

SPEECH BY HON PREMIER MANDLA NDLOVU ON THE OCCASION OF 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Your Worships Executive Mayors and Honourable Councillors

Our host Executive Mayors of Gert Sibande District and Albert
Luthuli Local Municipality Council

Ubukhosi bethu bendabuko Ondabezitha

Esteemed guests from the civil society in particular from
Mpumalanga Aids Council and our donors, our funders and other
NGOs

Compatriots from the tripartite alliance and all political and non-
political structures

Senior government officials led by the Acting DG Mr Peter Nyoni

Ladies and Getlemen

Sanibonani

1. It is both an honour and a privilege to stand before you today as we mark the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children.
2. This global campaign, which takes place annually from November 25 to December 10, serves as a painful reminder of the pervasive violence that women and children continue to endure around the world, including here in South Africa and indeed in our Province of Mpumalanga.
3. We have come together to observe and reflect upon the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children and take stock of our successes and our shortcomings
4. Reflect on whether our policies and our laws are having any significant impact on reducing and finally eliminating this scourge of deep rooted violence against women and children
5. The campaign is a significant tool for raising awareness and advocating for the rights of women and children. The approach remains intersectional, recognizing different systems of oppression such as sexual orientation and gender identity, disability and age

6. We have taken cognisance of the findings of the Public Protector after an investigation on a sample of 38 courts throughout the country on their compliance and ability to discharge their duties as courts especially with regard to the protections of victims of gender based violence and femicide.
7. The report points to glaring administrative deficiencies relating to the processing of gender-based violence (GBV) related matters within the South African criminal justice system.
8. We will work hard together with three departments, that is the Department of Justice and Correctional Services, the South African Police Services and the Department of Social Services to identify the causes of such administrative deficiencies and take corrective measures.
9. We also call upon our social partners to come into this space and assist our communities on dealing with this scourge.
10. The 16 Days of Activism is a time to unite as a society, to stand together in solidarity with those who have suffered

in silence, and to advocate for a future where violence is no longer a part of the lived reality of women and children.

11. It is a moment to shine a light on the deep-rooted issues of gender-based violence and child abuse, to listen to the stories of the victims, and, most importantly, to commit ourselves to being part of the solution.
12. Programme director as we gather today, we are reminded of a harsh reality—violence against women and children is not a here-say issue.
13. It is happening in our communities, in our homes, and often behind closed doors. The 16 Days of Activism is an opportunity for all of us—individuals, families, communities, and nations—to come together and say: Enough is enough.
14. The reality of violence against women and children is both alarming and heart-breaking. Every day, we hear stories of women who are subjected to violence, whether through physical abuse, sexual assault, emotional manipulation, or femicide.
15. Children are not immune to this brutality—many face physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and

exploitation. In some cases, these children grow up to repeat the cycle of violence, perpetuating harm across generations.

16. Femicide, the murder of women because of their gender, is particularly rampant. Women are killed simply because they are vulnerable and they are women. It is a crisis that demands our urgent attention, and the 16 Days of Activism serves as a time to highlight these realities and push for greater change.
17. This campaign also urges us to confront the underlying factors that fuel violence—poverty, unemployment, inequality, and the normalization of violence in certain cultural and societal norms.
18. It calls on us to challenge the systems that perpetuate injustice and to take concrete steps towards building a society that values the dignity and rights of all its people.
19. Programme director there have been pockets of progress, but violence against women and children remain a significant issue in our province, threatening the constitutional democracy and eroding societal cohesion

20. We need to intensify and mobilize government, business and community leadership, including civil society, labour, communities, families, and individuals, communities to take ownership, invest and harness actions to prevent GBVF
21. We have to accelerate response and prevention of GBVF by fostering innovation, technology, collaboration and commitment among stakeholders, and strengthening a whole-of- society approach
22. We must accelerate awareness and drive transformative change by reshaping economic and social norms and sectors; and
23. We need to intensify the call to action for men and boys to actively stand-up against violence directed at women, children and non-binary individuals
24. The power of the 16 Days of Activism lies in its ability to raise awareness and foster solidarity. For too long, the silence around gender-based violence and child abuse has allowed these issues to persist. By speaking out, we can break the silence. By raising our voices, we can change the narrative.

25. We must be the voices for those who cannot speak up for themselves. We must stand in solidarity with survivors of violence, not only during these 16 days but every day. Let us listen to their stories, offer them support, and fight for a world where they no longer have to live in fear.
26. But awareness alone is not enough. Action is needed. It is not enough to simply say that we are against violence. We must actively work toward creating safer spaces for women and children.
27. This means ensuring that law enforcement and judicial systems respond swiftly and effectively to cases of violence.
28. It means providing survivors with access to medical care, legal assistance, and psychological support. And it means educating our youth, teaching them that violence is never acceptable, and promoting respect, equality, and kindness in every relationship.
29. This campaign is not just for those who are directly affected by violence. It is for each and every one of us. As

individuals, we have a responsibility to contribute to a culture of respect and dignity.

30. We must call out toxic behaviour when we see it. We must teach our children the values of kindness and equality. We must stand up when we witness injustice

31. Moreover, we must hold ourselves and others accountable. Gender-based violence is not just the responsibility of the government or non-governmental organizations—it is a collective responsibility.

32. We must create a culture of zero tolerance for violence, and this starts with us, in our homes, in our workplaces, in our communities, and in our schools.

33. While individual efforts are vital, structural change is also essential. We have put in place stronger policies, and better law enforcement, and more accessible support systems for survivors of violence.

34. We will continue to invest in programs and services that protect women and children and provide them with the resources they need to rebuild their lives.

35. It is not enough to respond after violence occurs; we must work to prevent it. Prevention means addressing the

root causes of violence—challenging harmful gender norms, tackling poverty, and providing access to education and economic opportunities.

36. Prevention means intervening early, supporting at-risk families, and empowering individuals with the tools they need to break the cycle of violence.
37. As we enter the 16 Days of Activism, let us use this time to reflect on how far we have come and how much more work remains.
38. The fight to end violence against women and children is not just a 16-day campaign—it is a lifelong commitment. It is a commitment that requires each of us to stand together, to stand firm, and to stand up for what is right.
39. Let us remember that every day is an opportunity to make a difference. Let us commit to building a society where violence is not tolerated, where women and children are safe, and where every person can live with dignity and respect.
40. This is not just a dream—it is a possibility, and it is within our power to make it a reality.

41. As we move forward, let us be inspired by the voices of survivors, and let us honour their courage by making a firm commitment to end the violence.
42. Together, we can create a world where violence against women and children is a thing of the past, and where love, respect, and equality reign supreme.
43. Thank you.