TUESDAY 07 OCTOBER 2026

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

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The Council met at 14:00.

The Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence in honour of the women who lost their lives because of the inhumane act of Gender-Based Violence.

The Chairperson announced that the virtual sitting has been convened to debate Gender- Based Violence and Femicide as a matter of public importance in terms of rule 101.

DEBATE IN TERMS OF COUNCIL RULE 101: THE SCOURGE OF VIOLENCE ON WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE RECENT KILLING OF WOMEN IN EKURHULENI AND THE URGENT NEED FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Chairperson to you, the Ministers and Deputy Ministers, members

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of executive council, MECs, all hon members and fellow South Africans, good day.

It is often said that meetings in South Africa usually start with an apology. Hon Members, I make no apology for calling you all to the House today for this unscheduled sitting in order to discuss an issue of national and public importance.

I choose my words carefully because I do not think we are here to debate gender-based violence as a scourge in our society. I think we are here to discuss it as people who are all equally horrified by the recent events in Ekurhuleni.

But this is not just a matter of national importance. It is one of personal importance as well. I grew up in Edenvale on the East Rand of Gauteng, a town that falls within the area of Ekurhuleni. My mother and my sister still live in the area.

While I was at university, I worked part-time at a bank in Kempton Park. I have friends in the area. This is personal. I am not a woman. I cannot stand here and pretend to know what it is to calculate every journey, every parking lot, every evening walk through the experience of being a woman in South Africa.

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But I can listen, and I can see what fear has done to the lives of the women that I love.

This madness, this abhorrent behaviour affects me as a son, a brother and a husband. My mother and sister both enjoy walking for exercise. My mother no longer walks the streets of the neighbourhood where she lives, but she confines herself to the safety of the retirement village where she lives. It never used to be like this. Importantly, not all citizens benefit from the safety of retirement villages.

My sister lives several kilometres away from her, also in Ekurhuleni, but for her, the streets are also not safe enough. She needs to go to a secure neighbourhood, patrolled by paid security guards, to meet friends so that they can walk together in safety. Again, it is necessary to point out, not all citizens can enjoy their safety in the presence of paid for private security guards. Is this the freedom that we hoped for?

Before 1994, many South Africans lived in constant fear, told where you could be, never knowing when to expect violence or attack. Again, I cannot imagine how that must have felt, but that system was defeated. Why then do we allow half of our

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population to still live like this? Constantly having to security check their plans, looking to see who is around, being told that they must avoid certain places, carefully planning routes and times, asking what route, what time, who will be there, who will walk with me, is the parking area safe? This is not freedom. This is not what we were promised.

In 2018, President Ramaphosa called gender-based violence a national crisis, and he convened the Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence. In 2019, he labelled gender-based violence, GBV, a national emergency and developed the Emergency Response Plan.

During covid, in 2020, President Ramaphosa has called gender-based violence the second pandemic, and he launched the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, GBVF. In 2024, we heard the second pandemic narrative again, and then we were told again that it was a national crisis during the G20 Social Summit in November 2025. In early December 2025, the President used his weekly newsletter to address GBV once again and declared it a national state of disaster.

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The Domestic Violence Act of 1998 has been law in this country for 28 years. It is a good piece of legislation, and it is worth reading, hon members. Yet, too many victims still encounter police officers who either do not understand these statutory obligations or they fail to discharge them.

Arrangements for suitable shelter, arrangements for medical care, arranging a social worker where they exist, and of course, the initiation and enforcement of protection orders. Sadly, some officers do not care.

The Act I am referencing was amended again in 2021, and yet we are still waiting for parts of that amendment to be implemented. Section 6(a) in particular relates to an integrated electronic repository for protection orders so that they can be easily accessible, but it remains purely theoretical until the President announces its commencement.

The actions of our government do not reflect the urgency that is recorded in speeches. Let's talk a little bit about urgency.

On 19 March 2024, this House passed the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Feminicide Bill, and the President

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signed it into law less than two months later. That was 2024, but it was only on 31 July 2026, more than two years later, that the President finally announced the names of the seven members who are to serve on the council.

I have to say that the new members of the council have not shown the same tardiness and have already given incisive analysis and comment following their appointment. Well done to them. We wish them well in their work and pray that they will in fact work themselves out of a job.

Our government has let us down repeatedly when it comes to gender-based violence. Government has legislated, created institutions, funded programmes, established Thuthuzela Centres, and announced initiatives to reduce deoxyribonucleic acid, DNA, backlogs. But there is a recurring implementation gap between declared urgency and administrative urgency.

The appointment of Mr Jacob Zuma as the political principal of the Moral Regeneration Movement when it was first formed was almost farcical. The man who was accused of rape, and though he was acquitted of those charges, he freely admitted to having casual sex with a girl half his age, younger than his children.

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The revelations about his role as the architect of state capture add further insult to this. But with someone like that heading our moral regeneration efforts, it is no wonder that senior police officers think it is okay to engage in questionable behaviour.

I will not pronounce on allegations presently before a court. That is for the court to decide. But I can speak about something that is not disputed. The 59-year-old Deputy National Police Commissioner has acknowledged to having sex with an 18-year-old woman, 41 years his junior.

South Africans are entitled to ask what that tells us about power, judgment, and the example set by those entrusted with protecting vulnerable people.

I am often called malume [uncle] back in my constituency, a title given to me as a mark of respect for the older guide or mediator. Ubab'mkhulu [grandfather] is another similar title. Older men are supposed to be the ones we turn to when we need wisdom or advice. They are not the ones that we expect to prey on our children.

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And policemen are supposed to be trusted to uphold the law. They are the ones that we turn to for protection when all else fails. They should be the ones that our daughters and sisters trust, not the ones that they fear the most. Yet this matter is before the courts, and we may not reflect more deeply on it. Though I have much to say, this is not the time.

This Moral Regeneration Movement that I referred to earlier was deeply flawed under the hand of Jacob Zuma, and to the best of my knowledge, even the current chair has been silent for the past month. He doesn't show up in any Google searches, having said anything on the current GBV crisis. There are no press releases from the organisation, and the official website of the movement is not working.

In his 29th of September address last week, President Ramaphosa directed the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture to, and I quote:

“Strengthen the work of the Moral Regeneration Movement and ensure that it contributes to changing the attitudes, social norms, and practices which enable violence against women.”

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That statement alone requires much deeper analysis. First of all, the President has bypassed his deputy, who's the former patron of the movement, and he's passed an instruction on to a Minister directly. Now that Minister happens to be one who also has a history that points to the fact he may not be best placed as the person to kickstart this action.

It seems that there are too few men in positions of power who have a track record that affords them the moral high ground to lead a campaign against gender-based violence. How sick is that? Here we get to the point that I want to emphasise as my contribution to today's discussion.

Government has a massive role to play, but they cannot do it alone. It is us men who need to take responsibility for changing the behaviour of men. We must participate in a programme to change the attitudes of our brothers and sons towards women.

Years ago, when the crime and situation in South Africa seemed unbearable, if my memory serves well, there was a local routing radio station, Highveld Stereo, together with Mr Yusuf Abramjee, who ran a public service campaign called SHOUT.

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It was an initiative aimed at getting law-abiding citizens to raise their voices so that we could understand that there is the silent majority who abhor crime. All of the noise was being generated at the time by the criminals and the gangsters. It was time for the good people of the province to stand up and be counted.

Men, my brothers, that time is here again. Those of us who reject violence, who understand that women are our equals, and who refuse to accept predatory behaviour as normal must now stand up and say, stop it! Stop the brutality, stop the rape, stop the predatory behaviour and grooming, and for the love of all that we hold precious, stop the mindless killing. Stop it now.

Gentlemen, and yes, the honorific title is chosen with care, gentlemen, do not allow your colleagues, your friends, your family, your neighbour or your acquaintances to hurt a woman.

I'm not calling on you to be vigilantes, not at all.

I'm asking you to speak up. Refuse to laugh it off. Refuse to excuse bad behaviour. Refuse to cover for a friend. Call out

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degrading language. Challenge controlling behaviour. Intervene safely where you can. Call the police where you must, or if the situation has not yet escalated, sit your brother down and let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable. This is our most powerful tool.

When aggressors learn that their actions draw consequences, they think twice. And of course, here is the foundational solution. Fathers, teach your sons. Uncles, teach your nephews. Coaches, teachers, pastors, colleagues, teach the boys and young men who look up to you. And all of us, mothers and fathers alike, must teach our children that no means no.

Teach them to understand that nobody has a right to harm someone else, the least of all, a more vulnerable person, because we all have a role to play. Everybody said that somebody must do something, so nobody did anything. And the bodies added up.

It's time for us to realise we are all somebody. It's up to us to take charge of this terrible situation, especially those in this House. We are leaders. A greater burden lies with us. But everybody can make a difference.

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We just need to choose to do so. Government must implement the laws already passed. Police must enforce them. The council must coordinate. Prosecutors must prosecute, and the Moral Regeneration Movement must become visible and relevant. But gentlemen, none of that absolves us.

Government cannot legislate what we say in the change room. Police cannot patrol every braai. Courts cannot raise our sons for us. Parliament cannot sit beside us when a friend speaks about his partner as though she is a belonging. That responsibility is collectively ours.

Men, stand up!

Thank you, Chairperson.

USIHLALO WOMKHANDLU KAZWELONKE WEZIFUNDAZWE: Siyabonga malume ... [Thank you, uncle.] ...

English:

... for quite a moving opening. You don't want us to say a debate, but a discussion.

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IsiZulu:

Siyakubonga kakhulu, malume. [Thank you very much, uncle.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Dr S P Boshielo): Hon Chairperson, hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Leader of Government Business, President of the SA Local Government Association, Salga, hon Ministers, hon House Chairperson: Committees, hon House Chairperson: Members' Support and International Relations, hon Chief Whip, and all on the platform, ...

Setswana:

... dumelang [greetings.]

English:

We meet at a painful moment of our country. The recent killings of women in Ekurhuleni have again forced us to confront a reality we have faced for far too long. This urgent debate allows and gives us the opportunity to assess the state's response to the gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF and its implementation effectiveness, especially across our provinces. Chair, I am happy that you have included our MECs from provinces and Salga to represent the local government.

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As His Excellency President Ramaphosa has reminded the nation, government must do better and society must do better. Also, as confirmed by the hon House Chairperson. We must move beyond outrage and statement. We must ask, what must we do differently to stop the violence before another woman becomes a statistic? According to the Constitution, in particular section 205, South African police officers are entrusted with protecting the public, upholding the law and safeguarding the rights and dignity of women and children.

The recent arrest of a lieutenant-general on disturbing allegations involving the rape of an 18-year-old and the sexual grooming of a teenager has intensified the GBVF debate. Accountability must and will apply at every level, particularly within our own institution. The SA Police Service has reaffirmed its zero-tolerance approach to GBVF, while our Independent Police Investigative Directorate, Ipid has reaffirmed its mandate to investigate independently and without interference. That is why you even have the Deputy National Commissioner in court.

The Independent Police Investigative Directorate has secured 84 criminal convictions compared with 43 of the previous year. The

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highest number of cases were recorded in the Western Cape, with 905, Gauteng, 898, KwaZulu-Natal, 722 and the Eastern Cape at 770. Disciplinary action against the senior officer will commence on 12 October 2026. These steps are essential to bring public trust and to assure survivors that every allegation will be taken seriously regardless of a person’s rank or position.

Hon members, the President has identified four areas for immediate action. Our task including members of the NCOP, is to ensure that these actions are implemented in every province, in every district and communities within the stipulated time framework.

One of it is in terms of recovering cases and advancing justice. The SA Police Service must ensure that these cases are properly investigated, survivors are treated with dignity and families are kept informed. The South African forensic services, the Department of Health, the national prosecuting officer and other relevant stakeholders must also work together on a funded, time-bound plan to reduce backlogs and prioritise cases involving women, children and addressing backlogs.

