

OPEN THOUGHTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

We are saddened and angered by the latest cases of feminicides of Ilaria Sula and Sara Campanella that occurred last week. It has been little more than a year since the tragically similar femicide of Giulia Cecchettin, which sent shockwaves through public opinion. The powerful words and resolute stance of Giulia's family remain etched into our memory, having offered society the tools to name and comprehend the true nature of what had happened.

It is inaccurate to say that “we do not understand the reason for this violence.” Reason lies in the objectification of women, in the culture of possession, and in the culture of rape. Men's systemic violence against women is ingrained in our society and shows itself in many different facets, of which feminicide is only the tip of the iceberg.

Many of us share a discouragement towards institutions or, as part of institutions themselves, because it is undeniable that the events of the past few days represent a failure.

We live in a moment of anguish, of anger. We understand the root of the problem and do not see substantial changes from two years ago.

We know that prevention and management of gender-based violence are very difficult things to deal with. It is easy to make mistakes in these areas: formal steps are necessary to systematize the fight against gender-based violence, but they may end up being empty boxes and failing to give victims of violence the support they need. The current reality shows that legal tools, while necessary, are by no means sufficient to address the problem of male violence against women.

At the same time, it is not obvious whether each and every one of us, on a personal level, has the tools to effectively deal with gender-based violence—even when it affects people close to us.

For a few years now, within this department, OUR place of study and work, we have been working to build relationships that can make this a space “a little safer,” a more affirming, inclusive, and just environment to live in for everyone.

We are sure and certain and aware that real change will not happen unless we **all** take the matter in our own hands, because cultural change can only come through people.

This means working on education, of which the university is only the last piece.

It is well established that prejudices become entrenched during early childhood, making it all the more crucial to provide comprehensive sex and affective education during those formative years.

University comes late in the educational path, but we have not given up and will not give up organizing and encouraging trainings on the topic of gender-based violence, trying to fill the voids. We have done it, and we will do it with the help of, relying on, those who have been working on these issues for years: associations and centers against violence.

Given the reality we face, our foremost responsibility—here and now—is to foster community and build strong networks of solidarity.

We can offer guidance toward safe, supportive spaces and help value the resources already in place to care for and stand beside those who have been harmed by male violence.

But we know that this is not enough. If we all and all do not take a stand against gender-based

violence, if we all and all are not active participants, there will be no hope of changing things.

When confronted with something as devastating as a femicide, it's natural to react defensively—to think, “That doesn't affect me,” “It could never happen to me,” or “I'm not like that.”

But simply *not being like that* is not enough.

Unless we speak out—every day, in every space—against violence and discrimination, silence becomes complicity. These issues cannot be left only to women or to those who already care deeply about them.

This is a collective responsibility.

We are speaking directly to our male friends, colleagues, and peers:

We need you with us.

We need you to take up the fight against gender-based violence, to walk beside us in awareness and education, to keep your eyes open and your stance firm.

Together, let's continue building a department—and a world—that is truly safe, welcoming, and just for everyone.

We also acknowledge and respect the anger many are feeling right now—because that anger is ours, too.