



**LESBIAN  
GAY  
BISEXUAL  
TRANSGENDER  
INTERSEX**

EQUALITY • DIGNITY • FREEDOM

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**TO: ALL MEDIA**  
**ATTENTION: NEWS EDITORS**  
**DATE: WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 2026**

### **NATIONAL TASK TEAM ON SOGIESC MATTERS MEETS – REFLECTING, RENEWING, RECOMMITTING TO THE VALUES OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The National Task Team (NTT) on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Matters met in Pretoria on Monday, 30 March 2026.

As South Africa concludes Human Rights Month, and on the brink of the start of Freedom Month, the NTT calls on all sectors of society to transform constitutional ideals into everyday reality by promoting safety, inclusion, access to services, and respect for diversity.

The meeting was co-chaired, by the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Andries Nel, by Sibonelo Ncanana-Trower, from civil society.

The NTT is a partnership between government, Chapter 9 institutions and civil society and was established to protect and promote the rights of persons of diverse SOGIESC.

Deputy Minister Nel opened the session by affirming the renewed momentum and the importance of the NTT in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons of diverse SOGIESC. He noted that the role of the NTT is all the more vital, given a global climate marked by increasing levels of intolerance and an “open assault on the values of human dignity”.

Legislation is one way to ensure the protection of human rights. In this regard, Deputy Minister Nel reported that the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has concluded public consultations on the draft Regulations which are required in terms of the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Act, 2023 (Act 16 of 2023). This paves the way for the legislation to be put into operation in the near future.

Funding is also vital to ensure that civil society organisations can function optimally and can promote and protect human rights.

Civil society members raised serious concerns about the funding crisis facing SOGIESC organisations, noting that the withdrawal of USAID funding and Global Fund restructuring have forced closures, have weakened Provincial Task Teams, and severely limited access to gender-affirming healthcare and victim support services.

With regards to hate crimes, the NTT's Rapid Response Team (RRT) and provincial RRTs monitor hate crimes committed against persons of diverse SOGIESC.

The RRT reported at Monday's meeting that it is currently monitoring 54 active cases of murder, rape, and assault committed against persons of diverse SOGIESC.

Eighty-four per cent (84%) of cases were recorded between 2024 and 2026, highlighting both improved reporting of such crimes and escalating levels of violence. Particular concern was raised about organised criminal groups, known as "Grinder syndicates," targeting gay men via dating apps for robbery and kidnapping, with the RRT engaging Grindr to find ways to increase the safety of app users.

To further strengthen prevention and response efforts amidst rising violence in educational and social settings, the NTT resolved to formally include the Department of Basic Education, the Commission for Gender Equality, South African Human Rights Commission, and the CRL Commission in the RRT.

The meeting reflected on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution which will be celebrated under the theme: One Constitution, One Nation: Reflect. Renew. Recommit.

The NTT stated that the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is a celebration of progress made thus far it is also a renewed call to safeguard hard-won rights, particularly in the face of continued discrimination, violence, and marginalisation affecting many LGBTIQ+ persons, especially transgender, gender-diverse, and intersex individuals.

South Africa's Constitution remains a global human rights landmark as the first in the world to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and paved the way for the Civil Union Act. Now 20 years since the Civil Union Act affirming equality, the lived experiences of persons of diverse SOGIESC too often fall short.

The meeting also paid tribute to Sharon Cox, the Health and Support Services Manager at Triangle Project. Deputy Minister Nel heralded her lifetime of activism and advocacy advancing the rights of persons of diverse SOGIESC, while co-chairperson Ncanana-Trower called her a leading voice that has been crucial to the growth and empowerment of the sector with a track record that has been foundational to the struggle for SOGIESC equality in South Africa.

Co-chairperson, Sibonelo Ncanana-Trower, concluded the meeting by saying that the NTT meeting "enabled us to account for what has been done, what challenges we face, and allows us to pave the way to do better tomorrow".

Deputy Minister Nel emphasised that human rights are interconnected and indivisible and every person should be able to access their rights. "The NTT provides a practical mechanism that makes it possible to turn human rights into reality," he said.

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**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE NATIONAL TASK TEAM ON SOGIESC  
MATTERS**