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The KwaZulu-Natal Forensic Science Laboratory at Mayville commenced operations in February 2026 and has continued to support the National Prosecuting Authority. During the first quarter, 7 182 GBVF-related DNA analysis reports were finalised and submitted to the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, with a further 815 reports submitted by the end of July 2026. This demonstrates the critical role of forensic science in supporting investigations and prosecutions to ensure that there is no delay in finalisation of the cases.

Between January and July 2026, the SA Police Service served 19 883 protection orders within 24 hours at 593 police stations and reactivated 220 rape court cases, resulting in 127 identified offenders being rearrested. These figures demonstrate that cases can be pursued even after a significant period. The SA Police Service through Operation Shanela II also continues to intensify efforts against perpetrators of gender-based violence and femicide and other serious crimes.

Due to diligent work of our detectives and prosecutors, a total of 317 life imprisonment sentences were handed down to 246 accused persons. In the past seven days, police arrested 14 581 suspects nationwide, while detectives traced and arrested 1 811

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wanted suspects linked to serious and violent crimes. Among those arrested are 174 suspects arrested for rape, 7 for attempted rape, 140 for murder and 130 for attempted murder.

On 30 September 2026, the Umzimkhulu regional court in KwaZulu-Natal sentenced 33-year-old Tenes Hassan to six life terms for raping six women in 2022. In each case, he broke into a home, demanded money and cellphone, and then raped the victim. He targeted the homes where there were only children and women.

In separate operations, Interpol South Africa arrested 40-year-old Turkish fugitive in Isipingo KwaZulu-Natal, wanted in Turkey for rape, sexual assault, and kidnapping. A former primary school principal in Cape Town, Western Cape, was arrested in September 2026. He was wanted in Turkey for sexual assault, kidnapping and intimidation involving a minor.

Provincial and local safety plans must also respond to what the communities experience on the ground. Safer public spaces are essential, but they must be matched by prevention, accessible victim support services, and effective policing. We cannot separate the fight against GBVF from the fight against illegal

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firearms. Firearms can be used to threaten, intimidate, and escalate violence against women.

In the past seven days, the SA Police Service seized 110 unlicensed firearms, 1 777 rounds of ammunition, 619 dangerous weapons, and arrested 61 for possession of unlicensed firearms, with Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces leading. These are not merely crime-fighting statistics of removing illegal weapons from our communities, it is also a critical GBVF prevention measure to ensure that our women, children, and vulnerable persons are safe.

The SA Police Service and other law enforcement agencies must target illegal alcohol sales and increase visible policing in identified hotspots, working with provincial and local partners in addressing this alcohol issue. Hon Chairperson, it is very difficult for somebody to rape a child or to rape a woman when they are sober. Most of the time, they are under the influence of alcohol and substance abuse. So, we need to be able to regulate the licensing of taverns, because most of these rapes and other killings and murders, as you have seen in the Wedela area, are in the taverns. We need to also do that.

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On other key arrests between 28 September-04 October included 140 murders: Gauteng 33, Western Cape 24, Eastern Cape 22. I'm saying this because I'm consciously aware that I'm in the National Council of Provinces, where provinces are represented, so, they can be able to take the figures and assist in prevention measures. There are 1 473 cases of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, GBH, 1 262 undocumented immigrants, and out of them, in Gauteng it was 614.

Sixty-one possessions of firearms: Eastern Cape it was 17, and KwaZulu-Natal was also 17. Two thousand five hundred possessions of drugs: Western Cape 1 611. Two hundred and nineteen dealing with drugs: Western Cape 47, KwaZulu-Natal 39, Gauteng 33, and 773 driving under the influence of alcohol and other robberies. We also confiscated and recovered 110 unlicensed firearms, as I said before.

Hon Chairperson, as we are debating in the National Council of Provinces, operational successes per province are as follows, but I'm not going to be able to read them, looking at the time that we have. But suffice to say in the Eastern Cape, we arrested some suspects with 360 stolen copper wires, which they use to make sure that there's no electricity and it is dark and

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they can be able to do things that they are not supposed to do. In the Gauteng area, we also arrested cash-in-transit robbers who had AK-47s, and there was a shootout with police.

In KwaZulu-Natal, as I said, there's the Umzimkhulu regional court sentence. In Limpopo, foreign nationals were arrested in Lephalale for dealing in illicit cigarettes at the value of 150 000. Still in Limpopo, the Hawks arrested seven suspects linked to fraud, corruption, thefts and money-laundering of more than R1,1 million at the Maruleng Local Municipality. In Mpumalanga, nine Mozambican nationals were arrested during the Operation Vala Umgodi operations. I'm mentioning these areas because after they've done this, they then go and victimise our women, especially the ones of Operation Vala Umgodi and the ones that are on drugs.

Hon members, allow me to also add a fifth intervention to the four identified by the President: Prevention with particular attention to the boy child and to the male. GBVF begins long before an assault, in attitudes that treat women as inferior, in confusing control with protection and in behaviour that dismisses harassment or ignores consent. I think the House Chairperson went at length to be able to do that. Prevention

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must begin earlier. We must consider what our sons see and hear, how we teach them to respond to anger and rejection, how to resolve conflict and how to respect consent.

The recent GBV debate rightly emphasised that policing alone cannot end GBVF. And now in the NCOP, we continue to outgrow the same sentiments. Specialist services such as victim friendly rooms and family violence, child protection and sexual offenses services must be properly staffed, equipped and accessible, including in rural and underresourced communities.

The effectiveness must be measured not only by how many facilities or training sessions exist, but by whether survivors receive dignified, timely and effective support. We must ask whether cases are investigated and resolved, whether survivors are kept informed, whether forensic delays are being reduced and whether safety plans are delivering visible improvement in communities.

We must continue to monitor whether the President’s intervention gives us a clear area of action in terms of our responsibilities, to ensure that they are implemented and that progress reach the communities where people live. Our message

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is: My action can stop GBVF. This must be more than a slogan. My action can be by to teach my son that women are not properties, to teach my daughter that he has a right to safety and dignity, to challenge a friend who normalises violence, report abuse, support a survivor, seek help when I'm struggling or refuse to laugh when violence is made a joke.

Homes and families are a child's first school. It is where children learn respect, how conflict is handled and whether violence is acceptable. Parents have a vital role to play by preventing GBVF requirements. It requires a collective effort from school, faith-based communities and organisations, traditional leaders, the civil society, social services and law enforcement.

It takes a whole society to create a safe environment. It also takes accountable action in every province, in every municipality, in every ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Deputy Minister, I'm afraid your time is up. If you can just quickly round up.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Dr S P Boshielo): Hon Chairperson, in this NCOP, we are appealing to the provinces to assist us to be able to work with the police so that we can curb this scourge of GBVF. They all happen in the provinces. In Gauteng, the premier has already called stakeholders, and we have already started including ourselves to be able to deal with the challenges that are faced and the method on how we are going to deal with GBVF.

As I close, Chairperson, thanks for your ... towards a society where every woman and every child can live free from violence and fear, let us not wait for another family to bury a daughter, mother or sister before we act. Let us all act before the violence. If my actions can stop GBVF, then yours can mostly do. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Deputy Minister, I used my discretion to allow you more time because this is a very contentious subject we are discussing today and it relates directly to your department. It was of essence to us to get the message as to what is it that ought to be done by all of us. Now, having said that, once again, we thank you for your participation in this discussion. We are now moving on to the

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next speaker on my list, which is hon Mananiso. You have 10 minutes, hon Mananiso.

Ms J S MANANISO: Hon Chairperson, let me stand on the protocols already established. Hon Chairperson and hon members, I rise with a heavy heart with anger that is justified and with condolences that cannot be enough. This House condemns, in the strongest terms, the brutal murder and dumping of women in Ekurhuleni and Soweto.

Since July 2026, 11 bodies of women have been discovered in the parts of Ekurhuleni, Kempton Park, Olifantsfontein, Clayville, KwaThema and Dawn Park. Some naked, partially clothed, and showing signs of sexual assault. Behind each body was a daughter, a mother, a sister and a friend.

As President Ramaphosa said in his televised address, on 30 September:

> Behind each of these terrible deaths was a human being, whose life had value, whose future mattered, and whose absence has left a family and a community grieving. How can our hearts not be broken? How can we not be angry?

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We send our deepest condolences to the families; we share their anger.

This matter is receiving attention at the highest level. The President of the Republic, His Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, said that the killings of women in Ekurhuleni are receiving attention at the highest level of government and law. He acknowledged that what we have done has not been enough to prevent women from being killed, and we cannot police our way out of gender-based violence. He declared gender-based violence and feminicide, GBVF+, as a national disaster in November 2025, after years of summits. He said:

> That is why we classified gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster. We did so to harness all the resources and capabilities of the state to end these crimes.

On 31 July 2026, he appointed the National Council on GBVF until 2029 and now announced for immediate measures – a national case recovery operation — to audit unresolved murders, rapes and sexual offences, increased forensic capacity, municipal safety audits, and additional funding to be announced by the Minister of Finance on 21 October 2026.

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The Acting Minister of Police Prof Firoz Cachalia said that a high-level multidisciplinary team under Acting Deputy National Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Senthumule, has been established. The team is in place, the South African Police Service, SAPS, has the experience and the high-level expertise to investigate cases of this kind. The team has already resulted in arrests of four suspects linked to some of the murders. A further suspect killed himself when police closed in.

Operation Shanela will massively expand an Ekurhuleni lockdown, intelligent-led roadblocks, patrols, and 1007 arrests have been made in Gauteng in two days, including 28 for rape 211 GBV cases. A R400 000 reward for information was announced.

The Minister of State Security has been directed through the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, NATJOINTS, to support the police with intelligence on syndicates, trafficking, and possible serial patterns and to strengthen early warning system.

We commend the SAPS, the multidisciplinary team and the South African National Defence Force, SANDF, support. We also appreciate the communities of Ekurhuleni and Soweto, who are

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assisting with information despite their fear. Without the community, no policing will succeed.

This brings me to the second part of our discussion. We have policies, we have the National Strategic Plan on GBVF+ 2020-30.We have three GBV laws signed by the President in 2022, expanding protection orders, tightening bail and minimum sentences. The question is no longer whether government understands the crisis; the question is whether the systems in delivery are working for us?

The newly appointed National Council on GBVF must now be fully capacitated legally, structurally, and financially, as the co-ordinating body working with civil society, not another layer of bureaucracy.

In co-operative governance we must use tools of co-operative governance to implement gender-responsive policies in local government planning. Municipalities must maintain open fields, cut long grass, rehabilitate abandoned buildings and fix street lights, provide safe water and sanitation as the Human Rights Council, HRC, has directed.

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Building a GBV-responsive local government is the way to go. Every Integrated Development Plan, IDP, and budget must have a GBVF lens. That means establishing victim-friendly facilities where they do not exist — we know we have Thuthuzela Care Centres — a specialised GBV desk in every police station, setting up of GBVF information centre at SAPS Academy to track incidents, joint co-operation of SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, so cases do not fall through the cracks from reporting to conviction.

Gender budgeting is not a charity; it is a foundation socioeconomic stride towards emancipation. The President allocated R21 billion over five years, but Appropriations committee shows that policy ratio is 1427, shelters are underfunded and we must ring-fence.

Drivers of GBVF must be addressed, alcohol regulations, drug labs linked to cartels, and patriarchal attitude. Entertainment industry must not normalise violence, religious and cultural sectors must preach the sanctity of women’s bodies, and traditional leaders must act.

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You would know that we do have a multi-party caucus. The multi-party caucus of the National Assembly and the NCOP must ensure that we do proper co-ordination, monitoring, and evaluation of these issues as we deal with them on a daily basis, publishing measurable targets for investigations, prosecuting convictions, protection orders and shelter capacity.

Success and shortcomings would be able to be addressed in terms of the laws, councils, and Thuthuzela centres. On issues of shortcomings, implementation gaps must be dealt with ads soon as possible. Women representation must be the issue that we always address in all these discussions because we cannot deal with women issues without them being on the table. So, there is a need that when we speak on these matters, we are on the table as girls, women, and young boys dealing with these particular issues. We must stop being ceremonial and become fiduciary, taking care of what is entrusted to us.

