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PRESS RELEASE

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

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Jamaica 's rape rate is higher than the global average.

The number of reported rape cases in Jamaica has increased steadily from **701** in 2009 to **724** in 2010 to **748** in 2011.

Jamaica's rape rate is higher than the world average - the worldwide average for rape is 15 per 100,000 females and Jamaica has an average of 51 per 100,000 females. The increase in reported rape cases is one cause for concern, but it must be taken into consideration that **many cases go unreported.**

Muffling the voices of the nation's women and subjecting them to sexual and physical violence has also **contributed to HIV prevalence in Jamaica.** The Caribbean region has the second highest HIV prevalence rate in the world, second only to Sub-Saharan Africa. In Jamaica, 1.5 per cent of the population is living with HIV/AIDS.

Gender inequality in sexual relationships affects condom use negotiations, which is further compounded by the patriarchal culture to have more than one partner, inadvertently increases their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The **Jamaica AIDS Support for Life** believes that empowering women can reduce HIV infection rates, hence the importance of continuous social media campaigns and inclusion of anti-violence (advocacy) content in programme material.

"LOVE, ACTION & SUPPORT"

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