

**Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS)
Stands in Solidarity with Dominican Feminists
Defending Women’s and Girls’ Lives, Health and Dignity**

April 2021

During the early hours of April 20, 2021, police officers arrived at the public space in front of the National Congress in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, and proceeded to violently evict the young feminist activists who had been camping there. The activists were staying there in the most recent mobilization in the movement’s 20-year-plus fight to decriminalize abortion under three exceptional circumstances or “causales”: when a woman’s life is in danger, the pregnancy is not viable or in cases of rape or incest as the Dominican Republic is one of the very few countries in the world that penalizes abortion under all circumstances.

[Sociologists for Women in Society \(SWS\)](#), a professional feminist organization with 1045 members, stands in solidarity with the Dominican feminist movement and firmly condemns this arbitrary and anti-democratic action. SWS also supports the Feminist Camp or *Campamento de las Causales*, the first camp feminists established in front of the Presidential Palace on March 11, 2021 (LINK: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/fight-against-dominican-republic-s-total-abortion-ban-intensifies-after-n1263978>) calling attention to the need to partially decriminalize abortion to save women’s and girls’ lives and protect their health and dignity.

The aggression by the police took place just a day after unknown criminals sent a poisoned dessert to the Camp, which resulted in 12 people intoxicated including activists, visitors, and members of the press. It was precisely because of the widespread manifestations of support from the public at large (in the forms of free food, blankets, desserts, and funds) that the activists were caught off guard and accepted what seemed to be another well-intentioned gift. Similarly, the *Campamento de las Causales* has received widespread support from healthcare professionals, academics, constitutional lawyers, and many other civil society organizations in the Dominican Republic and international organizations as you can see in this interview with SWS Sister to Sister Committee Co-Chair, Dr. Esther Hernández-Medina (LINK: <https://boycottx.org/las-3-causales/>).

Clandestine abortions represent the third cause of maternal death in the country (LINK: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/11/19/its-your-decision-its-your-life/total-criminalization-abortion-dominican-republic>), and two thirds of female college-age students know someone who has gone through an abortion procedure according to a recent study by PROFAMILIA, the leading family planning NGO in the Dominican Republic (LINK: <https://profamilia.org.do/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Situación-del-aborto-en-RD-min.pdf>). However, President Luis Abinader has backed down from his and his party’s longstanding support to *las causales* and is now proposing a national referendum to resolve the issue.

These challenges and the unacceptable acts on the part of the police and cowardly criminals will not deter our comrades in the Dominican Republic and will only motivate more people to join their just fight. Please help us by disseminating information about their struggle using #LasCausalesVan and #rd3causales on social media, writing to President Abinader through the Dominican embassy in the US (LINK: <http://drembassyusa.org>) or donating to the GoFundMe Campaign to support the Camp (LINK: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-in-the-fight-for-las-tres-causales-in-dr>). Your support is crucial as the Dominican Chamber of Representatives has started debating the inclusion of the *causales* in the Penal Code this week and we need to show them and all Dominican authorities that women's and girls' lives and health are not negotiable.