Civic education and localisation need to be attended to. We need civic education from the ground. The 16 days of activism must not be seasonal; we must localise it with actionable plans 24-7. We need to ensure that we are active 365 days from our homes, from our streets, from the society that we come from, from all

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the sectors that we belong to, and each and every ward, so that we ensure that we are one or two steps forward as we do this particular work.

I want to say to the country that it is important that those who've been bystanders must stop doing that and they must now take charge. We need to ensure that GBVF is being responded to as a societal issue. We need to ensure that we deal with the household family laws. We know that when you are abused by your husband as a female, you will be called for abomalume [uncles] to come and discuss. Those meetings are not helping us; they are silencing women and perpetuating GBVF.

So, we need to ensure that we create an enabling environment and safe spaces from our homes. Those who are being silent, be it men or women, need to come out because all these systems and structures are meant to actually protect, prevent, and ensure that there's social justice for all, and not for a few.

I want to say in this particular platform, we can't normalise *Senzeni Na?* and #AmINext, as women. We cannot do that when we know that we are united and we are all working together to ensure that we dismantle and defeat gender-based violence and

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femicide. In our responses, let’s not leave a boy child, men, a disabled person, elderly persons, LGBTQIA+ society, and children because this disaster affects us all, and if we're not responding to the population of our country, we won't be speaking about the democracy that we ... Anything that we do that exclude any population needs to be addressed as we respond to these issues.

So, we need to ensure that all sectors must now be actively involved from all government spheres, Chapter 9 institutions, business and civic organisation, faith-based organisations, FBOs, nonprofit organisations, NPOs, nongovernment organisations, NGOs, ex-offenders, disability sectors, and all government departments, with specific actions, 365 days programmes that are sustainable and continuous.

Any programme that does not speak to or have victim-centred programme must be rejected. Confronting ... [Time expired.] ... Thank you, Acting Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Modise): Thank you so much hon Mananiso. Let me take this opportunity as well to thank the Chair for giving me this chance to chair the following session. As we move

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out of the Gauteng province represented by hon Mananiso, we now move to hon Rasilingwane representing the Gauteng province. Hon Rasilingwane, you've got seven minutes.

Ms Z K RASILINGWANE (Gauteng): Hon Chairperson, hon members, fellow South Africans ...

Tshivenda:

... ndi masiari. [Good afternoon.]

English:

There are some things you see in a public life that you can never unsee. There are scenes that stays with you longer after the cameras have left. I have stood at scenes where women’s lives had been reduced to silence, where human being who has a name, a family, a mother, a child and a home to return to was no longer coming home. I remember that moment when a lifeless body was lifted and placed into a vehicle to be taken to the mortuary. I want South Africans to take a moment to think about that, a vehicle that was supposed to be taking someone from home, a taxi that should have been carrying a mother back to her children, a car that should have been taking a daughter back to her family. Instead, her final journey was to a mortuary.

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Somewhere, at the very moment, a family was still waiting, waiting for the sound of a gate opening and waiting for someone to say, she is home. This is what South African needs to understand. This woman did not simply die. Their death entered homes. They broke mothers, they broke children and they broke something inside our community as the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

When one woman is killed, an entire community begin to ask, could I have been the same person or could I have been next? A woman walking to work, a woman coming from work, a woman getting into a taxi and suddenly the life has changed for the people of the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. The walk home becomes frightening. Fear begins to change the way people live and in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality that fear has become so loud because 12 women have been killed in the same city in a period of two months.

Twelve women. Is 12 too many? Twelve women in roughly 2 months is not a statistic. We should read and simply move past it.

It is 12 families whose lives have been permanently altered and the countless people asking, could we have done something

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sooner? That is the question that should haunt us as individuals that have been entrusted with the leadership that we have. Not only, who killed that individual but what happened before they died and the unsafe places did we tolerate in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality? What system failed to move with urgency that a human life demands? Because when a woman disappears, we cannot simply just afford to say, let us see what happened. We must say, let us find her immediately. Because every hour that passes, it is danger to her life. Every woman who leaves home should have the reasonable expectation that she should be able to return home.

Hon members, I do not want us to become a society that is very good at mourning women and very bad at protecting them. I do not wish for us to become experts at sending condolences to the families and experts at memorial services and experts in saying that never again, only to meet again in this debate after another woman has died in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. The same measure of our responses cannot be how beautifully we mourn the dead. It must be how fiercely we protect the living. Perhaps the simplest question we should ask ourselves is also the hardest. When a woman leaves home

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tomorrow, will she make it home safely in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality?

Hon members, South Africans cannot continue to face extraordinarily high levels of violence against women and children. The latest national figures recorded that almost more than 50 000 Gender-based Violence and Femicide, GBVF related cases during the first quarter of the 2026/27 financial year in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality between the month of April and June 2026, the Kempton Park recorded 76 kidnapping cases and that is compared to the 48 cases that were reported during the same period last year. This simply represents an increase of 58%, the highest number recorded at the police station in Gauteng province during the first quarter under review. This figure shows us why kidnapping, trafficking, sexual violence and GBVF cannot continue to be treated as a separate issue.

We need a co-ordinated response from SA Police Service, SAPS, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department, EMPD in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, communities, civil society and the Community Police Forum, CPF. We need safer public spaces, better lighting, effective crime fighting

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technology like they have in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, visible policing and most importantly, an agitation when women go missing.

In the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, I am here to report that almost 300 EMPD vehicles are reported to be out of service. What that means is that there are fewer vehicles for patrols. It means there is fewer police visibility in our streets and fewer responses when individuals called for help. But fixing the EMPD alone will not be able to save or solve the GBVF matter because GBVF is a police issue, but it is also a social, justice, healthcare, education and human rights issue.

Every woman has the right to live free from violence and every survivor has the right to support and justice. We must strengthen our shelters, our survivor’s services, police investigation as well as prosecution. We must also stop placing the responsibility for preventing violence on women. We must also ensure that women should never have to change how they dress, what time they walk in their street and send their live location to feel safe in their community because their responsibility must lie with the perpetrator. And the state must

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prevent crime and protect residents and ensure that there is access to justice.

We need to move from a reaction kind of leadership to a proactive kind of leadership that protects women in our communities. Let us use crime data that is available to identify the crime hotspots before another woman is harmed in our communities. We need to also ensure that missing persons cases receive the most urgent attention and we need to also demand accountability when systems are failing our communities.

For 12 women whose bodies were discovered in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, we are demanding justice. For the families who have been waiting for answers, we demand justice to be found. For the survivors, we demand support. And for every woman and a girl in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, we demand for them to feel safe in their community. And from the government that leads us, we say: we had enough of the advice that you have given us. We need and demand action because so many women have been killed in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in the shortest period, which communicates that we have a serious challenge, that SAPS

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has been failing, dismally on it. Hon Chairperson and hon members, I thank you.

Ms M MAKESINI: Hon Chairperson, greetings to the members and the premiers. The gender-based violence and femicide is the most painful issue that it needs our attention as a country today. It is all functional in a very low intensive to fight gender-based violence and femicide. I stand here in the council today on behalf of the EFF to urge men to unite and play more effective role to bring the end of the gender-based violence and femicide.

In South Africa, an average of 15 women is murdered in every single day. This is the highest femicide rate in the world. This statistic is a figure that excludes large number of incidents that go unreported. They do not account for the incidents of violence that are not reported and normalised perceived genders, violence and discrimination that is experienced by the women on daily basis especially those women who are coming from the rural areas, in the areas where these cases are not reported.

The recent event in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality over the past 10 weeks where the 12 women bodies were found and dumped in the open field, near the local

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cemeteries and along the railway lines in the areas like Kempton Park, Olifantsfontein, Boksburg and Springs has brought fear and outrage to the local community, even to the country. Many of these victims were found semi-naked and wrapped with the sheet, showing signs of severe sexual assault and physical bulging. These victims are simply not statistics. As hon members already said, these are the mothers, daughters and sisters of one of the family members.

Elizabeth Tsontso Moselakgomo, a thirty-eight-year-old woman who was doing her routine jogging, never returned to see her children again. Itumeleng Kekana, a thirty-year-old woman who was reported missing and her body found decomposed and discovered two weeks later in an open area, never saw her children or was able to meet with her children again. Nomfesane Ntando Mjobo, the mother of the three children whose lifeless body was found in R21 Highway.

IsiXhosa:

Kabuhlungu, akanakuze aphinde abone abantwana bakhe. [Sadly, she will never see her children again.]

English:

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Dineo Evelyn Motapane, a 38-year-old mother of a young child who went missing on Sunday in the middle of September, her battered and partially burnt body was recovered in the open field of the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. We are also talking about Busisiwe Mahlangu who was found dead in Kempton Park and her partner taken into custody. Boitumelo Gift Mashita, a twenty-three-year-old young woman, shot dead in Tembisa Township by her estranged husband who later committed suicide. Jabulile Timba, found dead during the peak of the investigation. We are also talking about Ntombifuthi Nxumalo also found dead during the same period.

An unidentified woman was also found but still needs her family to identify her and make closure. We must also encourage her family members and everyone to go and identify the body. We must be worried that today we still have three bodies that are not found by their families.

The 12th body was also recovered in the periphery of a river system which was brought by the task force, a case that to the 12 women that were missing and killed in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

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The murders of women in the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality is not an isolated incident. Their deaths occur within a country where women face persistent sexual violence, domestic violence, rape, abduction and murder and but alas, the weakness of a criminal justice system is well documented. The state has extensive information on where these violent crimes occur, the circumstances in which women are most vulnerable in the communities, experience and persistence of violence but the institutional weakness prevents perpetrators from being brought to justice.

As the EFF, we also note with concern the images of four points that were directed by the state President. We note the following measures: a national case-recovery audit of unresolved sexual offences; plans to clear the severe forensic and DNA backlog; mandatory municipal safety audits; and stricter legislative measures targeting alcohol-related violence. While the same measures are necessary, it is concerning to note that the Government of National Unity, GNU, delayed to respond to the issue of the gender-based violence and femicide. The GNU has known for years about the scale and the nature of location of this crisis but they consistently failed to act. The fact that the Emergency Declaration was required and activated basic

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policy and municipal function show how deeply broken our system has become.

Government has already allocated R57 billion to the National Strategic Plan on the GBVF between 2020 and 2025. Yet safety and services remain severely underfunded, a problem and also poorly managed. There is a large gap between the policing text and actual implementation that must be done by the police. An emergency of 60 days audit or a promise to clear off 140 DNA backlog means very little to the survivor and that are turned away by untrained officers at the local police station.

Despite the billions of rands allocated to the National Strategic Plan on the GBVF, very little has changed for a survivor walking into the police station. Evidence kits remain missing, forensic backlog drags for years and only a tiny fraction of the report cases actually end in a successful conviction.

We must also reject the idea that women must change their behaviour. There is nothing wrong that women of South Africa have done. That they should stop running alone or need to change their jogging routine just to stay alive, is immaterial. The

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burden of the safety belongs to the state. We, must demand visible policing, functional forensic laboratories and immediate action when women go missing.

As a safe country, we require basic services. We need working streetlights, clear the bushes in our municipalities and secure a public space. The tragedy of this country of the gender-based violence and femicide crisis is the massive gap between our laws and the lived experience that are lived by the women daily. We have advanced domestic violence statutes and specialised courts but they fail. When local infrastructure is neglected and the justice system is stalled.

To break this cycle, we must move beyond temporary interventions and address the root causes of gender-based violence. We need systems that hold institutions accountable for failures that perpetuate this violence.

Sesotho:

Meya ya bona e robale ka kgotso ...

English:

... and that justice must prevail. Thank you, Chair.

