

Dominican rape victims keep mum, fear husbands will leave them

Santiago (Dominican Republic), Oct 6 (EFE) Over two dozen victims of a serial rapist arrested in this northern Dominican city are refusing to file complaints against him as they are afraid their husbands will leave them if they learn they were raped, police said.

Police turned over to the courts a man arrested Sunday in connection with 34 rapes in Santiago between June and September.

Regional police spokesman Col. Jesus Cordero Paredes told the media that Carlos Miguel Henry Patina Santana, 30, pretended to be a taxi driver so that he could get the victims to get into his car.

Once they were inside the vehicle, he drove them to isolated spots where he abused them sexually after threatening them with a knife.

He took off the underclothes and other clothing of many of them and beat them with a belt.

'That guy was the same one who raped me when I got into his car as a passenger on a street in Santiago, and later he abused me as he wanted. He took off a belt holding up his pants and beat me,' one of the women, who refused to be identified, told EFE.

Another victim said that she had not filed a complaint against her rapist because she was afraid her husband would abandon her and their three children, aged 2, 5 and 9.

'Machismo in Latin America is so huge and the Dominican Republic doesn't escape it. Few men who share a life with a woman will understand something so difficult and traumatic that's happened to her. So as not to abort the marriage, it's preferable to keep silent,' said the victim, a teacher who also did not provide her identity.

Many men reject their wives if they learn that they have been the victims of abuse by another man.

Col. Cordero said that only four women courageously showed up at the main police station in Santiago and identified the arrested man as the person who raped them.

The spokesman said that the victims identified the man as they were brought individually to a panel of one-way glass to view him, as well as from photographs.

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