the rising number of cases of gender and family violence "should not only prick our consciences but everyone in the nation as well".

"While the courts will do the best, they can in attending to such matters promptly and timely in terms of court hearings, trials and processes, it is a concern which everyone in the society must take up, especially the churches, the Government, provincial governments and civil societies.

"The workshop commencing today should sensitize, equip and empower you, judicial officers to have a better understanding and appreciation in dealing with gender and family violence matters.

"It is timely for a lot of focus and emphasis by Government, Aid Donor organizations, the United Nations, civil societies and the community have raised concerns and held awareness

talks in the increasing numbers of crimes committed and cases coming through the doors of the courts.”



He said there have also been cases where judicial officers have increased sentences for family violence offenders to reflect the seriousness of the offence and to send a clear message to the community that family violence will not be tolerated by the Courts. This is something which this workshop can also enter into discussions time permitting and other measures that can be considered to ensure priority in court hearings and processes while safeguarding the rights of the accused to a fair hearing.

He adds that such type of workshop, the Gender and Family Violence Workshops have been conducted in six other Pacific countries, with support from their Chief Justices and the judiciary. We are grateful to the PJSI team for the fantastic work it has been doing in having such a workshop convened with a specific focus on empowering judicial officers.

A key element or focus of the workshop is to introduce the toolkit and the four key areas of (i) collaboration, (ii) prevention, (iii) victim focus, and (iv) perpetrator accountability. These areas will be thoroughly discussed throughout this week and help to impart relevant knowledge and attitudes towards dealing with these types of crimes.

There have been encouraging results from other countries where the workshops have been conducted including the establishment of a Judicial Gender and Family Violence Action Plan, and judges, magistrates and court staff being empowered with increased knowledge on gender and family violence.

“I trust this workshop will further improve and enhance your knowledge base and attitudes towards this unacceptable increasing trend of violence in our society and empower you with the right skills and capacity to be more effective and efficient in the discharge of your judicial functions.

“I trust that this time out for training will bear rich fruits in the discharge of your work as judicial officers.”

The workshop is organised by the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative.

**Jennifer Kusapa**