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Ms F MAZIBUKO (Gauteng): Hon House Chair and let me greet hon members on call. Let me acknowledge the premiers, the MEC's Deputy Ministers and Ministers on call. Hon House Chair, gender-based violence and femicide continue to affect families, and communities across our country. Many women live in fear, sometimes in the very places where they should feel safe. While children are also exposed to abuse, this painful reality requires us to strengthen how we prevent these crimes, support survivors, and also respond when someone comes to help.

The recent killings of women in Kempton Park and surrounding areas here in Gauteng have again shown that the government cannot respond only after violence has occurred. We are examining what happened before the violence, how victims sought help and whether our systems did everything possible to protect them and bring perpetrators to justice. It is against this background that our President on 29th of September announced measures in response to the national GBV plan and directed government to also focus on the recovery of unresolved cases, the forensic and DNA backlogs, the women's safety audit and stronger action against alcohol-related violence.

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The President further directed us that unresolved murder and attempted murder, rape and serial sexual offences cases involving women and children should be audited within 60 days, followed by recovery plans within 90 days. He also called for a funded plan to address forensic backlogs and to prioritise rape and murder samples that involve women and children. For Gauteng, this responsibility is therefore demonstrated by the implementation and the directives.

Our Premier, hon Panyaza Lesufi, has set out a provincial response plan together with the provincial government, the municipalities, the law-enforcement structures, and relevant national institutions. Eleven municipalities also have participated in this process. One of the best areas of intervention is the functioning of police stations where high numbers of rape cases are being reported.

Gauteng has prioritised 10 policing precincts such as Ivory Park, Roodepoort, Alexander, Mamelodi, Diepsloot, Atteridgeville, Kagiso, Reiger Park, Meadowlands and Tembisa. These audits are done to examine the docket management, the protection orders that have been issued, the victim support services and whether previously the reports were done, where

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violence was reported. Where gaps have been identified, corrective action is being assigned to responsible officers with clear deadlines.

Our response is also paying closer attention to women who have already reported abuse and remain at risk of further violence. Whether there are repeated complaints through protection orders that are ignored, these warning signs are receiving closer attention and follow-up.

We are also strengthening the link between the police, the victim support services, social development and health, so that the women at risk do not fall in between and suffer secondary victimisation. The response does not end when a case is opened or when a woman leaves a police station or leaves a health care facility. ... [Inaudible.] ... continued where circumstances indicate that she remains in danger, and this is one of the areas where earlier intervention can also help prevent violence from escalating into another tragedy.

The recent Ekurhuleni cases have also helped us to identify earlier interventions that could also help prevent further violence. The same level of accountability applies to the

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forensic backlog. We are tracking the size and age of the backlogs, the staffing and equipment shortages, the pathology and the transportation delays, the outstanding priority samples, the turnaround times and the resources required to reduce backlogs.

Family liaison and psychosocial support are also forming part of this response. For us at the Department of Health, this is important because health care is ... one of the first places where a survivor encounters the state after an assault. Through our clinical, forensic, medical services and Thuthuzela Care Centres, survivors receive special forensic and medical assessments, evidence collection and medical legal services.

Hon Chair, in Gauteng, we are strengthening the places where women can seek help. The province currently has 145 GBV desks in police stations and 133 Green Cloths in communities. We are working to keep these services functional and accessible whilst addressing gaps in the coverage.

The introduction of the e-panic button will also strengthen access to immediate assistance, particularly for women and children who find themselves in danger. The e-panic button

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provides another way to quickly call for help and faster response when assistance is urgently needed. The pressure on these services remains high.

Gender-Based Violence Command Centre also does its best work, and I hope hon members know what the number is that is being used when you are calling the GBV Command Centre. It is 0800 428 428. I hope everyone will be able to always keep this number so that in cases where you want to report such cases, it's quicker, and we are able to do work and ensure that our people are protected.

We are also addressing alcohol-related violence. Alcohol does not exclude violence. A responsible person remains a responsible person, but if they drink excessively or are under the influence, that is why we're experiencing some of these cases that we see.

Prevention is also receiving attention. We are also speaking to young people about respect, dignity, and concern involving men, boys, schools, families, and communities in challenging abusive behaviour before it escalates. Again, as Gauteng, we've created accountability mechanisms to ensure that these commitments are

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followed through and the provincial committee will be meeting every Wednesday to track implementation, identify delays and escalate matters requiring intervention.

The committee will also track what has been completed, what remains outstanding, who is responsible and the deadline for action. The province will also use the 16 Days of Activism period to report on progress back to the communities. Hon House Chair, this is where the role of the NCOP becomes important. Our responsibility is to ask whether these commitments are reaching provinces, municipalities and communities, whether timelines that have been set are met and whether the identified gaps are also being addressed.

As I conclude, hon House Chair, let’s appreciate this opportunity to be able to share with the whole country the plans that we have in place, as Gauteng. We hope that these plans will protect women and encourage women to continue reporting abuse. Please break the silence, let’s not keep silent.

Afrikaans:

Dankie. [Thank you.]

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IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo. [I thank you, hon House Chair.]

Cllr S MABALE-HUMA (Salga): Hon House Chair, hon Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, hon Deputy Minister of Police, hon Chief, hon MECs, and hon members, Salga welcomes this urgent debate on gender-based violence and femicide. This is not an episodic concern to be revisited only after one woman or child is killed. It is a national emergency that requires the state to act before danger becomes death.

We support the President's directive that every municipality must begin a women's safety audit without delay, complete it within 60 days, and ensure that urgent hazards are corrected or placed in a funded implementation plan with clear completion dates within the following 90 days. Local government accepts its responsibility for the safety of the public environment in which people live, travel, work, and access services. But these deadlines must be understood as obligations of the whole state, not at a test that municipalities are expected to pass alone.

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Women experience the state as one system. They do not separate the dark street from an absent police patrol, an unsafe transport route from a delayed protection order, or a municipal referral service from the shortage of shelters and social workers. Our response must therefore be equally integrated, practical, and urgent.

What local government must do now is move from commitment to visible action. Municipalities must conduct credible, participatory safety audits ward by ward with women, youth persons with disabilities, the older persons, community organisations, SA Police Service, SAPS, and provincial departments. These audits must identify broken streetlights, overgrown spaces, unsafe transport routes, insecure parks and public facilities, abandoned buildings and other local hazards.

Urgent municipal risks must be accepted and acted upon. Repairs, clearing, maintenance, access control, and safety measures must be prioritised at high-risk sites. Councils must also use their regulatory powers by enforcing applicable liquor, trading, land use, building control and public space bylaws, particularly where repeated noncompliance increases danger.

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However, this cannot be a once-off clean-up campaign. Audit findings must be built into service delivery and budget implementation plans, municipal safety plans, and maintenance programmes. Community safety forums must be activated. Referral pathways to policing, health care, shelter, psychosocial services, legal assistance, and social protection must be strengthened and progress must be reported transparently. Communities deserve to know what has been fixed, what remains outstanding, who is responsible, what has been budgeted for, and when each intervention will be completed.

The constitutional balances in terms of accountability must be matched by support. The constitutional balance is clear. Section 152 and section 153 require local government to provide sustainable services, promote a safe and healthy environment, involve communities, and structure administration, planning and budgeting around basic needs. Salga does not retreat from these duties.

However, municipalities form part of one system of co-operative government. Section 152 requires national and provincial governments through legislative and other measures to support and strengthen municipal capacity to manage their own affairs,

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exercise their powers, and perform their functions. We therefore caution against an approach that assigns the deadline downwards.

While the money, personnel, policing powers, data, and decision-making remain elsewhere. Accountability cannot be decentralised while capacity remains centralised. Municipalities must account but support must be measurable, timely and properly funded.

Concerning the responsibility of national government, the national government must provide a funded implementation framework, including a common audit template, minimum evidence standard, clear definition of urgent hazard, and a single reporting system so that municipalities are measured consistently. National Treasury and relevant departments must identify grant flexibility, target funding windows and emergency support for high-risk repairs, lighting, public service rehabilitation, and municipal safety co-ordination. New responsibilities must not become unfunded mandates.

The criminal justice system must also be fully mobilised. SAPS must share hotspot data, provide precinct-level operational support and respond rapidly to risks identified through the audits. Prosecutors, courts and forensic services must address

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case backlogs, breaches of protection orders, repeat offending, and evidence delays.

Municipal environment action cannot substitute for effective policing and prosecution. National co-ordinating structures, including the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, Natjoints, the National Council on GBVF, and the interministerial committee should maintain one implementation dashboard. Identify cross-sector blockages and publish consolidated progress. Technical expertise in engineering, planning, infrastructure, data, and procurement must be deployed to municipalities where capacity is limited. Survivor support services, including Thuthuzela Care Centres, shelters, the GBV Command Centres, transport, psychosocial care, legal assistance and accessible rural services must be adequately resourced.

Responsibility of the provincial government is the vital bridge between national policy and local implementation. Each province should establish a multidisciplinary support team linking co-operative governance, community safety, social development, health, human settlements, roads and transport, and the provincial treasury. These teams must resolve risks involving provincial roads, transport facilities, schools, hospitals,

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informal settlements, and land or buildings outside municipal control.

Provinces must share crime and service data, assist with mapping and verification, deploy technical and community safety personnel where municipal capacity is weak, and align provincial budgets and programmes with municipal audit findings. Where rapid procurement is needed, it must be facilitated lawfully and urgently. Oversight must distinguish unwillingness from incapacity: support should be documented, constraints escalated promptly, and constitutional intervention used only where justified. District and intergovernmental structures must ensure that the small and rural municipalities are not left behind.

What must happen within the president's timeline? Demand co-ordinated action across all three spheres. The first phase begins immediately. Every municipality should appoint political and administrative leads, convene community and intergovernmental partners and begin mapping local risks. At the same time, national and provincial governments must provide the common methodology, release relevant SAPS and provincial data, and identify funding, technical support and escalation channels.

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Within 60 days, municipality must complete and publish credible women's safety audits that prioritise risks, identify the department's responsibility, and provide initial cost estimates. During the same period, national and provincial government must validate the risks that cross municipal boundaries or fall within other sectors, confirm which spheres ... [Interjections.]

Yes, in conclusion, hon Chairperson, municipalities do not seek exemption from responsibility. We seek the conditions required to discharge it. Salga will mobilise councils, municipal administrations and communities to complete the audits, address urgent hazards, and report honestly on progress. But we must be equally honest about the limits of fragmented action.

A broken streetlight may be municipal; the violent offender is not. An unsafe park may be municipal; the forensic backlog is not. A local referral pathway may be co-ordinated by municipality; the availability of police, courts, shelters, health care and social workers depends on other parts of the state. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Ms F A MASIKO (KwaZulu-Natal): Hon Chairperson, I wish to rise on the protocol that has been observed.

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I rise on behalf of the people of KwaZulu-Natal, carrying both grief and urgency. We debate today because women are dying. The recent killing of women in Ekurhuleni has once again confronted our nation with a terrible truth: For far too many South African women, freedom in law has still not translated into freedom from fear. We extend our deepest condolences to the families who have lost daughters, mothers, sisters, and friends. However, our condolences cannot become a ritual. We cannot mourn today, issue statements tomorrow, and then wait for the next woman to be murdered before the nation is outraged again.

Something fundamental must change, hon members. Gender-based violence and femicide represents unfinished business in our democratic transformation. Our Constitution promises women equality, dignity, freedom, and security, yet too many women still calculate their lives around danger: which taxi to take, which street to avoid, whether it is safe to walk home, whether reporting abuse will actually protect them. That contradiction must trouble the conscience of this nation, and, as government, we must have the courage to say what we have done has still not been enough.

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Yes, South Africa has strengthened legislation. We have Thuthuzela Care Centres, specialised policing interventions, victim-friendly services, and instrumental architecture dedicated to confronting gender-based violence. These interventions matter, but a progressive law cannot protect a woman if it is poorly implemented. A protection order cannot protect her if warning signs are ignored. A police station cannot protect her if she is turned away, and justice delayed can become another form of injustice.

