

Dear Irmandade,

About a year ago our mother church organization, ICEFLU, and several affiliated organizations of Céu do Mapia submitted a letter to the public stating their position in regard to violence against women. This violence, which can be sexual, emotional, and physical, includes sexual harassment, misconduct, and the abuse of power. We honor the importance of this letter and affirm all that was stated within, presenting our organization, CEFLURGEM, in solidarity with the Women's Working Group, Superior Doctrinal Council, Board of Directors, and ICEFLU. We felt a sacred responsibility to expand upon this stance as it pertains to North America.

First, we would like to acknowledge that this subject matter is very deep, complicated, and difficult to articulate. Due to the pain and trauma many hold, it can be triggering, and it is also challenging to include so many different considerations and perspectives. Even with these factors, we feel it is important for CEFLURGEM to work to address this delicate study within our own organization.

Our intention is to invite honest self-examination of how we relate to the broken societal systems we live in that view the feminine as less valuable than the masculine. We encourage each individual, regardless of gender, to examine the effects of gender prejudice and violence in our lives and how they may be unconsciously or consciously perpetuated by our societal paradigms.

This old structure validates and normalizes the denigration and sexual exploitation of women, as well as violence towards them. The majority of this violence has been directed from men toward women, and this prompts us to specifically implore the men of our communities to reflect upon and encourage each other to consider their attitudes, words and actions concerning the feminine, and of women in particular. To be true stewards ushering in a healthy balance of the masculine and feminine, we also importantly recognize both men and women have a responsibility to heal this wound.

While we are addressing traditional gender roles and identities when we speak to these societal wounds, we want ALL survivors of violence to feel protected and supported, as we reject violence against ANYONE including gender nonconforming, non-binary people, and regardless of one's sexual orientation. Furthermore, we acknowledge violence can happen from any one person to another regardless of gender.

Though it would seem that an intentional spiritual community such as ours would not have these issues, no aspect of our culture is unaffected by violence and gender inequality. We acknowledge that some of the past situations of sexual misconduct or abuse within our communities were not handled optimally for the survivors and other members of the community to feel properly reconciled, and the lack of accountability for the accused has caused further unnecessary suffering for all involved. As the ICEFLU Women's Working Group so eloquently stated in their most recent letter, "Only the

overcoming of the belief system that affirms inequality and injustice, and all forms of violence against women - physical, emotional, sexual - will make possible the deep understanding and transformation of violence and its consequences, not only to the women, as well as the whole family and all of society.”

We ask each one to take responsibility to help stop this cycle of the enabling culture that has been a part of our history and has perpetuated these types of abuse. As members of a doctrine guided by the Sovereign Mother let us all work together to create safer spaces for all survivors so their plight is not overlooked or belittled within our communities. May we hold the intention to listen fully, without preconceived judgements, to accounts of witnesses, the survivor, and the accused. Let us also seek to find the balance of accountability and reconciliation. CEFLURGEM intends to handle each situation on a case-by-case basis, to review all ethical complaints and work to find the balance of what is needed for all involved. Ultimately, our goal is to explore how we find healing and safety for the survivor, support for the accused in their healing, and resolution for the broader community.

CEFLURGEM asks all members to unify in our stance against violence and gender inequality. We believe that healing is possible for all who seek it, aiding in each one's spiritual evolution. As the Father of our Doctrine, Mestre Irineu, teaches in hymn number 75 of his hinário *O Cruzeiro*, “No mundo se cura tudo / In the world, everything can be healed”. Each of us has witnessed the incredible power of the Santo Daime to bring about healing in our lives, and by singing this line, we affirm it.

We offer this message as an important step toward a much-needed ripple of transformation. In alignment with our guiding principles of Harmony, Love, Truth, and Justice, we as a community seek to become ever more non-discriminatory, and further affirm that it is not sufficient to be merely non-discriminatory, but we must seek to become actively anti-sexist, anti-racist, and anti-discriminatory in all ways. While this statement focuses on violence and gender equality, we recognize the inherent link between sexism, racism, and other forms of bias, all of which we reject and repudiate. With the opening of this door, we invite CEFLURGEM to continue this crucial work in its efforts to create justice and equality for all.

We are beginning to implement the following steps to improve and upgrade our organization:

1. Updating our Code of Ethics regarding violence and gender bias-
 - Outlining how we will handle claims, support the survivors, the accused and the community while ensuring accountability to the best of our ability.
2. Identifying resources and training to guide communities through sensitive experiences with more awareness and information.
3. Assessing the need for developing a survivor's support network where individuals with basic training can share resources and referrals for further help.

Everything is going to shake, including our outdated perceptions and actions that limit us from birthing a new paradigm, a New Era, and a New Dimension. We in the spiritual doctrine of the Santo Daime possess unique opportunities for healing and redemption, and furthermore, a special mission in regard to rebalancing the forces of the Sacred Feminine and Sacred Masculine. We ask each one to examine their conscience in order to deconstruct the systems that perpetuate the subjugation of the feminine. With the example of our beloved matriarch Madrinha Rita, let us uphold the feminine as sacred. Through this reverence, we are honoring the Queen of the Forest, our Mother Earth, all beings, and ultimately the evolution and healing mission of the Santo Daime.

With love, light and unity,
The North American Working Group Against Violence