

Article

The sanctioning of the new criminal type of psychological violence against women: Law n. 14.188, of July 28, 2021

O sancionamento do novo tipo penal de violência psicológica contra a mulher: Lei nº 14.188, de 28 de julho de 2021

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Abstract

Objective: to analyze the sanctioning of the new criminal type of psychological violence against women, coming from Law n. 14.188/21 that inserted the modality of psychological violence against women. **Materials and Methods:** the study is qualitative in nature, with explanatory characteristic, based on doctrines and legislation relevant to the theme. **Results:** the implementation of the Maria da Penha Law, Law n. 11.340/06 presented, as main consequences, the regulation and the complementation of the rights inherent to women victims of psychological violence in the Brazilian legal system. **Conclusion:** the law on psychological violence is another advance in women's rights, because it came to prevent and punish the perpetrators of this criminal conduct and brought with it the symbolism of the red light, as a way for women to seek help before society and the Brazilian judiciary.

Keywords: Maria da Penha Law. Domestic violence. Psychological domestic violence.

Resumo

Objetivo: analisar o sancionamento do novo tipo penal de violência psicológica contra a mulher, vindo da Lei nº 14.188/21 que inseriu a modalidade de violência psicológica contra a mulher. **Matérias e Métodos:** o estudo é de natureza qualitativa, com característica explicativa, tendo como embasamento doutrinas e legislações pertinentes ao tema. **Resultados:** a implementação da Lei Maria da Penha, Lei nº 11.340/06 apresentou, como principais consequências, a regulamentação e a complementação aos direitos inerentes às mulheres vítimas de violência psicológica no ordenamento jurídico brasileiro. **Conclusão:** a lei sobre a violência psicológica constitui mais um avanço nos direitos das mulheres, pois veio para prevenir e punir os agressores dessa conduta delituosa e trouxe consigo a simbologia do sinal vermelho, como forma de a mulher buscar ajuda perante a sociedade e ao judiciário brasileiro.

Palavras-chave: Lei Maria da Penha. Violência doméstica. Violência doméstica psicológica.

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Received: 08/25/2022. **Approved:** 02/10/2023.

How to cite this article: Oliveira JAV, Silva DF, Silveira MND, Andrade MM, Oliveira VCS. The sanctioning of the new criminal type of psychological violence against women: Law n. 14.188, of July 28, 2021. Humanidades (Montes Claros). 2023 Jan-Jun;12(1):186-98. <https://doi.org/10.53303/hmc.v12i1.492>



Introduction

The law aimed at women in the legal system began to be seen differently from the life story of Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes, from Ceará and who, through her fight against domestic and family violence, had a law sanctioned with her name, the Maria da Penha Law, which aims to protect women against domestic and family violence. It was a breakthrough in the legal system, because it brought to the right a look at the woman. The law provides for mechanisms to prevent violence against women under CRFB/1988 and international treaties ratified by Brazil, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women and the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women; provides for the creation of Domestic and Family Violence Courts against Women; and establishes measures to assist and protect women in situations of domestic and family violence¹.

Violence occurs frequently in society, which can cause problems to the physical and psychological health of the victims; it then becomes a public health problem. It is necessary to highlight the different types of violence, such as physical, psychological, sexual and controlling behavior. Psychological violence, which is a very recurring type of aggression, is characterized by humiliation, insult, threat intimidation and public degradation. In order to mitigate violence and condemn aggressors, Law 14,188/2021 was created, which is the Law of Psychological Violence Against Women².

Law 14.188/21 carries a symbol that is the “X” in the hands, as a way to denounce, in public and private places, that the person is suffering this type of violence. The Law of Psychological Violence Against Women once again demonstrates to society and victims that this regulation is valuable not only for the safety of those who go through this type of violence, since it is a means of removing the aggressor from their victim and punish them for their conducts, but it is also a great step to give more breadth to such a relevant theme³.

The theme in question is based on today’s context and notoriety with regard to the interpretation of Law 14.188/21 to reach women victims of psychological violence⁴.

