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QUEENSLAND POLICE, POLITICIANS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS TO FATAL SCOURGE

March 6, 2020

By Mark Bowling



Time to act: "A kind of domestic hostage-taking in which the victim has no outside to escape to, because the supposed safe place, the relationship, the home, the family network, has been identified as the point of imprisonment and entrapment."

CAMPAIGNERS against family violence are pressing for the outlawing of coercive control between partners as a way to stop domestic homicides.

Queensland is set to hold a domestic violence summit late this month, as police and politicians search for solutions to the domestic violence scourge following the Camp Hill murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children.

The Queensland Women's Legal Service announced an urgent priority list of reforms that includes criminalising coercive control that is now considered an important behavioural indicator that serious physical violence could follow.

A review of domestic violence-related homicides in New South Wales, for instance, found that in 99 per cent of cases, the relationship between partners was characterised by the male abuser's use of coercive controlling behaviours towards the victim.

American researcher Dr Evan Stark, who introduced the concept of coercive control says it is more effective in trapping women in relationships than physical violence.

It is the psychological abuse that a perpetrator uses to dominate a victim rather than inflicting physical harm, and includes constant surveillance and manipulation, isolation from friends and family, rigid rules, degrading put-downs, humiliation and threats.

Dr Stark says the level of "control" in abusive relationships is a better predictor than prior assaults of future sexual assault and of severe and fatal violence.

"I think we need a law that punishes offenders at the same level that we would punish people that take hostages, or kidnap people, because what we're really dealing with, although the analogy's by no means perfect, is a kind of domestic terrorism," Dr Stark said during an interview for the United States documentary Power and Control.

"A kind of domestic hostage-taking in which the victim has no outside to escape to, because the supposed safe place, the relationship, the home, the family network, has been identified as the point of imprisonment and entrapment."

Britain has already taken action, with coercive abuse declared a criminal offence in England and Wales in 2015, and in Scotland and Ireland in 2018.

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Vatican Museums closed until April 3 March 8, 2020

Vatican City, Mar 8, 2020 / 09:30 am (CNA).- The Vatican Museums will be closed until April 3 as a precautionary measure to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus in Italy. The Holy See Press Office put out a statement March 8 announcing the closure following the Italian government decision to close all movie [...]

Pope Francis: Be strong in faith amid coronavirus trial March 8, 2020

After reviewing the British laws, a doctoral candidate at Deakin Law School Paul McGorry has just co-authored a book Criminalising Coercive Control.

"The new offences were designed to protect human rights by addressing gaps in the criminal law, gaps which permitted significant harmful activities to previously go unpunished," Mr McGorry wrote.

In 2005 Tasmania introduced laws making economic and emotional abuse an intimidation offence.

However, until now, conviction rates have been low.

Speaking about the agenda for this month's domestic violence summit, Queensland's Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said "everything can be on the table".

"There is a great deal to be discussed in this space and I know for a fact that there have been wheels turning behind the scenes and a lot of ideas being shared," she said.

Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington called on the State Government to consider a full review of the criminal justice system, including a consideration of coercive control.

"We owe it to Hannah Clarke and countless other people who have lost their lives, and survivors of domestic violence, to make sure we look at a suite of reforms," Ms Frecklington told the ABC.

"Isolating a person, depriving basic needs, it can be a financial control, these are usually elements that are around a domestic violence victim ... the problems they are facing often comes from these means."

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Denver, Colo., Mar 8, 2020 / 04:00 am (CNA).- One of the most prominent people in the life of Jesus Christ, St. Joseph, his foster father, is also one of the quietest. And as such, he can be one of the most overlooked people in the Bible and in the Holy Family. But Fr. Donald [...]

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Vatican City, Mar 7, 2020 / 12:30 pm (CNA).- Pope Francis will lead the Sunday Angelus prayer via video link, the Vatican has announced. The pope will also hold this week's Wednesday general audience in the same way. The decision was taken in response to ongoing concerns about the spread of coronavirus in Italy and [...]

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South Bend, Ind., Mar 7, 2020 / 12:00 pm (CNA).- Catholic clergy and laity have a shared responsibility to proclaim the Gospel, speakers at a conference sponsored by the University of Notre Dame have said. "We're all in the same boat. We're all here to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is, to [...]"

Louisiana AG: Argument against Unsafe Abortion Act 'absolutely a lie' March 7, 2020
Washington D.C., Mar 7, 2020 / 12:00 pm (CNA).- Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry has dismissed arguments made before the Supreme Court against a state abortion law as "absolutely a lie." In a Thursday interview, Landry said efforts to conflate the case with a Texas law regulating abortion clinics, struck down by the court in [...]



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