That is why the President’s latest intervention must translate into measurable results. The President has directed a national case recovery operation into unresolved murders, attempted murders, rapes, and serious sexual offences involving women and children. Within 60 days, unresolved cases and delays must be identified. Within 90 days, recovery plans must be established for priority and stalled cases. He has also directed a funded plan to reduce forensic backlogs.

KwaZulu-Natal welcomes these measures, but we must now demand implementation as well as accountability. This crisis has a very real face in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In the uMzinyathi district alone, 93 rape cases and 15 other sexual offences cases

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were reported during the previous quarter — 93 rapes, hon members. We must resist the temptation to hear that simply as statistics. These are 93 human beings who reported their bodies and dignity having been violated. Just recently in our province, an accused appeared in the Durban Magistrate's Court facing 15 counts of rape, with the alleged offences stretching over a decade, from 2014 to 2024. That raises a difficult question for all of us. How does alleged serial offending continue for years before the system finally catches up? That is why KwaZulu-Natal says today that we must move from case management to prevention, from fragmented interventions to co-ordination, and from periodic outrage to permanent accountability.

However, there is another conversation that South Africa must have. We must talk to our men. For generations, women have carried the burden of fighting violence perpetrated overwhelmingly against them. Women organise the marches, women attend the dialogues, women establish shelters, and it is women that warn other women about dangerous men. Women change their clothing, their routes, as well as their routines. Women are taught how not to become victims.

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Perhaps it is time we spend much more energy teaching men not to become perpetrators. A boy must learn from an early age that rejection is not humiliation, that consent cannot be assumed. Jealousy is not love, and control is surely not affection. Obviously, violence can never be masculinity. Men must police the conduct of other men. When your friend abuses his girlfriend, speak. When your brother beats his wife, intervene. When your colleague sexually harasses a woman, do not laugh. When a man threatens to kill his partner, believe the threat and report it. Silence is not neutrality when somebody’s life is in danger. We must build a new masculinity in South Africa, one where strength means responsibility rather than domination, respect rather than intimidation, and protection of human dignity rather than power over women.

We must also support the President’s directive that every municipality undertakes women’s safety audits. Within 60 days, municipalities must identify hazards, including broken streetlights, abandoned buildings, unsafe transport routes, overgrown public spaces, and poorly secured parks. Urgent hazards must then either be addressed or incorporated into funded implementation plans. Gender-based violence is not only a policing matter. A broken streetlight can become a women’s

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safety issue. An abandoned building can become a women's safety issue. Unsafe public transport can also become a women's safety issue. A forensic backlog can become a women's safety issue. A police officer who does not take a woman's complaint seriously can also become a women's safety issue. That means municipalities, provinces, the SA Police Service, prosecutors, traditional leaders, and communities must all be held accountable for the part of the system they control.

In KwaZulu-Natal, amakhosi and izinduna must be central to this struggle. Our churches and faith-based communities must also be central. Our schools, our taxi industry, sporting formations, workplaces, as well as institutions of higher learning must be central. Most importantly, our homes must be central because government can pass laws, build police stations, and prosecute offenders, but government surely cannot put a police officer inside every household. It cannot legislate every conversation between a father and his son. It cannot legislate respect into the heart of a man. That work belongs to all of us.

As KwaZulu-Natal, we say enough mourning without accountability, enough outrage without consequences, and enough promises without implementation. The lives of women must matter not only after

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they have been killed; it must matter whilst they are still alive. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. [Time expired.]

Afrikaans:

Me T BREEDT: Agb Voorsitter, geslagsgeweld is beslis ’n nasionale krisis, maar, soos met baie ander krisisse in Suid-Afrika, is daar ’n groot verskil tussen die aantal kere wat daaroor gepraat word en die werklike verandering wat slagoffers op die grond ervaar. Ek het besluit om by die begin te begin.

Op 2 November 2018 het Suid-Afrika die eerste presidensiële beraad teen geslagsgeweld en vrouemoord gehou. Die verklaring wat gevolg het, was vol goeie bedoelings. Dit het erken dat geslagsgeweld ’n nasionale krisis is en het onderneem om saam te werk om hierdie epidemie uit te wis. Van daar af het ek begin tel. In 2021 alleen het hierdie Parlement ten minste vier keer oor geslagsgeweld gedebatteer. Dit was meer as die twaalfde keer dat hierdie saak gedurende die sesde parlementêre termyn formeel bespreek is — ’n Parlement wat sy aanvang geneem het net na daardie eerste presidensiële beraad. Ek het intussen telling verloor oor hoeveel keer ons al hieroor gepraat het, hoeveel verklarings gemaak is, en hoeveel beloftes gemaak is.

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Dit het my geskok, en ek het dus maar teruggegaan na die statistiek van vandag. Ek het na die jongste statistiek gaan kyk, want ek wou weet of ons verbeter het. Het al hierdie beraadslaging, verklarings, veldtogte, en nuwe wetgewing ’n verskil gemaak? Ek het gehoop om goeie nuus te vind, maar wat ek gevind het, was selfs meer ontstellend.

English:

Approximately one in three women in South Africa will experience physical violence in their lifetime. Millions of women have experienced sexual violence, and almost 50% will live with the trauma of abuse, often at the hands of people who were supposed to protect them.

Afrikaans:

Hierdie is nie bloot statistiek nie. Agter elke syfer is daar ’n mens: ’n vrou, ’n kind, ’n familie wat vir altyd verander word.

English:

During the 2019 campaign for 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children, a year after that initial summit, South Africans did not only see statistics. We saw names, we saw faces, we saw lives destroyed. I remember the posters and

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flowers in front of Parliament. Those were not headings. Those were human beings. South Africa does not lack laws. We do not lack policies, and we do not lack strategies.

What we do lack is implementation and accountability. Victims need police officers who take their complaints seriously, not headlines like "Top South African police officer charged with raping woman, 18, and grooming 16-year-old girl." They need protection orders that are enforced. They need investigations that are professional and justice that is delivered because a system that fails to hold perpetrators accountable becomes a system that fails victims.

Afrikaans:

Ek wou so graag afgesluit het deur te sê daar is verbetering, maar toe ek na die afgelope jaar se opskrifte kyk, sien ek weer dieselfde pyn — vroue wat vermoor word, kinders wat mishandel word, gesinne wat verwoes is, en slagoffers wat steeds wag vir geregtigheid. Daarom moet ons met onsself eerlik wees. Hoe lank gaan ons nog hieroor praat voordat daar werklik opgetree word? Slagoffers kan nie net leef van debatte, verklarings, en beloftes nie. Hulle het beskerming, geregtigheid, en optrede nodig.

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Waarvoor wag ons? Dit is nou tyd. Ek dank u.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon Minister, Deputy Minister, members and fellow South Africans, good day. In February 2013, South Africa made international headlines. We even made it to the cover of *Time Magazine*, not because we invented something useful or our economic growth broke the model. Neither happened. We made headlines because one of our top athletes killed his girlfriend on Valentine's Day.

Reeva Steenkamp was one of the estimated 2 500 women who were killed just in that year. The media outcry was massive, and the deaths of Anene Booysen and Sandiswa Mhalwuli], now forgotten, made local headlines around the same time. People organised marches, signed petitions, and asked every Minister to step up, and a well-founded outrage was tangible across society. Does this sound familiar?

Sadly, however, by April 2013, the headlines and life had moved on. Some placatory action steps were taken. Yes, I say placatory for a reason, because 13 years later, our gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF, rate has increased in South Africa. The government itself acknowledged in 2025 that the country has one

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of the highest femicide rates in the world, and the question is: Where do gender-based violence and femicide start? According to the United Nations, it starts with rape culture. When rape culture is woven into the fabric of society, gender-based violence and femicide are high. Rape culture is not merely the act of rape. It starts when women and girls are othered, when they are treated as an extension, as lesser, as something different, or even as a status symbol. Rape culture scrutinises her character to find blame for her abuse. This creates an environment where rape becomes easy and the murder of women understandable, allowing the perpetrator to get away; this cannot be, it just cannot be.

When gender-based violence occurs, the state must work, but it is not. Thuthuzela Care Centres were designed to give survivors a co-ordinated response to sexual violence, but Parliament has heard repeatedly about inadequate staffing, infrastructure and resources. In 2024, staffing and infrastructure problems in most Thuthuzela Care Centres were recorded. By 2025, Parliament was told that there are only 68 Thuthuzela Care Centres nationally in a time of crisis. More accountability is needed here. Corruption and maladministration have a cost. This accountability must extend to the SA Police Service, SAPS. A

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survivor who walks into a police station is not asking for a favour; she is exercising a constitutional right. Police officers who dismiss domestic violence, discourage reporting, fail to investigate, lose dockets, or ignore protection orders are undermining the criminal justice system and destroying lives.

Changing the fate of girls and women in South Africa will take more than talking. It will take a whole-of-society approach where we re-examine how we engage with the women within our society. Going forward, we cannot allow this outrage to die out as the headlines die out. We must continue this fight. History cannot keep repeating itself. I thank you.

Ms F F RADZILANI (Limpopo): Hon Chair, allow me to stand on the protocol already established. I rise with a heavy heart to extend my deepest condolences to the families and friends of all those who have lost their lives to gender-based violence and femicide. No words can undo your loss. We stand with you, we grieve with you, and we recognise the pain that this scourge has brought into your lives.

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Hon Chair, South Africa has endured terrible few weeks. The discovery of the bodies of women in Ekurhuleni shocked the nation and prompted President Cyril Ramaphosa to address the nation and announce a four-point plan to tackle gender-based violence and femicide. We welcome this plan and believe that its full and urgent implementation will help turn the tide. The President's address underscored the urgency of confronting the scourge and bringing perpetrators before the law to face its full force.

While recent killings have drawn particular attention to Gauteng, Limpopo has also been devastated by the murder of 22-year-old Vinolia Kgadima, a medical student found dead outside the University of Limpopo, where she was studying medicine. Her death reminds us that this is not a crisis confined to one province or one community. It is a national emergency demanding immediate and sustained action.

In the same vein, the discovery of the decomposed body of a 28-year-old Vutomi Mathebula among those killed in Kempton Park underscored the far-reaching nature of this tragedy. These killings are not confined to Gauteng; their impact is being felt across provincial borders. By now, the message is unmistakable:

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We are confronting a national crisis, one that demands a united response and the full commitment of the country's resources.

The murder of these defenceless women must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Each killing leaves a trail of destruction; mothers are taken away from their dependent children, parents are left devastated, families and communities are forced to live with grief that no words can adequately describe. These women are not statistics; they were loved, they had hopes and futures, and their lives mattered.

In Limpopo, we have intensified awareness programmes that call on men to lead in promoting women's safety and to challenge and condemn those who perpetrate violence across our communities. We have held dialogues bringing women and men together to confront this scourge and to develop collective measures to protect women and children. This conversation must lead to action in our homes, our streets, our institutions and our places of work.

The Department of Social Development in Limpopo is encouraged by the urgency shown by the police in this province. Through the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit, officers have demonstrated a strong commitment to investigating

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gender-based violence-related offences. We have also seen positive prosecutions arising from their work.

We acknowledge these efforts while recognising that every case must be pursued with care, urgency, and respect for survivors and families. A lot of work in this regard still needs to be done. We remain with many unresolved cases which require thorough work for the victims to get justice and for society to retain confidence in both the police and the prosecution system.

Gender-based violence remains widespread and deeply concerning. Women continue to live under threat, and their safety remains in question. Awareness alone is not enough.

We need prevention, effective protection, accountability for perpetrators, and support for survivors and the families left behind. The Limpopo Department of Social Development, of course, under the guidance and support of our hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, will continue to provide shelters, counselling and other essential support to victims who need these services.

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During the current October Social Development Month, the department will strengthen its awareness efforts and mobilise communities to make women's safety a priority.

We call upon every sector of society to take responsibility. Let us teach respect, challenge harmful attitudes, support those who speak out and refuse to protect or excuse perpetrators. We owe it to Vinolia, to the women whose bodies have been found and to every woman living in fear to act with greater urgency.

