



ammar.
trabajadoras sexuales argentinas
en acción por sus derechos

The Association of Women Prostitutes of Argentina Ammar CTA, is the umbrella organization sex workers in the country and defend their human and labor rights.

♥ ¿What is AMMAR?

AMMAR stands for Asociación de Mujeres Meretrices de la Argentina (Association of Women Sex Workers in Argentina). It is an organization that unites Sex Workers throughout Argentina, defending their Workers' Rights and Human Rights.



♥ What is Sex Work?

Sex Work is a voluntary activity in which adults 18 years or older offer and/or perform services of a sexual nature in exchange for payment. This payment constitutes their wages.

♥ How and when did AMMAR form?

We organized as Sex Workers in Buenos Aires at the end of 1994 to demand respect for our rights and an end to the police violence we faced daily.

At the outset, our organization primarily included women who practiced Sex Work in public settings. Over the years, however, we have grown to include Sex Workers who offer their services in closed-door settings, such as webcam models, professionals in the porn industry, companions, escorts, and sexual assistants of diverse functions, among others.

Since 1995, we have been part of the Argentine Workers' Central Union (Central de Trabajadores de Argentina CTA).



Since 1997, we have belonged to the Network of Women Sex Workers from Latin America and the Caribbean (Red de Trabajadoras Sexuales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe, or RedTraSex).



In 2016, we spearheaded the creation of FUERTSA, Frente de Unidad Emancipatorio por el Reconocimiento de los Derechos de Trabajadoras/es Sexuales en Argentina (The Emancipatory Unity Front for the Recognition of the Rights of Sex Workers in Argentina).
www.fuerts.org.ar



♥ What are we fighting for

- ♥ The respect for and guarantee of Human Rights and Workers' Rights for Sex Workers.
- ♥ The making of public policies intended to guarantee Sex Workers' access to comprehensive health care, insurance, and all other rights and benefits accessible to any registered worker in the country and to their families.
- ♥ A Law to regulate Sex Work and protect the practice of it.
- ♥ The overturn of misdemeanor laws and all regulations that criminalize and/or penalize the practice of Sex Work in public or in closed-door settings.
- ♥ The elimination of all Institutional Violence towards Sex Workers.
- ♥ The elimination of the stigmatization of and discrimination towards those who practice Sex Work.





Why do Sex Workers need a Law?

As Sex Workers, we need a Law in order to practice our profession with the same protection for our Workers' Rights as any other registered worker in the country. Sex Work is not prohibited in Argentina, but there is no regulatory framework in place to guarantee our rights.

The Law of Autonomous Sex Work aims to create a record of Sex Workers within the Ministry of Labor, so that this entity may regulate the voluntary practice of Sex Work. Furthermore, it encourages the establishment of autonomous Sex Worker cooperatives, the issuing of grants, and the inclusion of Sex Work among Small Taxpayer categories to enable access to insurance, pensions, lines of credit, and housing, among other rights. Similarly, it proposes job reintegration for those who wish to end their practice of this work.



Sandra Cabrera lives on in our memory



Sandra Cabrera, a leading member of AMMAR Rosario, was murdered on January 27, 2004. She was shot point-blank with a .32 caliber firearm. Days prior, the union leader and champion of Sex Workers' rights had spoken out against police complicity in the organized crime network responsible for the sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of young girls and teenagers near the Rosario Bus Station. Her femicide remains unpunished. .

♥ How does our organization work?

Thanks to Decree 1086/05, in which former president Néstor Kirchner counseled the State to “promote the sanctioning of a law to protect Sex Workers, recognizing their right to retirement pensions and social security,” we were able to obtain approval from the IGJ (the Inspección General de Justicia, a supervisory board of companies and other entities in Argentina) to register AMMAR as a Civil Association defending the rights of Sex Workers. This was a significant achievement, as it reflects the State’s recognition of our organization as a contributor to the common good.

Formally, AMMAR functions as a Civil Association. In practice, however, we are structured as a Union. Those of us who make up the organization identify as workers and seek recognition as a Union; we are unable to unionize, however, because in Argentina our labor is not legally recognized as a profession.



♥ Who are our supporters?

Diverse entities, both national and international. We have successfully carried out empowerment, training, and prevention efforts in collaboration with or with the support of:

Fundación Paz y Solidaridad de CCOO, Ayuntamiento de Burgos España, Global Fund for Women, Red Umbrella Fund, Mama Cash, Urgent Action Fund — Latin America, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, University of Buenos Aires, Australian Embassy, Dutch Embassy, AWID, Ministry of Health (national and provincial), National Institute Against Discrimination, United Nations Population Fund, UNAIDS, Levi Strauss Foundation, Dirección General de Fortalecimiento de la Sociedad Civil del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, among others.

This has allowed us to grow at the organizational level and empowered us to carry out multiple actions in diverse spaces.





