

## **STATEMENT ON KILLINGS & RAPE JANUARY 2012**

Help & Shelter wishes to register its abhorrence and outrage at the continuing escalation of domestic violence murders and rape of women and children. What kind of twisted logic is at work in the justice system of Guyana when bail is denied for theft but granted in cases of rape of children as young as 4 years old?

The inability of the nation to protect and defend its most vulnerable groups is a travesty and one for which all Guyanese must take responsibility, but especially those who hold office and have been elected to manage the affairs of the Guyanese people. For too long, scarce resources have been allocated to inappropriate, wasteful and ineffectual projects and initiatives, which do not achieve the necessary results but continue to be re-cycled in different forms without meaningful consultation, participation and implementation to benefit those most in need.

As a nation, we need to wake up and end the violence and the partisanship, incompetence and denial of justice that is contributing to and exacerbating the tragedy and trauma suffered by families and communities up and down this land of ours. The prosecution of and sentences handed down to perpetrators of crimes of domestic and sexual violence must be the same regardless of status. The safety of survivors and their protection from threats, intimidation and coercion must be enforced without fear or favour. It is imperative that all those appointed to positions of power and authority, including those with responsibility for law enforcement and the justice delivery system and those in professions that put them in positions of trust, be of proven of integrity and good character.

The status of implementation of the new sexual offences legislation should be made clear to the Guyanese people.

20 January 2012