Let us ensure that the President's plan is implemented, that our communities stand together and that no woman is left to face this violence alone. Thank you so much, hon Chair, for the opportunity afforded to me.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Standing House Chair hon Modise, hon Ministers, Deputy Ministers, MECs that are present and all hon members, greetings. I rise on behalf of the families of women who have been murdered in many parts of our country. I rise to honour their lives and the memories of those defenceless women who were brutally murdered in cold blood. As the IFP, we extend our condolences to the families who continue to be affected by the brutality of gender-based violence. Allow me at

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this point to thank hon Ryder for placing this item before us to be debated today.

Our Constitution does not leave the safety of women to chance. In the Bill of Rights, section 12 guarantees every person's freedom from all forms of violence, be it in public or private. Section 9 guarantees equality and section 152 require every municipality to promote a safe and healthy environment. These obligations are on every sphere of government, the private sector as well as civil society.

Since legislation is not cast in stone, it can be amended to address prevailing and emerging challenges. Seven years since the Joint Sitting of Parliament on 18 September 2019, we have made considerable improvements to existing legislation as well as frameworks. But as we can see, these amendments have not proven to be effective in stopping the brutality served upon the women of our country. As government, we must admit that we are failing the women of our country and something needs to be corrected.

After the President declared gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF, a pandemic in 2019, we subsequently adopted the National

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Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence, which was released in April 2020. We also have the National Council on GBVF that took office on 1 August this year. All these strategic legislative instruments and strategies attest to the fact that we are indeed in a crisis.

Furthermore, in November 2025, GBVF was classified as a national disaster under the Disaster Management Act by the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs – the president of the IFP hon Velenkosini Hlabisa – who reminded the nation that this is not a woman's issue, it is a national crisis. However, the families who buried their loved ones do not ask how many pieces of legislation that we have passed. They ask whether a woman is safe today than she was in 2019. [Interjections.] Chairperson, I am being disturbed.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Mazibuku, please mute. I've just called them to order. Deputy Chair, continue.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you. The IFP's local government manifesto says what many South Africans feel, and that is we are fed up with empty promises.

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Legislative frameworks that cannot demonstrate effective planning, budgetingzz and implementation simply remain an unattainable ideal. As women who have been assaulted, they need emergency services that are responsive. A woman walking home at night needs streetlights that work and a taxi rank that is safe. That is where safety is won or lost, and much of it is won or lost in the local sphere, in our wards, our clinics and our streets.

The IFP therefore identifies GBVF as a national priority that needs the attention of government and all spheres of government. This is not a crisis that affects one government department. It calls for all three spheres of government as well as the private sector to work together.

For our part, the IFP commits to functional women's directorates, functional GBVF desks, available social workers, safe shelters and working streetlights in the municipalities we serve and to publish the results that we achieve. Let us measure success not by declaration or legislation but by whether women are safe. I thank you, hon House Chair. [Time expired.]

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Ms B R S DANTJIE (North West): Hon Chair, I acknowledge and stand on the protocol already established. The resilient women and children of our country, fellow South Africans, greetings. We convene here today in this House under the shadow of a national pandemic — a pandemic that does not rely on a virus, but is instead orchestrated by patriarchal attitudes, toxic masculinity and systemic silence.

This debate happens at a time when a cloud of darkness is hanging over our heads as men are on a rampage killing women and girls like never before. While the country remains in deep pain and grief over the series of dead bodies of young women found in Ekurhuleni, Rustenburg, Ramotshere Moiloa, Moretele and Moses Kotane, perpetrators of this vile and heinous crime continue to rob us of many more lives across all nine provinces.

Setswana:
Re tlhasetswe ke sera. Borre bangwe ba iphetotse dilalome. Ba iphetotse diphiri. [We are attacked by the enemy. Some men have turned themselves into monsters. They have turned themselves into wolves.]

English:

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Just in September 2026 alone in the North West province, we grief and mourn the untimely deaths of Rethabile Mosime from Tlhabane, Refilwe Matjiela who was five months pregnant, also from Tlhabane, Tsakane Rafedile from Moretele, Amogelang Motshwaedi – a 15-year-old young girl from Dinokana who was killed by a 17-year-old boy, Palema Rankoko - an 18-year-old girl from Luka who was found murdered on 23 September 2026, Atholang Irene Vetche – a mother of three murdered by her husband in front of her children in Freedom Park in Rustenburg and Mmaphefo Khoza who was killed in Moretele on 1 October.

The Premier of the North West, Mr Lazarus Mokgosi, has appointed a team of MECs led by the Department of Social Development to ensure implementation of the Nine-Point Plan as pronounced by the President during our family meeting.

The death of victims of gender-based violence and femicide continue to rise even after the President has declared GBVF a national disaster and calling the nation to stop this pandemic and outlining the national plan to curb this brutality. The pain is too much to bear, and we cannot continue to live in fear like this. Enough is enough! The murder of one woman is one too many. We can no longer live like it is business as usual. This vile

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crime of gender-based violence and femicide must stop, and it must stop now.

Gender-based violence and femicide has left deep scars on the conscience of our nation. Every statistic read into the parliamentary record represents a broken home, stolen potential and a family shattered by violent death of a girl-child, a wife, a sister and a mother. The President said a mouthful when he said:

> The freedom we enjoy in this country cannot belong only to a certain sex. South Africa is a nonsexist country. Together, we have built a new society on the values of a united, nonracial and nonsexist South Africa. The Bill of Rights enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

It therefore means that women of this country deserves full protection. We need safety in our homes, in our streets, places of entertainment and even at work. As women, we expect nothing from the courts but justice. We need support from our communities, rather than being driven by fear. Women need to

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enjoy their freedom like any other citizens of this beloved country called South Africa.

As the Department of Social Development, we stand before this House not merely to express outrage, but to outline our moral and statutory obligation to act, protect and heal. The department sits at the frontline of this crisis. When the police complete their dockets and the courts pass judgment, it is our social workers, shelter operators and care workers who step in to rebuild shattered lives. Our response is anchored on three core pillars, namely, prevention, protection and psychosocial support.

Our frontline troopers, our social workers who are mostly women, bear the brunt of the heat as they try endlessly to quell the flames of gender-based violence and femicide. They provide all the necessary support and ensure that victims of gender-based violence recover and live a normal life. Most of the time this takes a toll on them as some might be experiencing similar challenges at home. Through our social support services, they continue to offer trauma containment, counselling and long-term recovery support to victims and their dependent children.

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Working with our social partners, we are linking survivors staying in our shelters to skills development, entrepreneurship programmes and job opportunities. We do this to break the cycle of abuse because financial independence is also a critical shield against repeated abuse. Many survivors of gender-based violence and femicide remain in abusive relationships simply because they lack the means to support themselves and their children. This can only change if they are economically empowered and freed from these chains of dependency that serve as a breeding ground for abuse.

It must be noted, however, that funding for such services and recruitment of additional social workers remain huge challenges. Even worse is the fact that the department cannot take the few social workers to debriefing sessions to help them cope because ...

Setswana:

... bo nnete le boammaruri ke gore ... [...the truth and the reality is that...]

English:

... under the circumstances, our social workers ...

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Setswana:

... le bone ba imetswe. [...are also overwhelmed.]

English:

They also need counselling. This calls for the issue of funding for the Department of Social Development to be given an urgent special attention. [Time expired.]

Ms K D MANCE (Free State): House Chairperson, let me say that all protocol has been observed. Our country is still reeling from the senseless killings of women. The past weeks marked a rather dark period when, day after day, we received horrific news about the discovery of lifeless bodies of defenceless women whose lives were snuffed out by heartless men. Chalk lines and force serve as painful reminders of lives which met a premature and violent end.

Who could be so cruel to plunge a sharp blade into the torso of a terrified woman without feeling any remorse? What kind of person is unmoved by the desperate cries of woman paralysed by fear. Unfortunately, that it what has been happening. Ekurhuleni has been gripped by fear as dozens of women were murdered. This even prompted President Cyril Ramaphosa to speak out against these callous killings of women. Our province, the Free State, was not

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spared. One of the women who was found murdered was Itumeleng Kekana from Qwaqwa. Her body was found on 3 August.

As more bodies were discovered, there was a worrying sense of déjà vu. We were once again confronted with the ugly reality of the slaughter of women of South Africa. We felt the stinging pain we went through in 2017 when Karabo Mokoena was missing, and her body was later found burned in an open field in Johannesburg. We relived the trauma of losing Uyinene Mrwetyana who was raped and murdered in 2019. We relived the nightmare of losing Tsholofelo Pule who was eight months pregnant and was found stabbed and hanging from a tree as a result of these killings. These killings reminded us of Nosicelo Mtebeni who was killed and her body stuffed in a suitcase.

Gender-based violence, GBV, and femicide is not somebody else's problem; it is our collective responsibility. South Africa has taken an important step to strengthen its response to gender-based violence and femicide which was classified as a national disaster in November 2025. The country continues to implement the National Strategic Plan on GBV which is built around accountability and leadership, prevention and social cohesion, justice, safety, and protection, response, care, support, and healing, economic

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empowerment, research and information management. Hon Chairperson, but we must be honest with ourselves: no law, policy or government programme can by itself end GBV.

Government has a profound responsibility to ensure that victims and survivors receive protection and support, perpetrators face justice, and that institutions perform their duties. It must also ensure that prevention programmes reach our communities. However, government cannot enter every home; government cannot supervise every relationship; government cannot be present in every conversation between a father and son; a mother and daughter; a friend and a friend or a congregation and its members. That is why we must continue to fight against this scourge. Because the fight against GBV must also be found in our homes, churches, schools, workplaces, communities and places of worship.

We must create a society where a woman can say, I am not safe, and she is believed; where a child can disclose abuse and be protected; where men can seek help to address anger and harmful behaviour or attitude, without violence being normalised, and where the message from victims are equivalent. Violence is not love; control is not love; humiliation is not love; abuse is not discipline; and silence is not peace. Today I want to speak particularly to the men of our

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country. I believe that men must be at the forefront of changing the narrative around masculinity. We must raise boys who understand that being a man does not mean exercising control over woman; it does not mean responding to disagreement with anger; it does not mean proving one's strength through violence and it certainly does not mean believing that a woman belongs to a man simply because she is his partner or wife.

True strength is being able to talk or to walk away from conflict rather than escalate it. True strength is protecting rather than harming, and accepting rejection without retaliation. True strength is respecting the dignity and choices of human beings and true leadership begins with how we behave when no one is watching. The message we sent to our sons today will determine the society they create tomorrow. Let us therefore teach our boys that women are not possessions; let us teach them that consent matters; let us teach them that disagreement does not justify violence; let us teach them that asking for help is not a weakness. Let us teach them that masculinity must be associated with responsibility, respect, compassion and accountability.

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We must acknowledge that one of the difficult realities surrounding abuse and relationships is economic independency. A woman who has no income; no access to economic opportunities; and no financial independency may find it very difficult to leave an abusive relationship. This does not mean economic empowerment alone will end GBV, but it does mean that empowering woman economically can strengthen the ability to make choices about their lives and future. For this reason, women economic empowerment forms part of the national strategy and response to GBV. As government, we must continue to create opportunities for women through skills development, entrepreneurship, access to markets, employment and support for woman owned enterprises, but again this must become a societal project.

That is why this government support women through skills programmes, mentorship, enterprises development initiatives, and networks that help woman becomes economically active. Because a woman should never feel that she must endure abuse simply because she has no way to go. We must also pay particular attention to our children. Children learn what society teaches them; they learn what they see in their homes; they learn what we tolerate, and they learn from the way adults treat them.

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If a child grows up watching violence being normalised, they may begin to believe that violence is an acceptable part of a relationship. Let us live with a renewed commitment to create homes where children feel safe, relationships where people are respected, churches where survivors are heard, communities where perpetrators are held accountable, and a society where women, children and vulnerable persons live with dignity without fear. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson and hon members, I greet you in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ our Lord and survivors. Genderbased violence is not a private matter, a family matter, or a women's issue. It is an international crisis; a human rights crisis; and a direct challenge for our constitutional democracy. When a woman is beaten in her home; a girl is raped; a person with a disability is abused; a survivor is intimidated; or a woman is murdered simply because she is a woman, the Constitution itself is being violated. Section 10 of our Constitution protects woman dignity.