Thus, this article discusses the evolution of the Maria da Penha Law, in order to find complementation in defense of its application in case of psychological violence against women. The aim of this study is to analyze, from the perspective of legislative progress, the sanctioning of the new criminal type of violence coming from Law N. 14.188/21, which inserted the modality of psychological violence against women⁴.

Materials and Methods

The study is qualitative in nature, with an explanatory and descriptive characteristic, through the method of bibliographic research and analysis of positive legislation from 2006 to the current year. Doctrines and legislation relevant to the theme were analyzed in order to understand psychological violence against women⁶.

Results and Discussion

The sanctioning of Law 14.188/21 brought greater scope to the right to protect women and included in the penal code/40 the qualifier for the crime of bodily injury.

The implementation of the Maria da Penha Law, Law n. 11,340/06, resulted in regulation and advances in the law belonging to women victims of psychological violence in the Brazilian legal system. Therefore, the Law of Psychological Violence, Law n. 14.188/21, is another achievement in this aspect, since it arose to prevent and punish the aggressors of this type of criminal conduct, in addition to having brought the symbology of the red sign, which is a milestone of this new legislation and also a way for women to seek help in the face of society and the Brazilian judiciary, when she attests that she is being a victim of psychological violence.

The historical process of formulation and approval of Law 11,340/06

For the woman, it was a harder road. It was difficult thirty years ago to imagine a woman occupying a prominent place, because her ability to be there had always been questioned. But it is relevant to recall a phrase by the philosopher Simone de Beauvoir: “One is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman”⁷.

In law, it was necessary to fight to regulate and understand that women also have their rights and that they are equally relevant. Thus, it was necessary to see the woman as a citizen. An example of achievement was the right to vote, which came into force in Brazil in 1932 and expanded the rights of Brazilian citizens⁹.

The Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988 (CRFB/1988)¹⁰ reformed the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1967, which provides for equality as a fundamental right to all, without distinction of sex. For the first time, equality between men and women was decreed¹¹.

The fight for women’s rights in Brazil is not unnoticed by the story of Maria da Penha, born in the city of Fortaleza in Ceará, graduated in Pharmacy from the Federal University of Ceará,

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Brazil married to Marco, a Bolivian she met during the course of her master's degree in São Paulo. They had three daughters. With this, his spouse was able to naturalize himself Brazilian and Maria da Penha reports that, after this, he changed his behavior and became violent and intolerant, often assaulting their children⁵.

The first physical assault suffered by her was an attempted murder, which occurred when Maria da Penha was asleep. Her ex-husband made a shot that hit the spine leaving her paraplegic¹².

Her ex-husband, not satisfied with the vain attempt to murder her partner, began to visit her in the hospital and took advantage of the situation to make psychological pressure. Soon after, when she was discharged from the hospital, he kept her with their daughters in private prison, preventing even their relatives from visiting them¹³.

Not considering it enough, he tried for the second time to execute Maria da Penha. He planned to electrocute her during the bath, a failed attempt. Therefore, she understood that the scenario in which she lived was not natural, which made her seek help and then denounce her aggressor¹⁴.

In 1998, Maria da Penha, not conformed to everything that was happening and the slowness with which justice took her case, appeared in two institutions: the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM). Her case, then, and complaints of the delay in a response from the Brazilian justice system were brought to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS). Thus, in 2001, the OAS cited Brazil in a report, alleging the violation of human rights, with international repercussions, which caused the country to discuss and give visibility to the subject. On October 28, 2002, the aggressor of Maria da Penha was convicted and arrested, beginning the execution of the prison sentence in closed regime¹⁵.

Only in 2006, given all the repercussion and proportion that the case of Maria da Penha took, Brazil sanctioned Law 11.340/06, known by all as Maria da Penha Law, which provides for a rigorous treatment of this type of crime. The law sought measures of protection, inhibition and punishment in relation to violence against women. Maria da Penha was a symbol of revolution in Brazilian legislation, and her steps and movement were important because other women gained a voice and knew the way to free themselves from their aggressors¹.

