



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Speech by Minister Lamola during Women's Month Closing Session at Protea Harredene Hotel in Amanzimtoti in Kwa-Zulu Natal on 30 August 2021.

The Director General of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Advocate Doctor Mashabane

Acting Regional Commissioner of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mr Kenny Mthombeni

Representatives of the National Prosecuting Authority

Representatives of the South African Police Services

Women from both Departments of Correctional Services and Justice and Constitutional Development

Renowned Activist, Dr Criselda Kananda

We have always called for integrated programmes between the two Departments of Justice and Constitutional Development; and Correctional Services; it is pleasing to see an integrated government programme.

Today marks an important day, women in both departments gather to commemorate and close women's month in style. They will also look at the efficacy of the criminal justice system in tackling the Gender Based Violence and Femicide Pandemic in the country.

Throughout women's month, we have prioritised activities to arrest this pandemic whose effects we have all felt. Not long, we were confronted by a devastating incident, Eunice Moloko, a Leeuwkop Management Area Correctional Official, was brutally killed allegedly by an inmate at work. The inmate has since been charged with murder.

Nosicelo Mtebeni, a 23-year old University of Fort Hare Law student, was murdered, dismembered and her body parts stuffed in a suitcase and plastic bags, allegedly by her boyfriend who has since been arrested.

Sergeant Nonjabulo Mogale of Tembisa, was shot on the head and later died of her wounds. Her gun was stolen by her killers who then fled the scene.

Sadly, these women are part of a long list of women who have been killed either by an intimate partner or someone who is known to them.

These devastating killings have a severe impact on society, and the fact that most gruesome of them occur even in Women's Month, makes one wonder if we have internalised the true status of women in society.

How will we explain to future generations that during a period where we sort to celebrate heroines in our society, we were forced to mourn owing to heinous attacks against women.

One thing is certain, we can no longer look beyond ourselves, the manner in which we treat women cannot be attributed to external players outside the walls of our homes.

The fact that some of these incidents happen within the walls of our homes, makes it more complex and devastating. Action against this second pandemic requires collective action by government, civil society, professionals and broader community.

As government, our efforts to eradicate Gender Based Violence and Femicide in all spheres of society continues. We remain worried when women fall victim to acts of violence at the hands of men. The trauma which women are exposed to, is unimaginable, often leading to survivors struggling to regain self-worth.

We have put in place measures to deal with the needs of survivors of this pandemic. Government is taking a collaborative approach to ensure that no effort is spared to reach out to survivors and to address this calamity.

For urgent counselling of survivors, the Department of Social Development has established a 24-hour Gender Based Violence Command Centre which offers trauma counselling and assistance to survivors. It can be contacted on

0800 428 428 or people can send a please call me by dialling *120*7867# on their cellphones.

In the Justice Sector, we continue to lead various campaigns against Gender Based Violence and Femicide, for both society and the workplace. We have availed resources to fight this pandemic including ensuring that we have victim centric justice system that eliminates secondary victimisation.

From a policy perspective, we have ensured that progressive policies responding to this pandemic are passed. However, society must come on board, we must address and tackle the deep rooted culture of violence and masculinity which manifests itself in our communities.

Government has taken steps to ensure that future generations are taught about gender equity and this is infused into our curriculum. The Life orientation curriculum now includes Constitutional rights and responsibilities concepts such as Human rights, as stipulated in the South African Constitution, gender equity and human rights violations are also being taught between grades 7 and 9.

If all of us can take a firm stand against this pandemic and commit ourselves as activists, together we can defeat this monster. Violence against women is a direct threat to the fabric of society.

The pandemic of Gender Based Violence has gripped South Africa for a long time, we have taken decisive actions within the ambit of the law against perpetrators. This sends a strong message that there will be serious consequences and severe punishment for violating women.

The courts are demonstrating to South Africans through convictions and harsh sentences that strong actions are taken. We have also toughened granting of bail and our parole regime is reformed to ensure that perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and Femicide are not granted parole prior to satisfying strict requirements.

We have impressed upon the leadership of both departments, to prioritise wellness programmes in the workplace, moreover now that we are grappling with the devastating effects of COVID-19 and Gender Based Violence and Femicide. Security at the workplace must be improved so that we can protect women to avoid painful situations such as the one that happened at Leeuwkop.

We will spare no mercy to officials whose action, inaction or failure to observe Standard Operating Procedures lead to compromised security resulting in loss of lives. Budgets must be reprioritised to cater for the wellness and protection of officials, more especially women.

Programme Director, another area of work that we are prioritising as the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services, is the empowerment of women. We have demonstrated through appointments at higher echelons of both departments, that we are committed to realise the mandate of the ruling party of seeing more women assuming leadership positions.

Concerted efforts to dismantle patriarchal mindsets in society are still needed, we will remain relentless in promoting gender equality. We will continue agitating for increased representation of women which must culminate into increased influence.

We want to thank and honour all women in both departments and government entities under our ministry for their continued commitment towards creating better lives for our people. Without your efforts and dedication, South Africans would have been poorer.

From this dialogue today, I hope that we can reflect as the various components of the criminal justice on how we can improve the experience of citizens particularly women when they have to interface with our criminal justice systems. From the police station or a courthouse where protection order is sought, I want us all to ask ourselves, are we doing the best we can to address this pandemic?

I thank you!

