



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES,
NKOSI PHATHEKILE HOLOMISA (AH! DILIZINTABA), MP, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE CAMPAIGN OF THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE ON 1 DECEMBER 2020, AT THE SOUTHERN CAPE
MANAGEMENT AREA**

Programme Director, Ms Seyisd,

The Executive Mayor of Bitou Municipality, Councillor Lobese,

Honourable Councillors,

Regional Commissioner of the Western Cape, Mr Delekile Klass,

Plettenberg Bay Police Station Commander, Mr Khunga,

Southern Cape Area Commissioner, Ms Booi,

Senior Management of the Department of Correctional Services and other sister
Departments,

The Plettenberg Bay Community Police Forum and our Partners, in particular Mr Kotze
and All Nations Church, in the fight against crime and gender based violence and
femicide,

Esteemed guests, in particular our honoured guest, Ms Daniwe Mzayifani, receipient of the house refurbished by DCS inmates and staff,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all!

In the words of President Cyril Ramaphosa, our land is suffering the ravages of two pandemics - the Coronavirus and Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. Whilst we do not know the origins and causes of the Covid-19 pandemic, we know fully well who the murderers, rapists, molesters and violators of the rights of women and children. These are men - fathers, brothers, uncles, lovers, strangers to the victims of these heinous crimes - crimes that are a total negation of the egos of humanity, Ubuntu. In paying homage to the victims and survivors of GBV and Femicide, may I request that we all stand up and observe a moment of silence in honour of their souls and broken lives.

Today, as we gather here in this beautiful town of Plettenberg Bay, a town of contrasts between those stuck in poverty in the townships and informal settlements, and those who enjoy the privileges of affluence and wealth, we have to recognize that, for reasons known only to the Creator of all things ugly and beautiful, the coronavirus is still very much alive and deadly. This area is, alongside the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan City, the epicentre of the pandemic. We are all required, therefore, to abide by the rules and regulations that the government has put in place to prevent the uncontrolled spread of the disease. We must keep to physical distancing, wash our hands with soap and sanitise them regularly, use face masks at all times when in public. These have to be adhered to even as we enter into the festive season for which the Bitou Municipality is so popular a destination.

In its efforts to create a safe, secure and prosperous society, South Africa has adopted a sound and robust legal and policy framework, that seeks protect the rights of women and children, promote gender equality as enshrined in the Constitution. The rights we seek to promote are anchored in the norms and values of humanity, where the strong and better endowed have a duty to protect and help the weak and the vulnerable - children, the elderly, those with disabilities and women. This is what is called Ubuntu. If we lose these values, we become worse than wild animals, which live by the ethos of the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weak. This comparison, though, is in itself inaccurate and an insult to animals for, even as they do that, it is for purposes of managing the ecosystem - not a random act of killing and maiming. They behave in a manner that seeks to feed and protect their young and the vulnerable of their species. In our case as men and boys, especially, we have no justification for abusing and molesting those we are supposed to protect.

Ladies and gentlemen, we know the value of empowering women and how it benefits society at large. We, therefore, have a duty to continuously address structural barriers that hinder women's advancement, recognize and act on their special needs.

Let me emphasise that gender empowerment is important to any society that considers itself modern and progressive. It is a fact that women and children are the most affected by Gender Based Violence and it threatens their very survival with tangible negative impact on their health, safety, freedom, and welfare.

Just last week, in the province of the Eastern Cape, we woke up to a gruesome report that a man had killed five children and their mother, by butchering them with an axe. These undesirable incidents should challenge us to come up with strategies to eliminate violence

at all levels in our communities.

Victims of gender based violence are also exposed to social ills like unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, psychological trauma, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. We cannot be made to witness these harrowing experiences our women and children have had to endure. Let us make our communities and public places safer and be each other's brothers' keepers. We need to speak up, we need to step up when we witness any form of sexual, physical or verbal abuse. We cannot be silent anymore. That is why failure to report crimes of child abuse is soon likely to be a criminal offence in itself.