The Maria da Penha Law was created to curb domestic violence against women, who, regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income, culture, educational level, age, class and religion, enjoy the rights inherent in the human person. However, the implementation of human

rights is the responsibility of the public power, which will ensure conditions for them to exercise their fundamental rights¹⁶.

A provision left by the Maria da Penha Law is the so-called emergency protective measures, necessary actions to avoid harm to the victim. This type of measure seeks to guarantee the victim conditions to proceed with the lawsuit without the aggressor bringing harm to her, as well as ensuring the power to remain in her home and exercise the right to come and go, to continue working, that is, even in the midst of all damages related to domestic violence suffered, she has the right to continue following the path of her life¹⁷.

With prediction in art. 18 of Law 11.340/06, these measures can be requested by the own woman, directly at the police station or by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Upon receipt of the offended party's request, it will be up to the judge, within 48 hours, to decide on the protective measures of urgency, determining the referral of the offended to the legal aid body, when applicable and communicate to the Public Prosecutor to take appropriate action. It is important to emphasize that the aggressor may have preventive detention decreed, in order to ensure a good progress of the police investigation and the effectiveness of the enforcement of the protective measure of urgency. This request may be requested by the Public Prosecutor's Office or a police authority¹⁸.

There is no need to question the impact and relevance of the Maria da Penha Law. It emerged to ensure that the prohibition of violence against women was affirmed and presented as a fundamental right for women, for the purpose of protection, support and justice that women seek in the legal system. Therefore, from the creation of this Law, it was possible to observe a breakthrough not only in the judiciary, but also in society as a whole that came from a very dominant patriarchal culture¹⁹.

Basic concepts of types of violence with a focus on psychological violence

Violence can be seen as a major public health problem, as it occurs with great frequency and can cause problems to the physical and psychological health of the victims. However, it is important to define what violence is. It is an act that resorts to any action intentionally practiced by an individual to another and that causes damage, be they physical, psychological or societal²⁰.

It is necessary to emphasize that the categories of violence can be classified as physical violence, sexual violence, controlling behavior and psychological violence²⁰.

Physical violence, characterized by bodily injury, is established with offense to bodily integrity or health; it is any damage caused to the functional normality of the human body, both physiological and mental. It also covers threats of aggression, as well as slaps, jerks, bites, punches;

cuts, strangulation, burns, injuries from weapons or objects, forcing to ingest medicines or substances and food, abandoning it in unknown places, among numerous other cases of violence²¹.

Sexual violence happens when the practice of sexual intercourse is not consented and also when sexual harassment occurs. The number of complaints is very low, due to the fear or embarrassment of denouncing their partner or even the culture that women have to satisfy the pleasure of their companion²².

Controlling behavior is the partner's restriction, such as: preventing the partner from seeing family, friends, not being able to talk to people of the opposite sex, and the woman's decision is ignored. This type of aggression can cause psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression, antisocial behavior²³.

Listed in the Maria da Penha Law, it is worth mentioning domestic and family violence. For this law, there are differences between the two types of violence. Domestic violence is seen as an attack against women, which occurs in a way that often takes time to realize this aggression. These aggressions begin, most of the time, with a psychological suffering, in which the aggressor gives the victim some curses that are becoming commonplace in daily life, which is only seen by the victim as something serious when it evolves into physical aggressions. Domestic violence affects all types of women, not differing social classes, religions, age or race. Family violence is seen, by the Maria da Penha Law, when there are family, biological or socio-affective ties in the environment in which it occurs. It is considered, therefore, family violence that is practiced by one or more members of a family and can occur in an environment where there is or not the intention to raise a family life, whether by bonds of affection, affinity, whether natural or civil²⁴.

When we talk about psychological violence, which is an important object in this article, it is also relevant to talk about the relationship between criminal law and psychology. It is necessary to analyze that psychology studies human behaviors and mental functions and that, for the law, this is very relevant, since several times the judiciary needs reports that are obtained through psychologists²⁵.

An example of this relationship of law and psychology is the Criminological examination, which gives the judge the idea of good or misconduct of the prisoner, for the outcome of progression or conditional release. In addition, the operator of law needs basic concepts of psychology for his work in the criminal²⁶.

