

## InterOvo Statement 8th March 2016

Observatorio de Violencia Obstétrica  
#menospalabrasmasacciones  
OVO (ARG)

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www.lascasildas.com.ar



OBSERVATORIO DE  
LA VIOLENCIA  
OBSTÉTRICA



OVO  
COLOMBIA

Observatoire



Violence  
Obstétricale

From the international network of Watchdog organizations of obstetric violence (InterOvo), formed by such institutions from **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Spain and France**, and as a result of joint work and common exchange of information and data collected in each country so far, we declare:

-Obstetric violence represents an **urgent and global public health issue**, which involves high rates of intervention and rutinary medicalization, such as physical and verbal abuse, and is practised in both public and private healthcare. It is also independent from socioeconomic or cultural level, religion, race, sexual orientation and gender identity.

-Such abuse is a **serious violation of human rights**, since the woman in labour is not recognized as a subject of Law and her autonomy over her body and her sexual and reproductive processes is undermined, as well as her freedom to make decisions on the welfare of her baby. It is a type of violence against women which is practised from the social and sanitary acceptance and invisibility.

-We have to highlight that our hegemonic healthcare system exerts **institutional violence** in several ways towards both consumers and professionals, especially in the area of women's reproductive processes care.

-In such care we expect FIGO and WHO Guidelines to be followed, but these **basic recommendations** are often violated and procedures frequently depend on the criteria of a medical team which, due to lack of knowledge or to a deliberate decision, does not sometimes include them in hospital protocols. States hold little or no control over these procedures, which cause serious emotional and physical harm to mother and baby and to their initial bonding.

-We observe parallel initiatives that propose following such recommendations, **many of which unfortunately have found in "respected birth" a product** instead of a fundamental rights issue, so access to such care depends on families' purchasing power.

-In this problematic area Governments do not choose to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights, particularly those of women, but to **turn the healthcare system and the working conditions more precarious**, which involves complicity in the practice of obstetric violence.

**As an international network we reiterate our engagement and joint work for visibilisation and eradication of such violence and for an equal access to rights in a safe, dignified, adequate and quality care of these processes.**