



**MESOAMERICAN INITIATIVE**  
*of women*  
**HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**



# of women HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



# CONTEXT

- In Mesoamerica 24 women human rights defenders were assassinated between 2010 and 2011.
- WHRD are attacked for being rights defenders and for being women



# ***THE MESOAMERICAN INITIATIVE OF WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS***

- ✓ With the increase in attacks and murders of rights defenders in April 2010 we held the Mesoamerican Meeting of Women Human Rights Defenders (Oaxaca, Mexico).
- ✓ We carried out a first evaluation of the situation of violence against defenders and we formed a virtual Mesoamerican network.





## **Main actions:**

Document and analyze violence against WHRD with a gender perspective

Begin to build a model of safety and self-care for defenders

Mobilize emergency resources to help defenders in high risk situations

Facilitate dialogue between WHRD in different grassroots movements to promote common recognition as defenders and strengthen links of solidarity



## **Main actions:**

Denounce violence throughout the region and in forums in the UN and the OAS

Promote the use of international human rights accords such as CEDAW and the UN Declaration on Defenders



# LESSONS LEARNED

The lack of a gender analysis weakens our understanding of violence against WHRD and makes it harder to protect them.



# **LESSONS LEARNED**

## **Confronting violence against WHRD requires:**

Individual and collective recognition that women who defend rights are human rights defenders

Safe spaces where women feel comfortable identifying forms of violence that are not always recognized or are difficult to discuss, such as sexual violence, violence from family members, violence against women in their own organizations.

Formation of networks and access to emergency resources (political, legal, economic and communication) on the national, regional and international levels.

Promotion of dialogue between women of different social movements

Analysis of the context that helps us understand better what is happening

Recognition of self-care as a central part of any strategy for protection and safety.

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