Section 12 protects every person's right, freedom, and security. Section 9 guarantees equality. These rights means very little if millions of South Africans cannot feel safe in their home, communities, workplaces, schools and public spaces. The scale of

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this crisis is undeniable. South Africans national GBV prevalence study estimated that approximately 7,3 million women aged 18 and older have experienced physical violence during their lifetime, while more than 2,15 million have experienced sexual violence. The same research shows the particular vulnerability of women with disabilities and indicates that the crisis continues.

In the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year alone, the SA Police Service, SAPS, recorded more than five thousand GBV related cases, with more than thirty thousand results in arrests or referrals to the National Prosecuting Authority. These are not just numbers on a spreadsheet. Behind every statistic is a mother, daughter, sister, child, colleague, or neighbour - a human being whose right, dignity and safety has been violated. Recently, the nation was confronted with a horrific discovery of the bodies of nine women in Ekurhuleni. We must remember that this was not simply statistics but human beings whose family are now living with unimaginable pain. Government has responded through a specialised multidisciplinary investigation, but this strategy must also force us to ask the other question: How do we prevent the next victim from ever becoming a statistic?

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South Africa has not stood still. We have strengthened our legislation. The National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide has now been established as a statutory institution to provide strategic leadership and co-ordinate the national response. The biggest reason why men hurt women is because they don't respect women enough. We don't appreciate the women who rise above us in their respective fields of operation. Even though our history is full of great women who have done a lot in restoring dignity and freedom, it does seem to that simply suggest that men feel threatened by strong women and thus the urge to suppress them, forgetting that we were brought into this world by a woman, we were raised by that woman, and that we would feel hurt when that woman is pained.

Therefore, I wish to utilise the remainder of my time to appreciate Chairpersons and leaders in this august House. I wish to appreciate our programming Whip, and all provincial Whips in this House who are women. I also wish to appreciate our select committees' chairpersons who are women. To all of you, I have only one word to say: Salute! Thank you, Chairperson.

Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (Western Cape): Hon House Chairperson, hon members, I welcome my party, the DA, calling for this debate

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of national importance. However, debating an issue of this magnitude virtually behind screens rather than in person is unacceptable, and I believe the NCOP could have done far better today.

Today, I cannot stand before this House to offer warm policy pledges or read out hollow administrative metrics, while the women of our country continue to live in a constant state of fear. I would rather stand here to speak for the brave, unsung workforce I have the distinct privilege of leading - our social workers. Every single day, these dedicated public servants leave their homes to enter our communities, protecting vulnerable children, supporting survivors of abuse, and stabilising families in acute crises. Many of them are women, mothers, daughters, and my fellow sisters.

Afrikaans:
Sedert 2023 het personeel van die Wes-Kaapse Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling reeds 86 motorkapingvoorvalle beleef, terwyl hulle in amptelike voertuie gereis het, waarvan 27 voorvalle vanjaar elkeen aangeteken is. In Augustus is daar tydens ’n gewelddadige kapingspoging op ’n vroulike

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kinderbeskermingsbeampte geskiet, terwyl sy ’n moniteringsbesoek in Khayelitsha gedoen het.

In ’n ander afgryslike voorval is ’n maatskaplike werker gekaap, terwyl sy oppad was om ’n kwesbare gesin te besoek. En daar is iets diep verwerplik aan ’n werklikheid waar die einste individue wat as ’n lewenslyn vir die kwesbares dien, die teikens van geweld word. En vandag moet ons personeel op polisiebegeleiding staatmaak net om hoë risiko buurte te betree.

English:
We must be willing to have an uncomfortable political conversation about how we reach this point, and the alarming lawlessness on our streets and the rampant gender-based violence that thrives within it is the direct consequence of a national policing system that has neglected safety for decades. When police stations in high-crime corridors like Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Delft, and Mitchells Plain are chronically understaffed, criminality will advance. Deep-seated social ills, from gang warfare and rampant substance abuse to pervasive domestic terror, take root. A state cannot claim to protect its citizens when the social workers dispatched to heal communities cannot safely reach them.

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Afrikaans:

Verlede week het ek die voorreg gehad om direk van kinders te hoor van hoeveel onskatbare waarde maatskaplike werkers vir hul welstand is. Maar die feit dat die stelsel nie kan bykom of bybly nie in terme van die vloedgolf van geweld wat ons gemeenskappe tref, hou my werklik saans wakker. En ons moet ons stelsels beter bestuur, ons hulpbronne waarborg en amptenare op elke vlak van regering streng verantwoordelik hou.

English:

Where national policing structures have failed, the Western Cape government under the leadership of premier Winde has consistently stepped into the breach to restore dignity and social order. We do not govern through hollow announcements. We govern through measurable, accountable outcomes. In the Western Cape, the Department of Social Development, DSD, currently funds 27 specialised shelters for GBVF survivors and provides safe havens, legal navigation, and comprehensive trauma care.

Recognising that we cannot build enough shelters to outpace systemic violence, our department is taking decisive action. While national structures stall and leave critical relief funds unspent, we have increased transfer funding to NPOs and civil

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society partners to over R1,1 billion, ensuring frontline organisations keep their doors open to serve our most vulnerable citizens.

We have also allocated an additional R15 million specifically to safeguard our social services staff and facilities in high-risk zones, implementing private security escorts and upgraded protection protocols. We are actively making 22 of our GBV shelters fully disability accessible, expanding bed capacity, and deploying mobile service units alongside the Social Work Integrated Management System to reach survivors in marginalised and rural communities.

Through direct partnership with civil society organisations stationed at Thuthuzela Care Centres, local courts, and SAPS victim-friendly rooms, we ensure that survivors receive immediate psychosocial interventions in their hour of greatest need. While the national department faces qualified audit opinions, administrative bottlenecks, and unspent allocations, the Western Cape administration continues to demonstrate that clean, efficient government is a non-negotiable prerequisite for social justice. Yet, shelters and social interventions alone cannot compensate for a broken economic and justice ecosystem.

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GBVF thrives where poverty traps women in abusive households.

Afrikaans:

Om geslagsgebaseerde geweld stop te sit, vereis ’n fundamentele verskuiwing van reaktiewe krisisbestuur na deurslaggewende voorkoming. En hierdie stryd eis dat ons ophou om die las van veiligheid op vroue te plaas en begin konfronteer wat ons vir ons jong mans oor mag, toestemming en gesonde manlikheid leer.

Stilte in die gesig van mishandeling is medepligtigheid. Mans moet aktief die toksiese gedrag uitdaag wat geweld in ons huise en sosiale kringe normaliseer. Dis waarom die Wes-Kaap in doelgerigte manlikheids- en jeugintervensie belê. Ons wil die siklus van trauma wat van generasie tot generasie oorgedra word breek, voordat dit in verdere geweld verander.

English:

Our children are watching. They carry the silent trauma of domestic violence into their classrooms, their relationships, and their futures. As a mother, as a woman, and a MEC, I refuse to accept that violence must be our children’s permanent inheritance. We owe them more than usual parliamentary ritual, another campaign, a summit, or another hashtag.

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The true measure of our governance is simple. When a woman somewhere in South Africa cries out for help, does anyone answer? Is there a safe shelter waiting, a supported social worker, and a police service capable of delivering justice? We must move from awareness to prevention, giving our provinces and municipalities the policing powers needed to protect our communities, support our social workers, and build a nation where our daughters live without fear and our sons honour the constitutional rights of every woman. I thank you.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Hon Chairperson, may I be permitted to switch off my video, please!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A RADEBE): Yes, just like me.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga kakhulu. [Thank you very much.]

English:

Chairperson, hon delegates, and most importantly the women and families watching us today. I am not going to stand at this podium today and read through a polished list of political pleasantries. I am not here to trade statistics, and I am

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certainly not here to celebrate another expensive task team summit or national strategy document.

I am here because I am angry. I am here because the women of this country are being systematically abandoned by the state. We come to this House to debate as if we are dealing with a normal policy challenge but let us be honest with each other. This is a permanent national emergency.

A war is being waged against the bodies of women and children in our communities every single day. The most terrifying part of this crisis is how easy it is for the killers. Men are murdering women in their homes, in their beds and on the streets because they have figured out something. They know that in South Africa you can kill a woman and face absolutely no consequences. We need to have an uncomfortable, brutally honest conversation in this room. Why are these criminals completely unafraid of our laws? Why do they act in such total disregard for human life?

It is because we see our criminal justice system for what it really is: toothless, bureaucratic and weak. Why are these criminals completely unafraid of our laws? Why do they act with such total disregard for human life? It is because we see our

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criminal justice system for what it is: toothless, bureaucratic and weak.

The very same institutions meant to protect the vulnerable have fallen apart under the mountain of administrative, laziness, incompetence and a total lack of political will. The Department of Justice and Ministry of Police have broken their core promise to the people, they are failing at their most basic job, keeping citizens alive.

When a woman is murdered, her family does not get swift uncompromising justice. Instead, they get trapped in a broken frustrating administrative loop.

It starts in a local police station too many women tried to report death threats only to be told by dismissive officers to go home and work things out with your partner.

IsiZulu:

Goduka niyokhuluma. [Go home and talk it through.]

English:

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Then when a woman ends up dead, the family discovers the case dockets has mysteriously gone missing and under resource investigator simply does not have time to track the leads.

When it comes to the forensic bottleneck. Our state labs are downing in catastrophic backlogs, Deoxyribonucleic acid, DNA, result take months, sometimes, years to process while a mother waits for a simple lab report to prove who killed her daughter.

The prime suspect is granted easy bail, he walks down the exact same street, taunting the family, completely free to find his next victim.

Finally, they face a slow courts system, our court treats these horrific crimes like a daily newspaper, prosecutors mismanage cases and judges hand out soft sentences and cheap bail.

The system treats the killing of women as a routine, administrative burden, rather than a national crisis. As leaders representing the provinces, we see these exact failures play out every single weekend in our constituencies, from rural villages to townships. Our people have completely lost faith in the law. When the police can’t investigate, the labs can’t process

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evidence, the court won't keep killers behind bars and the state itself becomes an accomplice to crime.

We as uMkhonto weSizwe Party reject the idea that we can fix this by tinkering the same old broken frameworks. We cannot stop the crisis with a workshop, a ribbon, a pilot project. True justice requires an aggressive, top to bottom of a whole of our legal system.

We are demanding immediate, practical, structural changes. First, we must bring the course to the people, we must establish specialised fully funded family violence and sexual offences court in every single local municipality.

Justice cannot be unilaterally reserved only for people living in urban High Courts, secondly, we need to hold prosecutors and police personally accountable. We need real consequences for the people running the system. Any prosecutor or investigating officer who botched a docket because of laziness or negligence must face the consequences.

Thirdly, we must end bail and parole for killers. We must completely eliminate bail and parole for anyone charged with or

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convicted of aggravated gender-based violence and the murder of women. If you take a women's life, you lose the right to walk amongst us, period.

Fourthly, we must put resources where the crime is happening. We need to strip away the bloated multimillion rand budget used to drive around politicians in luxury very important person, VIP, convoy. Take the money and pump it directly into the local station level, family, violence and child protection and sexual offences units.

The blood of our daughters is soaking the soil of this country. You cannot sit in the chambers and speak in a polite legislative language while this horror unfolds in a real world.

The current systems harbour's the killers and punishes the victims. Umkhonto weSizwe will not be part of the political theatre, it is time to stop making the excuses, rebuild our justice system from the ground up and restore safety and dignity to our women of South Africa. The time for patience is entirely over, let us act, let us make sure we get our job done.

IsiZulu:

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Abangakwazi ukwenza umsebenzi baqhele endleleni.

