

## Portugal Parliament Text:

My name is Chris Green and I am the Executive Director of the Whiter Ribbon Campaign, UK and a member of the Council of Europe Task Force working on the current campaign to end violence against women.

I understand how seriously the issues are taken in Portugal when I see that on the 7th of December last year there was a special debate about COE Campaign to combat violence against women in the Assembleia da Republica of Portugal, and there was approval of the Solemn Declaration committing all Portuguese parliamentarians. M. Mendes Bota's words then were that

“We have a civil war which is almost silently ripping through the country”

A perceptive child in a refuge for battered women said

“The trouble with trouble is that it just causes more trouble and then the first bit of trouble gets hid and the new bits are what everyone goes on about, and the thing that causes all the trouble in the first place gets ignored as usual.”

That child was talking about all the problems that are associated with domestic violence, for the children there is- loneliness disruption, moving , poor behaviour at schools. These problems hide the first trouble- the fundamental evil of the domestic violence which causes all the other troubles.

I have been asked to talk about some of the forgotten violences which sometimes get overlooked and I will look at Elder Abuse, and Stalking , but after looking at these we will see the linkages and I make no apology for bringing you back to consider the issue of Men's Development, how we involve and develop men, and our culture, to ensure an end to the crime the human rights abuse of domestic violence. Mr Mendes Bota called Domesit Violence a Civil War- I will add that it is also an illegal occupation that a minority of men have in womens lives.

Professor Kevin D. Browne of the University of Birmingham talks about Abusive Patterns of Family Violence and suggests that

“Interventions to solve domestic violence and child abuse are best found in an holistic examination of the people involved in the family, their social and health problems and needs, and who is responsible for the ongoing brutality.”

Another set of remarks from one of the children in a refuge shows in their experience why men become violent- Men are violent when they are angry, When children run about, When children are around, When women go out, when people don't do things for them like make a cup of tea or make dinner, or when the house is a bit untidy, like one trainer on the floor.

So as I said I will return to ways of working with men later in my talk: fundamentally Gender equality needs men and Men need Gender Equality

### **Elder Abuse**

Prof Browne of Birmingham University makes links between violence by adults in the family and elder abuse and neglect. Many adult perpetrators and victims of domestic violence have experienced some form of family violence in the past, suggesting that the presence of violence in families can subsequently impact on family members. Studies have found that between 30 percent and 60 percent of men who batter their female partners also abuse their children."

There is a similar but less defined linkage to elder abuse.

46% of perpetrators of elder abuse are related to the person they are abusing, but only 1% of the abusers are the primary carer – and traditionally the primary carer is a woman.

Another similarity with our primary focus is the scale of the abuse -500,000 elderly people at any one time have suffered abuse, and another similarity is that most of it happens behind closed doors- 66% of abuse is committed at home.

Types of elder abuse are physical, emotional, exploitation, sexual abuse and neglect, the same range of abuses as we see listed in all texts on domestic violence.

The priorities to end abuse listed by the UK Charity Help the Aged include legislation to be able to more easily prosecute abusers, and for adequate inspection and regulation of those undertaking elder care, support and empowerment of the elderly, and the highest priority: greater awareness by the general public of the issues, so that people do not condone the violent behaviour of others..

The relatively unknown World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15<sup>th</sup> is one attempt to increase awareness.

The Duluth Power and Control wheel links the wide variety of controlling mechanisms that are used and shows the common threads between all forms of abusive behaviour which lead up to violence

**Stalking:** "A constellation of behaviours in which one individual inflicts on another repeated unwanted intrusions and communications"

There are a number of different types of stalking behaviour, Sex Stalking- with implicit or explicit sexual undertones- stealing personal items, Intimate Stalking- Under cover surveillance and research, Possessive Stalking- Controlling behaviour and Aggressive Destructive Stalking- Humiliation- possible violent behaviour

Cyber stalking is a rapidly increasing area and 83% of the victims are women.

More specifically the types of behaviour include

Unwanted phone calls, letters, gifts; Having restraining orders violated ; Being watched, mail stolen, unwanted calls, being followed, and unwanted visits.

A report by Professor Canter of Liverpool University concluded that 1 in 6 UK women suffer from stalking ,Typical victims are professionals in their 40's, 94% of victims are forced to make major lifestyle changes and up to 45% of episodes include violence

The British Crime Survey looked at the sufferers of aggravated stalking,restricted to cases where the stalking was accompanied by additional forms of violence towards the victim such as trying to touch, corner or grab the, threatened to use violence against them ,actually used force against them in any way, or made them have sex or attempted to make them have sex without their consent, IN this case 37% was by an intimate or former intimate, 59% by another known person.

