

Latin American Women's Rights Service

Women Against Violence Europe
Lucila Granada



LAWRS

We are a feminist organisation **run by and for** Latin American migrant women.

This year we celebrate **35 years** of work, supporting women who are exposed to violations of their fundamental **human rights**.

We support **5,000 women** every year. Most are facing physical, financial, emotional or psychological **abuse; exploitation and trafficking** in low-paid sectors; and enduring **severe poverty** and difficult living conditions.

Legal and counselling services



Development and integration programmes



Social change programme



The UK context

VAWG in the UK

1 in 5 women experienced physical and or sexual violence from their partner.

2 women are killed every week by partners or ex-partners (Wales and England).

4 in 5 BME women who approach refuges for help are turned away (Wales and England).

NRPF category: migrant women with no access to public support.

Women with insecure legal status

Service users at LAWRS

- ❖ Language, knowledge of the system, isolation.
- ❖ Intersectional discrimination

Violence
status
and status
status =

- REASON to migrate

- CAUSE of their irregular

- CONSEQUENCE of the

system making them

vulnerable

Women with insecure legal status

Women with **insecure immigration status**

92% women with insecure status seeking support for violence **reported threats of deportation** by perpetrator (out of 183 women).

40% of women reported staying in relationship for 5+ years.

99% of BME women victims felt safe at BME organisations that supported them with their case.

Imkaan (2015) State of the Sector: Contextualising the current experiences of BME ending violence against women and girls organisations. An Executive Summary. London.

IMKAAN (2010) Vital Statistics- Experiences of Black, Asian Minority Ethnic & Refugee women & children facing violence and abuse.

The UK context

Undocumented migrants

- ▮ No right to access **welfare** or social housing
- ▮ No bank account (CHECKS) or driver's license
- ▮ No higher **education**
- ▮ No right to **rent**
- ▮ No right to **work**: criminalised – prison + assets
- ▮ Increased enforcement: work, tube, 'ethnic' area
- ▮ Recognised victims of trafficking?
Deportation

Step Up Migrant Women UK!

60%



of UK police forces said they shared victims' immigration details with the Home Office.



**There is no
guidance**

for the police about how to act when a victim of crime is a migrant.

**Victims
are afraid**



to report crimes due to lack of trust in the police.



Step up!

● PICUM

CAMPAIGN

#StepUpWAVE #MigrantWomen #NoWomanIsIllegal

- ✓ Protecting and building quality, specialist services in Europe.
- ✓ Lobbying at European level for signing and ratifying the Istanbul Convention.
- ✓ Identify barriers in countries and step up efforts to remove them.

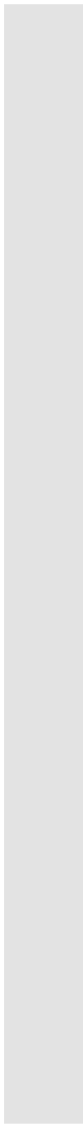


Steering
group

Evidence

Women
to the
front!

Firewall



Women to the front

I follow the blue and red light

**I pour my tale to you,
my accent thick, it swells my tongue**

you ask do you have permission to stay?

Visa, visa, he says...

**it seems that the scent of arepa, pescao
frito and frijoles is much more
detectable than the bruise in my cheek**

justice is blind indeed
by
a Latin American migrant woman



Women to the front



"I experienced violence not just by my ex-partner but by being seen as an "other" by the police"

Survivor
LAWRS

  #StepUpMigrantWomen

Women to the front



"It's a new life free from violence and I'm a new woman, a migrant woman who refuses to remain silent in the face of abuse"

Survivor
LAWRS

[#StepUpMigrantWomen](#)



LAWRS
LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS SERVICE
Servicio por los Derechos de la Mujer Latinoamericana

SUMW to Mayor of London



Government must protect domestic abuse victims 'trapped' due to hostile environment, Sadiq Khan says
[independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk)

Mayor of London to Home Office

Mayor and the Victims' Commissioner have jointly called for:

- **Operational guidelines** on how to respond to victims with insecure immigration status, including **prioritising safety and support over immigration offences**.
- The reinstatement of **legal aid** for immigration cases to ensure those with insecure status can access independent advice and support
- Victims of violence to be **entitled to financial support and safe accommodation** in order to leave an abusive relationship, irrespective of their immigration status

Seeking help should not be more dangerous than staying with the perpetrator

Migrant and refugee women must be able to speak u

Safe-reporting is a human right



**Step Up
Migrant
Women
UK**



www.lawrs.org.uk
www.lawrs.org.uk
[#StepUpMigrantWomen](https://twitter.com/StepUpMigrantWomen)