Psychological violence is a very recurring type of aggression, overcoming physical violence. The acts considered are: humiliation, insult, threat, intimidation and public degradation. Recently

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there was a breakthrough in relation to psychological violence. With the creation of Law 14188/21, the objective is a decrease in other types of violence².

Psychological violence not only affects the victim directly, but all who witness or live with this situation. For example, children who witness psychological violence between parents may have their behavior altered, starting to act similarly with close people⁹.

For the World Health Organization (1998), psychological or mental violence includes: repeated verbal abuse, imprisonment or deprivation of material, financial and personal resources. For some women, constant offenses and tyranny are as serious an emotional aggression as physical ones, because they undermine self-esteem, security and self-confidence. A single episode of physical violence can intensify the impact and significance of psychological violence. For women, the worst of psychological violence is not violence itself, but mental torture and coexistence with fear and terror. Therefore, this type of violence should be analyzed as a serious public health problem and, as such, deserves space for discussion, expansion of prevention and creation of specific public policies for its confrontation²⁷.

Among the causes of violence against women, jealousy is a trigger of male insecurity, causing controlling behavior of the man on the victims. This jealousy can be romanticized by women, confusing it with care or love²⁸.

Public policies are an important point that should be highlighted since victims have difficulty in denouncing their aggressors, because they often cannot count on the support of public policies. There is still unpreparedness of professionals who can guide, provide the necessary security for the victims and welcome them to feel protected in this situation²⁹.

In cases where gender inequality occurs, which stems from society putting the man above women, characterizing roles that have to be followed by both, men have high positions with relatively higher values and women with lower values and the function of caring for the home. There is also a history of family violence of the aggressor. This occurs when the author had experienced, in his childhood, with aggression inside his home, by his parents. Thus, men lead to their adult life the same customs and consequently women accept by understanding that the attitudes of violence are caused by the traumas suffered in the past. Thus, to conclude, the interruption of family support is a significant factor of psychological violence, when the woman does not have someone in the family she can trust or tell about the psychological aggressions suffered, that is, the lack of support from family members helps to make victims more vulnerable, because they are alone in this situation³⁰.

The possible impacts of the new legislation 14,188/21 on the legal scenario

Law 14.188/21 brought another advance to women's rights. It included in the Penal Code,

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Decree-law 2848/40, art. 147- B that provides on the crime of psychological violence against women and together with it a symbology of the red sign, symbol of this new normative³.

This tool would be a way for the woman to denounce her aggressor, because the law provides that it is possible for women to make, preferably, in the hands, a red X and that they can present it in public and private places, as a way of informing that they are suffering violence and thus obtain help³¹.

The changes that occurred as a result of this new regulation included in the Penal Code a qualification for the crime of bodily injury, provided for in art. 129 of that code. However, this inclusion brought in its paragraph 13 that, in case of injury practiced against the woman, the penalty to be applied will be 1 to 4 years³².

It is often possible to hear reports of women targeted for this crime, such as the example given by social media on 08/11/2021, of a victim who has experienced for 13 years an abusive relationship with her ex-husband who, at first, was confused with excessive love and later came the curses and threats. This fact now, due to this new legislation, is a crime, with a penalty of six months to two years and payment of a fine, and may have a greater penalty in more serious cases³³.

However, the main advantage seen by the majority doctrine of the introduction of this new criminal type in the Brazilian legal system is that the definition and concept of psychological violence are clearly defined in law and through the media are being disclosed, which did not occur previously³⁴.

It is feasible to look clearly at the extension of the definition of violence against women, so that various aspects of criminal conduct against victims can be criminalized. Nevertheless, the State has an important role to prevent and combat the aggressions suffered by victims, such as bringing information about their rights, investing in a new education, to exclude from society the patriarchal culture that still makes women victims of aggressions⁴.

Cases of psychological violence have intensified attention to acts of harassment to the mental health of women. It has been increasingly evident the importance of caring for victims in their completeness, being linked the duty of debt diligence. The idea of health is no longer related as merely physical, encompassing the mental and social dimensions, in alignment with the concept of health of the WHO (World Health Organization). It is important to note that the goal of typification in the list of crimes against freedom is to have the preservation of autonomy and the will of women, which protects the realization of their constitutional rights and effectively contributes to the preservation of their physical and mental health³⁵.