Gender Based Violence and Femicide has undoubtedly affected our country socially and economically as women and children contribute significantly to all spheres of life, including business, education, sport, agriculture, amongst others.

Programme Director, as we commemorate the 16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children, I implore all of you to reflect on our fundamental values of respect for human rights. Let us make South Africa a country that is well known for good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights. Therefore, this commitment should be reflected in the way we treat our women and children.

The Department of Correctional Services carries the unenviable task of securing and supporting those of our society who have been suspected of breaking the law and those who have been convicted by courts of law for such crimes. In line with the imperatives of our Constitution and its Bill of Rights, as well as international treaties to which we are signatories, we are required to treat them with dignity by, among others, keeping them

well-fed, clothed and healthy. In addition, we are required to provide them with rehabilitation programmes whose principal aim is to give them life-skills and education, as well as make them understand and abandon the error of their ways, so as not to return to a life of crime once released from our correctional centres. For us to be able to succeed in these endeavours, we need partners who have the necessary expertise to carry out these rehabilitation programmes.

Once we are convinced that such offenders have been rehabilitated and appear unlikely to commit crimes again, they are released, on parole, back to society for re-integration. This is the stage now where the meaning of our ethos “CORRECTIONS IS A SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY” becomes a reality. Whilst they remain our responsibility, required to be monitored at regular intervals, their families, the community, business and government institutions, like local government and other departments, must accept them. For our efforts at rehabilitating them to succeed, they must be shown social acceptance and be given jobs to use the skills acquired while in prison and to be able to feed themselves and their families.

Most importantly, though, is that they must show their remorse to those they have offended. They must use the skills they have to assist the victims and survivors of their acts of criminality.

That is the reason we are here today.

Ms Daniwe Mzayifani (MamXesibe), kindly accept our greatest apology for the pain you had to endure at the hands of a man. This day affords us an opportunity to reflect and say

to all the victims of Gender Based Violence – WE ARE SORRY. Real men do not abuse women. Real men do not kill women and children.

Looking at the quality of workmanship in renovating your home, it gives me a sense of courage that indeed offender labour can make a difference when utilised appropriately. Hence offender labour must form an integral part of the incarceration process and be given space to play a positive role in the development of our communities, and also give back to the victims of crime.

As government, we must increasingly identify areas where offender labour can be used to touch the lives of our people. Key to rehabilitation is empowering offenders with skills to function effectively in society upon their release. Whilst the White Paper on Corrections provides for the safe incarceration and rehabilitation of all offenders who are serving their court-imposed sentences, there is also a fundamental responsibility to work very closely with the affected communities in strengthening relations between offenders and the victims and survivors of crime.

Through such initiatives, Correctional Services aims to provide offenders with a second chance to correct their wrongdoing by giving back to society. An initiative of this nature where we renovate a house can be described as a small fraction of the many interventions we have been rolling out in the country. It is a small contribution from those in-conflict with the law in saying, WE ARE SORRY.

We thank all the stakeholders who made a contribution and successfully renovated this home. Your dignity, Ms Daniwe Mzayifani, needed to be restored and we thank you for allowing us into your home in order to make a difference.

When we work together, I am confident that we can conquer the challenges confronting our people, improve the lives of all South Africans, and build a safer country for all. Partnerships in the advancement of our society is important. It is in this context that we thank all stakeholders who continue to work with us in various activities across the country.

As I conclude, I would like to emphasise the fact that ending Gender Based Violence and Femicide should be seen as a collective responsibility. Our voices should echo in unison, a message that Gender Based Violence and killing of women and children is wrong and that perpetrators should be brought to book.

My plea to the victims and survivors is to desist from withdrawing criminal charges against perpetrators. Unless punished through our Justice, Crime Prevention and Security processes, women abusers do not change their ways.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the time is now for us to break the silence and end Gender Based Violence and Femicide. Let us make it a personal commitment to end this scourge.

As public speakers are known to say after a very long speech, "With those few words", I thank you!