

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIAISON
MEC PETRUS NGOMANE DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE 16
DAYS OF ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN AT
DRIEFONTEIN ON SATURDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2016**

Executive Mayor of Mkhondo Local Municipality, Councillor Vusi Motha
MMC for Public Safety, Councillor Hlatshwayo,
Members of the Portfolio Committee,
Mkhondo Traditional Leadership Babe Yende,
Representatives from the House of Traditional Leaders,
Head of Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr. William Mthombothi,
SAPS Provincial Commissioner, Lt. General Mondli Zuma,
Provincial Chairperson of CPF Board, Mr. Kevin Pillay,
Management of the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison and
SAPS

Members of the media,

Programme directors.

Sanibonani

It is that time of the year when the spotlight falls on the abuse of women and children through the launching of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign.

This campaign which ends on 10th December 2016, is celebrated under a theme: Moving a Non violent South Africa Forward.

As I was reading newspapers yesterday morning, I came across some startling figures with regard to the scourge of abuse in this country. Medical Research Council indicates that 50% of children in this country will be abused by the time they reach 18 years. This cannot be normal and it has to be corrected going forward and that is why we are here.

City Press has further reported that one in every four women is physically abused by her intimate partner. The newspaper report further says that every six hours, a woman is killed by her current or former partner. Very shocking indeed.

Although we are launching this campaign here today, what we are saying as government is that it should not be viewed in isolation but it should be understood in the context of many other initiatives that this government and civil society embarks upon throughout the year to enhance awareness around the negative effects of women and child abuse in our society.

Ours is a caring government and that is why we are saying to all of you here today those who abuse women and children should not be protected. We all need to work together to bring an end to the scourge of abuse in our communities. We must work with government, civil society, NGOs, traditional leadership and also support other existing programmes.

It is against this background ladies and gentlemen that we are once more calling on men to become the prime protectors of their families. They are the ones who should protect our women and children and not abuse them. Our men should change their attitude towards gender based violence.

We are calling on all men in our society to act against abuse not only during this period but for 365 days. It has to be men who are central to the campaign and assist to help government to realize the intentions of this campaign.

As men we should also shy away from hiding behind tradition and culture in order to abuse women. The society with sound moral values will not promote cultural practices that marry off young girls to older men for their own financial gains. But instead, the community will instil sound morals in their girls and allow them to grow up so that they are able to choose for themselves who they get married to.

If we live in a morally sound society, there will be no men who date younger girls. That is why we are also appealing to traditional leaders in our midst here today to inculcate the culture of responsible parenting.

Men should be part of government's efforts to eradicate women and children abuse in their homes and communities. They should also lead moral regeneration initiatives so that we ultimately bring an end to the scourge of abuse.

A society that is morally sound will produce men who will use their roles of father figures to speak out against abuse. These men will become crucial voices in the fight against violence and abuse.

It is these men who we are calling upon to realize that they have the power to put an end to abuse, assault, rape and domestic violence against women and children. We are therefore calling on them to become responsible fathers and to instil the values of human dignity, equality and respect in young men and boys.

Our young boys must be mentored and guided in their journey to adulthood so they value and respect women and children. A morally sound society should be able to produce such men.

Programme director, we should seriously continue to engage one another and have dialogue sessions in order to respond to the NDP Vision for 2030 which emphasises "building safer communities through an integrated approach".

With the engagements, we should not only target men who are often perpetrators but also target women who are often tolerating abuse in their homes for various reasons. Others, we understand let their men get away with abuse because they are breadwinners in their families. Others tolerate abuse because they are afraid of collapsing their marriages.

Women, mothers present here today, there is no marriage that is worth more than the wellbeing of your children, regardless of how many cows were paid to your family when your husband asked for your hand in marriage.

No man has a right to abuse any person regardless of their wealth or status in the society.

Women should report these men because we are tired of men who portray other good men in a bad light. We also tired of these monsters that are living in our midst. We are tired of **abumalume labangatsatsi kahle, labahlukumeta bantfwana nobomake. Sikhatsese ngama** twisted stepfathers who abuse our children.

It is about time that we all stop protecting them. We are tired of their barbaric acts and backwardness because there is nothing civilised about abuse. It is about time that real men stand up and address domestic violence and other social ills.

One of the ways that we can effectively stop barbaric and evil men in their tracks is to ensure that they do not go unpunished. The only way in which they could be punished is when we report them to the police.

We must not only report but we also go to court and testify in cases, provide required evidence without fearing any person. Once conviction is achieved, they will then be sent to jail where they belong.

Therefore ladies and gentlemen, our women should do the right thing because if we tolerate abuse, it will never end. It will go on and in worst cases they would end up paying with their lives and the lives of those that they love.

It is in this context that we are appealing to those who report abuse not to withdraw such cases. **Ningasabi futsi ningasatshiswa ngoba live letfu linemtsetfo lefanele ivikele nine.**

Another issue that also bothers me, programme director is men who after being rejected by women terrorise them. When relationships end men should move on and stop harassing their former partners. **Madvodza angasabi kushela.**

Women who are subjected to such display of cowardice should report their former boyfriends before they are killed.

It does not mean when you are not abusing those who are close to you its fine, standing up means not turning a blind eye and saying it is not me who is abusive.

We are also aware that alcohol and drugs also contribute to the abuse of women and children. There are numerous incidences of women being beaten up by their spouses after returning from drinking sprees.

Some women, as you have seen in the media, have subjected their children to injury and in worst cases even death. This happens as they neglect their children and go to taverns to drink alcohol. This immoral behaviour by these mothers often subjects the children to emotional and physical abuse. You find a child caring for another child while the mother is enjoying with other men.

Therefore, we as government also need to decisively deal with these liquor traders that open beyond their operating times and are also selling liquor to under age persons.

Liquor traders must also become nation builders by trading responsibly. Communities should not support traders who break the law because eventually it will be the same communities that bear the brunt of irresponsible liquor trading.

Ladies and gentlemen child abuse wreak havoc in families and communities. Some children get robbed of decent childhood and others get pain and scars that they take with to the grave. Others become affected such that they are unable to have healthy relationships later when they are adults.

On the other hand, as government and particularly the criminal justice cluster should continue to give adequate support to victims and survivors of crime.

The delay in finalizing such cases could even affect the conviction of suspects. This will further subject victims and survivors to even more grief as they will see perpetrators going unpunished.

The credibility of our messages as government could be compromised and people will not see any need to inform the police about abuse when they do not see evil doers becoming punished for their horrendous deeds.

As government, we will continue to work together to try and raise public education around issues of abuse. Our campaigns will continue to be anchored around working closely with other government departments, state-owned enterprises, civil society organs and big businesses.

The department also has numerous awareness campaigns such as gender based violence awareness, vulnerable groups, human trafficking and the monitoring of the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act by SAPS.

We will continue to support Victims Empowerment centres across the province so that they function adequately for the benefit of our communities and those who have been affected by abuse.

We will further assess the responsiveness of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence and challenges in accessing justice. This will assist to enhance our responsiveness to such cases. Our criminal justice system should continue to deal harshly with those who commit violence and abuse.

It is therefore very clear that government alone will not win the war against crime. We all need each other. Let us therefore work together in order to win this battle.

Together let us all move a non violent South Africa forward.

Thank you.