PRESS RELEASE
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Campaign under the High Patronage of the Presidency of the Italian Republic

Sexual crimes against children have tripled in one year: almost 80% of victims is female, Terre des Hommes denounces it in its Dossier “indifesa” at a conference in Rome.

Data by Interforze have recorded a surge in the number of children victims, mostly girl children and young women.

Say stop to violence and exploitation of girl children and young women in the world.
This is the objective of the “indifesa” campaign by Terre des Hommes Italy.

Girl children and young women are still the most vulnerable victims of violence against children: they reach 60% of the 5103 victims of the committed and reported crimes against children in 2012 (4,946 in 2011). The Terre des Hommes Dossier “indifesa” presented today in Rome, contains data supplied by the Security Forces and shows an alarming picture of the situation. In particular, girl children and young women have been the most vulnerable victims of sexual violence against children in 2012: they are the 85% of the total 689 victims. Other 422 are the victims of aggravated sexual assault, 79% of which is female.

In Italy, the increase of crimes of sexual acts with children is alarming. The number of victims (505) has tripled, comparing with the previous year. 78% of them are girl children and young women. Juvenile pornography has surged dramatically: +370% to the detriment of 108 children, 69% of which are female. Family abuses are still the crimes that claim the largest number of minor victims, recording some 1,246 in 2012, 82 more than in 2011.

With “indifesa”, Terre des Hommes Italy draws a global map of the violations of girls’ rights and is acting concretely to protect them from violence and stop them being exploited.

“Violence on women is often left unsaid even by the protagonists themselves, and to bring to light violence on girl children and young women is even harder”, states Donatella Vergari, Secretary General of Terre des Hommes (Italy), child victims have even less means to defend themselves and may be subjected to a greater psychological control by their offenders. The data supplied by the Security Forces are just the tip of the iceberg, obviously. They increase year after year. Only prevention-oriented activities on gender violence, both within families and at school, could invert this trend in the following years”.

“We can’t keep on counting the cases of violence against girl children and young women. Nor can we accept that this widespread indifference towards the youth goes on” – affirms Vincenzo Spadafora, ombudsman for childhood and adolescence, who has intervened to the
presentation conference – “Violations are brought about by lack of education, social distress, absence of institutions, and by the a culture that relegates the woman in a minor role since her early age. I wish an increasing in cooperation between countries and organizations in order to prevent crimes against children. We will do our best to trigger such cooperation”.

Worldwide, 16 millions of girl children and young women give birth when they are too young and often have no means to support themselves and their children. 3 millions children under 5 years die every year. Such an immense number of deaths could be significantly reduced if only their mothers could have access to adequate nutrition. 125 millions of girl children and young women who have suffered a form of genital mutilation, the majority of whose were under 5 years old. Violence is not the only plague that affects many girl children’ lives: 7,5 millions of girl children and young women are exploited and forced to work in strangers’ households in intolerable conditions. It is the case of the Petites Bonnes (girl servants) in Mauritania, where Terre des Hommes has started a project of social assistance and reintegration. Girl victims of exploitation are hosted in a center where they are given education, health care, sustenance, and their recording at the civil registry. So far, almost 15.000 parents have been involved and more than 2.500 petites bonnes have been taken care of.

Terre des Hommes has already started prevention and protection programmes in two hospitals and in some schools of Milan, with the funds raised by the “indifesa” campaign, in collaboration with Soccorso Rosa of San Carlo Borromeo Hospital and SVS – Soccorso Violenza Sessuale, Mangiagalli Clinic.

Download the Dossier “indifesa”:

The “indifesa” campaign is supported by the Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Minister for Integration Cécile Kyenge, and is performed under the High Patronage of the Presidency of the Republic.

With “indifesa” Terre des Hommes focus its intervention on the promotion of girl children’s rights worldwide. Actions are meant to prevent and contrast many forms of violence and discrimination against girls, but also to reach concrete results to break the cycle of poverty and offer thousands of girl children and young women better life opportunities.

www.indifesa.org

Since 50 years, Terre des Hommes has been on the front line worldwide for the protection of children from violence, abuses, and exploitation and to give each and every child education, health and sustenance.

Currently, Terre des Hommes is operating in 64 countries with more than 840 projects in favor of children. Terre des Hommes Italy is a member of the Terre des Hommes International Federation, it works in partnership with ECHO and is accredited to the European Union, UN, USAID and Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Indifesa Campaign: www.indifesa.org
Terre des Hommes Italy: www.terredeshommes.it
Terre des Hommes International Federation: www.terredeshommes.org