

December 11, 2014



AGAINST TRAFFICKING - The Church in Thailand observed the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women with a seminar on how to fight trafficking and other forms of sex-based violence in the country.

It urged for collaborative networking and action to end discrimination and violence against women throughout Thailand.

More than 200 participants, including women religious, consecrated laywomen, pastoral workers, teachers, and students participated in the seminar held on November 22 at Xavier Hall in Bangkok.

The annual workshop was organized by Caritas Thailand; Talitha Kum, the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons; and the National Human Rights Commission.

Monsignor Vissanu Thanya Annan, executive secretary of the Thai bishops' conference, said that the Thai bishops are deeply concerned about the issue, and have unrelentingly promoted the mission of the Church to “educate, protect, and uphold the rights and dignity of women and

the poor.”

According to Sr. Franciose Champen Jiranonda, S.P.C., chairperson of Talita Kum Thailand, “the workshop aimed at fostering collective efforts of networking with the state and private institutions, religious leaders, and citizens to counter violence against women and children.”

The conference reflected that exploitation and domestic violence against women remains a widespread epidemic in Thailand. With coercion, guilt, and fear, numerous cases also go unreported, putting social stigma on victims, who are also not effectively supported and protected by public authorities.

Speaking to the participants at the seminar, Dr. Amara Phongsapich, chairperson of Thailand's National Human Rights Commission, said that “the anti-violence campaign should be a continuous fight against discrimination and violence to bring social justice and change.”

She recalled that during the past years the country has witnessed numerous cases of violence against women and children.

Testimonies by women victims of violence at the conference evidenced that victims in Thailand lack protection, and that a lack of specialized services for victims of violence and training for professional helpers of victims are both needed.

A colonel in the Thai armed forces, Kanokwan Srichaiya, gave a practical session on safety and self-defence techniques to counter the attacks of muggings.

“The Catholic Church in Thailand is continuously exploring the quest for practical solutions to address these tangible issues concerning human life and the family,” said Monsignor Vissanu.

“Promoting and preserving the gift of human life and dignity is at the core of Catholic teaching. It's important to impress on the authorities the importance of upholding rights protection with

legislation, and of promoting education,” he added.

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