The costs and consequences of stalking are enormous: A high proportion suffering the abuse develop fear and safety concerns. One third of female and one fifth of male victims sought professional counselling.

Victims had an average of 11 days away from work. 7% never return to work

There is a strong link between stalking and other forms of violence in intimate relationships. U.S. National statistics provided by the West Virginia Stalking Help line show that 81% of women who were stalked by a current or former partner were also physically assaulted by that partner. 31% of those women were also sexually assaulted by that partner.

When we consider the prevention of stalking the suggestions are to notify the police, keep a record of harassment and seek a protection order. Approximately 7,000 protection orders were provided in the UK in 2002 under the Protection against Harrasment Act, which can lead to 6 months imprisonment or a substantial fine.

If the most important aim is to relieve victims of the burden of being stalked it is vital that we consider actions to repair the culture to show that we as a society do not tolerate and condone the behaviour of the men who behave like this,

nor the men who wear the Tshirt "If at first you don't succeed buy her another drink."

15,000 of these t-shirts were sold by a major supermarket chain in their "joke" range before pressure co-ordinated by the Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre forced their removal

Men from the The White Ribbon Campaign were involved in the campaign and I will move on to briefly examine a few of the other ways we have started this process.

Men become involved in campaigning if Relational Interests are demonstrated: By suggesting that it is their Mothers Sisters Daughters who are suffering. If it is in my own personal interest, my personal wellbeing is improved if I live in a safer less violent society. By demonstrating the collective interests of stopping violence- The Costs of Gender Inequality , and Violence are huge. The Total Cost of Violence

against women in the UK has been estimated by Sylvia Walby at £23 billion a year, and finally the issue of principle- It isn't right and it isn't fair-

We encourage men to campaign and wear a white ribbon specifically around November 25<sup>th</sup> the International Day to Eradicate Violence against Women.

As well as asking men to take the pledge

“Never to Commit, Condone or Remain silent about Violence against Women”

the White Ribbon Campaign also undertake political campaigning work with local authorities and try and get our message across using the media.

We target students and young people for the following reasons:

Young women are a high risk group for experiencing relationship violence

Highest rate of sexual offenders is among men 21-25

Adolescence and young adulthood are key times for disrupting negative beliefs before they become ingrained

There is an opportunity to interrupt inter generational cycle of violence

WE only registered as an organisation in late 2005 and achieved a great deal in that year. We sold 40,000 ribbons, received media coverage, undertook some campaigning and some endorsement by sports organisations and football teams like Liverpool.

So I was brought up with a shock when at a conference in the summer of 2006, a questioner from the floor of the hall asked “Why aren't you doing more”

AS a Non Governmental Organisation that receives no funding this came as a bit of a criticism but The questioner meant – I hope - that we were doing good work, but we needed to be reaching out more and having a wider impact-

Even with our best intentions currently we would only reach 1% of the men in the UK individually, we decided to massively expand our efforts and also to work with cultural icons who would pass the message on for us by what they say and how they behave:

“To wear the Ribbon White is like being, at that moment, a team captain, and like a good captain, involvement means respecting the more important values of life. When playing, the violence of one player damages all the team, and, therefore, also in life to ignore violence when we know that violence exists creates damage for all society. Therefore we have decided to come down to support absolutely, with you, the

Campaign of the White Ribbon men against violence.” Said Paolo Maldini the Captain of Italy

The Sports Campaign is going well with both Professional teams and community teams taking an active part in campaigning. 4 Premiership Football clubs 10 other professional teams and many community football teams take part, and we want to spread the campaign across other clubs and other sports.

We feel it is vital to keep a positive, inclusive message and in order to reach out to young people we have extended our campaign to the Music industry in 2007.

This can achieve a double advantage of musicians getting involved to support the campaign, and raising funds to support men’s support for womens movement activities.

IN 2007 we will be distributing 250,000 ribbons and pledge cards and campaigning around a number of issues. In recent months we have worked with 7 national womens organisations including UNIFEM, the National Association of Womens Organisations, and Rape Crisis Glasgow.

I believe that we are on the edge of making a breakthrough in the male dominated culture which has for so long silently condoned a variety of violences against women.

"Domestic violence is a cancer in Portuguese society which leaves bruises on the surface of the skin, but also deep scars in the soul, those which never heal, those which do not close, those which do not go away and are not forgotten", said Mr Mendes Bota

I know that as politicians you came into the political world to make it change for the better, and here we have the opportunity to make changes we will make changes in the law, but also in the examples of our own lives to ensure that this cancer of domestic violence is eliminated.

Thank you for listening