Our successes:

- ♥ Overturn of misdemeanor laws that criminalized the practice of Sex Work in public settings in the autonomous city of Buenos Aires, Sante Fe, Entre Ríos, and Santiago del Estero. These laws are still in effect in 18 Argentine provinces.
- ♥ Introduction of a draft bill at the national level and in five provinces (Neuquén, Santiago del Estero, Mendoza, Catamarca, and the city of Buenos Aires) to regulate Autonomous Sex Work. In the city of Buenos Aires, this would also enable the operations of establishments offering sexual services.
- ♥ Crafting and presentation of reports on the criminalization of Sex Work and infringements upon the rights of Sex Workers in various ambits.
- ♥ Launch of La Línea Roja (The Red Line), a phone line for reporting incidences of Institutional Violence against sex workers, along with the first Observatory of Institutional Violence against Sex Workers (Observatorio de Violencia Institucional hacia el Trabajo Sexual, referred to as OVITS).
- ♥ Development of the National Record of Femicides of Sex Workers in Argentina since 1996, based on newspaper articles.
- ♥ Active participation in a process carried about by Amnesty International, which resulted in a declaration in 2015 in favor of adopting a policy to protect the rights of Sex Workers.
- ♥ Creation of the Sandra Cabrera Health Center, a space designed to serve Sex Workers in La Plata, Buenos Aires province, operated jointly by the provincial Ministry of Health and AMMAR.
- ♥ Sensitivity trainings for medical personnel in various hospitals and Health Centers, to facilitate comprehensive and non-discriminatory medical attention for Sex Workers.
- ♥ Periodic visits to areas in the provinces where Sex Work is practiced and where the organization has presence to promote STI prevention, distribute condoms, and educate our colleagues regarding workers' rights and human rights. Annually, we establish contact with more than 5,500 Sex Workers.
- ♥ Organization of Forums, Seminars, and Political Roundtables on Sex Work and participation in debates and lectures related to the topic at Universities as well as other Organizations and Institutions.



Our successes:

- ♥ Political advocacy at the provincial and national level to gain recognition for the Human Rights and Workers' Rights of Sex Workers.
- ♥ Recognition of AMMAR as a leading national organization on the issue of Sex Work, with participation in forums and debates in diverse academic, educational, social and cultural settings.
- ♥ Participation and representation of Sex Workers in events and conferences addressing topics of Feminism and Human Rights, both nationally and internationally.
- ♥ Planning and implementation of activities to raise awareness among political players, figures in the media, and the community in general regarding the importance of guaranteed rights for those who practice Sex Work.
- ♥ Media attention to increase visibility of Sex Workers and establish media coverage that does not stigmatize the work.
- ♥ In 2010, at the XVIII International AIDS Conference in Austria, we won the Red Ribbon Award for community leadership and action in response to HIV. More than 720 organizations from 100 countries participated.
- ♥ First place in the 2015 EIKON Awards for Excellence in Communication in the Issues Management category for NGOs. Our "Symbolic invoices" campaign was one of the most noteworthy communication strategies in Argentina in 2015.
- ♥ Approval of the workshop "Mujeres Trabajadoras Sexuales" (Women Sex Workers) at the 31st National Women's Meeting in Argentina.
- ♥ Inclusion as part of a Workers' Union.
- ♥ Inclusion as part of the Network of Women Sex Workers from Latin America and the Caribbean.
- ♥ Creation of and inclusion in FUERTSA, a national political front for the recognition of the rights of Sex Workers in Argentina.





In Argentina, Sex Work is not a crime, but it is penalized everywhere it is practiced.

18 provinces have misdemeanor laws in effect that criminalize Sex Work in Public Settings. These measures include fines and up to 60 days in jail for those who offer sexual services in the street and enable the systematic practice of Institutional Violence by security forces.

Criminalization of Sex Work in the Public Roads



**In Argentina
Sex Work
It is not a crime but
It is penalized
in Codes
Misdemeanor
Fouls and 18 provinces**

* Data updated May 2016.



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As a result of the new policy against sex trafficking, inaugurated with the law 26364 in 2008, and most particularly as a result of the reform of the law 26842 in 2012, the activity of Sex Workers came to fall under state punitive control. None of these laws explicitly establish nor in any way authorize the criminalization of Sex Work, but different agents of the penal system point to them as justification for rhetoric and practices which, among other results, produce and/or foment:

- 1) The lack of distinction between sex work and sex trafficking, stemming from a complete denial of any capacity Sex Workers might have to consent to practice their work.
 - 2) Increased pressure to work under clandestine conditions.
 - 3) The reinforcement of the stigma that Sex Workers are always victims.
 - 4) A high percentage of women punished for sex trafficking, according to publicly accessible information.
 - 5) Increased displays of Institutional Violence during raids by anti-trafficking agencies and security forces in search of victims.
 - 6) The approval of provincial laws and municipal ordinances that prohibit the existence of spaces in which “acts of prostitution” occur.
 - 7) The prohibition of any advertising of sexual services in digital and print media.
- Commemorative dates





Our offices



Commemorative dates

February 17: Anniversary of the “Putas del Puerto de San Julián” strike in Patagonia (an event in 1922 in which brothel women refused to service soldiers who had participated in the shooting and killing of rural laborers on strike)

March 3: International Sex Workers’ Rights Day

March 11: Anniversary of AMMAR

June 2: International Sex Workers’ Day

December 17: International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers



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