One of the major questions of this new law is how to prove psychological violence, since it is different from physical aggression, because it does not leave visible marks by the body. It is necessary for the victim to gather evidence of the recurrent aggressions, such as the history of medical care, prints of messages sent, recorded audios, videos and photos that prove the humiliations, witnesses, such as family members, close friends, co-workers or neighbors who can confirm this act of violence³⁰.

Another important point to support the complaint is the empowerment of the public power, the judicial police, because there is a need for awareness so that the word of the victim is taken into account, and that is not taken as a liar. In addition, most violence occurs indoors where women are unable to gather evidence or are afraid to risk more when recording videos or audio³⁶.

Still, Law 14.188/21 points out something very relevant in the struggle of women victims of violence: the importance of the approach to psychological violence, because it can be as lethal as the physical ways and also bring marks and serious consequences. Moreover, it is significant that women know that they are protected by law, that they need and can report and seek help for any and all types of violence³¹.

For the experts, this new law brings a great advance in the fight against violence against women, because this criminal classification began to criminalize what the Maria da Penha Law (Law N. 11.340/06) already provided for as a criminal type of violence. Previously, when a woman was a victim of psychological violence, the question was try to fit into the criminal types of injury and defamation. However, because they had specific requirements, they often did not fit the situation experienced by women, triggering impunity of its author. Therefore, for lawyers and experts on the subject, such as Clarissa de Faro Teixeira Hofling, Daniel Bialski, Joaquim Pedro de Medeiro Rodrigues, Mônica Sapucaia Machado and Felipe Maranhão, the case of creating the crime of psychological violence is valuable not only for the safety of those who go through this type of violence, since it is a means of removing the aggressor from his victim and punishing him for his conduct, but it is also a remarkable step to expand a subject so relevant³⁷.

Conclusion

It is noted the importance of the creation and consolidation of Law 11,340/06, Maria da Penha Law, since it was through it that women got a look at themselves in law, more specifically, regarding violence. This regulation was an advance to show Brazil and the world the importance of the right to protection of women. Maria da Penha's struggle for justice has encouraged many other

women who suffer from violence on a daily basis. With the advent of this regulation, the Brazilian legal system was greatly impacted, because violence against women who, before, did not have a specific legislation to address the subject, came to have a law with the name of a woman.

It is observed that the Maria da Penha Law brings only a conceptualization of psychological violence, without a prediction of approaching it as a criminal type, as now described by the sanctioning of the text of Law n. 14,188/21, which brought another advance in their rights. The new regulations came to typify psychological violence against women, which in turn can be seen as a major public health problem. This is because, in addition to being characterized as a type of domestic violence, it can cause physical and psychological problems, greater or equal, to other types of violence.

Previously psychological violence was only approached as a type of violence within the Maria da Penha Law and the Femicide Law, which is now provided for in the Penal Code as a qualifier for bodily injury, emphasizing how important it is to prevent and talk about psychological violence. Women victims of this crime need to be protected by legislation so that they can identify when they are suffering these assaults masquerading as love and thus seek help and report their aggressors.

It is noted that the disclosure of this new criminal type is of paramount importance, whether in the media or in schools, through campaigns, because it warns people about how they should act when they witness cases of psychological violence against women. It will also be able to encourage and inform victims of their rights in order to prevent crime and punish perpetrators, in order to eradicate the violence suffered by the victims.

The great symbol of this normative is the creation of the red sign, which is a way for the woman to denounce her aggressor, because the law provides that it is possible to make preferably in the hands a red X and can present it in public and private places, as a way to inform that she is suffering violence and thus get help. However, it is of paramount importance that society know this new law and know that, for its better realization, society is a very significant piece, because it is through reports in public places that victims seek help. It is commendable that women know that they are protected by the law, that they need and can report and seek help for any type of violence so that, gradually, they are not targeted by crimes like this.

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