English:

I thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Chairperson, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, Deputy Minister, premiers, MECs, SA Local Government Association, Salga, representative, traditional leaders, social partners and fellow South Africans, we rise this afternoon in the shadow of a rising spate of women who have been tragically murdered in Ekurhuleni and elsewhere in our country. The scale of violence and femicide against women and girls is staggering.

As we assemble to reflect on and account for our collective responsibility towards the lives and safety of every citizen, we pay particular attention to the women whose lives have been tragically taken from their families, from their communities and from all of us in a manner that should alarm the conscience of the nation. We extend our deepest condolences to the affected families, communities and our society at large. Our government has and will continue to condemn gender-based violence and

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femicide, GBVF, as one of the most heinous crimes in our society.

Everywhere it continues to erode the standing of our constitutional democracy. It remains a dark stain on the soul of our nation and represents one of the most serious threats to the safety, dignity and freedom of women in South Africa.

We also wish to thank the residents of Ekurhuleni, Soweto and other communities who have assisted the police with information. Their actions are the clearest reminder that the fight against GBVF requires the active participation of communities, law enforcement, government and every sector of our society.

We know too well that ... Ekurhuleni is not an isolated tragedy. It is part of a continuing pattern of violence that led this government to classify GBVF a national crisis and disaster, requiring all of us to marshal every resource at our disposal, first and foremost to save lives.

Ekurhuleni is the mirror through which we are forced to confront a broader national reality. It is the latest and most painful reminder of a crisis that continues to unfold in homes, streets,

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workplaces, educational institutions and communities across our country.

Before we speak about statistics, we must draw the National Council of Provinces and the country’s attention to the home as one of the first and most urgent sites of prevention. Our homes are where the GBVF crisis sometimes lives on. Our homes look ordinary from the outside. The lights are on. The gate is closed. The neighbours pass by. Nothing appears unusual. But inside that home, a woman is calculating whether tonight will be another night of insults, another night of fear or even assault, or another night she may not survive.

In a bedroom nearby, a little boy lies awake, pretending to be asleep. He has learned to recognise the sound of violence before he has learned to understand it. He covers his ears, but he certainly cannot silence the fear. Years later, he may forget many things from his childhood, but will never forget the sound of violence. And, the impact of that trauma may manifest itself in many forms, including violence.

The first-ever Human Sciences Research Council’s national prevalence study on gender-based violence and femicide found

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that approximately one in three women have experienced intimate partner physical or sexual violence.

Taken together, these findings tell us that GBVF remains a national crisis that violates the dignity, equality, freedom, and security of millions of South African women and girls.

Therefore, we must stop asking women why they stayed in abusive relationships, and start focusing our full attention on the perpetrators who choose violence and ask perpetrators why they are violent.

When we peel back the layers of violence, we find that patriarchy is a central driver of GBVF. Patriarchy is the journey from control to coercion, from coercion to violence, and from violence to a grave. It is perpetuated when women are silenced and excluded from economic opportunities. Patriarchy creates an environment in which violence becomes normalised, excused and in some instances even defended. Its most dangerous expression is not merely inequality, but the belief that control is an entitlement and that violence is a legitimate response when that control is challenged.

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Gender-based violence and femicide is not simply a matter of culture, tradition or individual behaviour. It is a complex system of power reproduced through oppressive history, abusive social norms, economic inequalities and institutional arrangements.

Research has also repeatedly shown that alcohol and substance or drug abuse are the key GBVF drivers that we cannot afford to ignore any longer. Study outcomes by Prof Harrison and the SA Medical Research Council show that harmful alcohol use substantially increases the risk of intimate partner violence, while women whose partners are frequently intoxicated face a six times higher risk of abuse.

Our fight against GBVF cannot and should not be confined to a single department, sector or sphere of government. It is a national crisis that demands a whole of government and a whole of society response, underpinned by co-ordinated, sustained and accountable multisectoral action.

Every institution of our democracy, every sphere of government, Parliament, the private sector, organised labour, faith-based organisations, traditional leaders, civil society, families and

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communities themselves must recognise that they are not mere observers in this struggle, but active participants in addressing this scourge, of course with government leading.

South Africa’s response to GBVF is grounded in a robust body of international, continental and regional obligations to which our country has voluntarily subscribed. These international obligations include the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Africa’s Maputo Protocol, underpinning our National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, NSP-GBVF.

Since the 2018 Presidential Summit against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, South Africa has undertaken one of the most comprehensive policy responses on the African continent. The NSP-GBVF 2020-2030 remains the cornerstone of our response. The plan provides a comprehensive framework that brings together prevention, accountability, justice, survivor support, economic empowerment and research.

To strengthen co-ordination and policy coherence across government, the President appointed an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and alcohol and

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substance abuse to drive the implementation of the six pillars of the NSP.

The National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide has been established and operationalised. Prevention and positive masculinity programmes have expanded. The 100-Day Challenge programme now localises interventions in 50 municipalities across all nine provinces. Ekurhuleni has been ... [Inaudible.] ... and integrated for a 100-Day Challenge programme. Partnerships with civil society, business, academia, faith communities and traditional leaders continue to broaden our reach.

South Africa completed its first National Gender-Based Violence prevalence Study, providing a scientific baseline for measuring progress. The End GBVF dashboard now provides services in 257 municipalities, improving monitoring and accountability.

We further approved the Framework on Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing, which is amongst many critical policy instruments of social justice mainstreamed across spheres of government to transform the lives of women and girls across our nation.

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Women’s economic emancipation is not a separate conversation to GBVF. Women’s economic empowerment is an enabler to escaping the shackles of GBVF. Chapter 9 institutions such as the Commission for Gender Equality continue to hold institutions accountable and ensure that gender equality remains at the centre of public discourse.

We have also enacted three laws that strengthen protection for survivors, tighten accountability for perpetrators and broaden the legal recognition of abuse. They include the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, the Domestic Violence Amendment Act and the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act.

These laws have expanded the definition of domestic violence, tightened bail provisions for GBVF perpetrators, introduced additional sex crimes and broadened the scope of the National Register for Sex Offenders, NRSO.

The practical effect of these amendments is as follows: A police officer may no longer release an accused person on bail if that person is charged with violating a domestic violence protection

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order. There is no police bail for persons accused of femicide, domestic homicide or rape.

Courts must consider the safety of the victim before granting bail, including any threats made by the accused. If bail is granted, it must be accompanied by a protection order. The NRSO now protects, not just children and persons with mental disabilities, but also vulnerable persons such as women under 25 years in tertiary institutions, older persons in care facilities and persons with disabilities.

The National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, has prioritised the investigation and prosecution of serial rapists through the Serial Rapist Prioritisation Initiative. It has prioritised the prosecution of child pregnancy cases caused by criminal conduct.

During the 2025-26 financial year, life imprisonment sentences increased by 23% from 293 to 360. Long-term sentences increased by 9% from 958 to 1 040. In total, 1 400 severe custodial outcomes were achieved for GBVF perpetrators.

These are not just numbers; these are perpetrators removed from society and survivors who received justice. South Africa has

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built a substantial survivor support platform — 68 Thuthuzela Care Centres, TCCs, from 66 in just March this year, with more TCCs being earmarked. And, of course 142 shelters across 46 districts, the Khuseleka One-Stop Centre and 185 Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences units. These facilities save lives, restore dignity and provide a pathway to justice.

Furthermore, we have improved front line training and victim support mechanisms. We have trained 69 rapid response teams across eight provinces, and data capturers and analysts continue to provide timely data and feed information onto our dashboard. Civil society organisations are doing a lot of work on the ground in fighting against GBV, and we congratulate them.

Furthermore, we have conducted a five-year review on the NSP. The review revealed that prevention remains the weakest area of implementation. It told us that South Africa is becoming better at responding to violence than preventing it, and that no nation can arrest its way out of a problem if it does not prevent it. Prevention is now our front line response.

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In this regard, we are scaling up our flagship project, which is positive masculinity. The project is directed at young boys and girls, teaching boys to use their masculinity positively, and that girls and boys standing together is the condition for everyone to prosper. We emphasise to the boy-child that he matters.

On the 24th of November 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the classification of GBVF as a national disaster, recognising its scale, brutality and geographic reach as a challenge for every sphere of state. The classification introduced greater urgency, operational co-ordination and executive oversight.

Following the classification, we developed a comprehensive action plan which was approved by Cabinet, and furthermore, presented it to both civil society and the private sector. Thereafter, we are implementing it. The classification is a catalyst for a strong response. It declares the status quo unacceptable, and sharpens accountability and delivery. It complements and does not replace the NSP-GBVF.

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His Excellency President Ramaphosa has further directed government to undertake a national case recovery operation focused on unresolved GBVF cases, to submit a funded plan to reduce forensic backlogs and establish clear turnaround standards for priority GBVF cases, to make communities safer through municipal women's safety audits and the removal of environmental risk and to implement co-ordinated legislative and enforcement measures to reduce alcohol-related violence, which remains a significant driver of violence against women and children.

As the Inter-Ministerial Committee on GBVF, we are putting in clear measures to ensure monitoring and ensure that timelines, as announced by the President, are adhered to without delay.

As I close, now more than ever we need all hands on deck. No single institution will, acting on its own, end GBVF. We need everyone, including Parliament, every idea, every resource, and every community pulling together in one direction. For as long as one woman remains in danger, our constitutional journey remains unfinished. Hon L P Mhlongo, do you remember Khwezi? I thank you.

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Mr M BILLY: Hon House Chair, hon members, fellow South Africans, good day. I want to start by thanking the hon Ryder for bringing this important debate to the National Council of Provinces. Today we remember Uyinene, Namhla Mtwa, Karabo Mokoena, Tshegofatso Pule and the 12 women of Ekurhuleni.

As they, these are not just statistics, each had a name, a family and a future.

But beyond the headlines, women in communities continue to suffer abuse, rape and threats in silence. In Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape, a rural town close to my heart, families tell us that they've lost faith in the South African police. That victims fear that their calls will go unanswered, that no police vehicle will reach their village, or that an abuser will be released and returned to harm them or even kill them.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the province I represent, we remember Zolile Khumalo, who was murdered by her former boyfriend. In Nongoma, a woman was found dead in a stream. This family deserves answers and justice. The evidence is devastating. The SA Medical Research Council research found that in 2020-21, 60% of murdered women were killed by an intimate partner, yet fewer than one in

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five intimate partner femicide cases resulted in a conviction. It is correct that the President has made many promises, but communities are still waiting for tangible action. Women are dying, and communities are afraid. This has got to change.

IsiZulu:

Abantu besifazane emiphakathini akufanele baqhubeke ukuphila ngokwesaba.

English:

Hon Dr Boshielo, Deputy Minister, the truth is, we need functioning police stations, vehicles that reach villages, protection orders that are enforced, but more importantly, we need forensic evidence processed quickly and efficiently. And yes, hon Minister Chikunga, the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, must not only prioritise these cases, but prosecutors must ensure they secure convictions.

IsiZulu:

Amaphoyisa kumele enze umsebenzi wawo.

English:

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Women are not responsible for the violence committed against them. It is the perpetrators who are. So, men must confront abuse in our homes and in our communities. The test of the government is not a promise: It is whether women are protected, the perpetrators are convicted, and communities are safer.

IsiZulu:

Amazwi nokukhuluma nje kuphela akwanele. Sidinga ukwenza kangcono. Sidinga ukuqinisekisa ukuthi lokhu esikukhulumayo kuyayiyekelela imiphakathi kulesi simo esibhekene naso.

English:

In conclusion, I do want to say that women cannot wait for another promise. They need protection now. They need justice now. And most importantly, they need a government that is going to be able to protect them and deliver. I thank you.

Mr P NOE: Chairperson, I don't know what is happening with my computer here to show my face. There is something obscuring me.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): No, we can see your face.

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Mr P NOE: Hon House Chair and hon members. I stand on a protocol established, and I stand tall above all the members that have gone before me. Let me first start by thanking also hon Ryder for ascending to the call of the President after years of calling men to be at the forefront of championing gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF.

The only problem, hon Ryder, you almost took us to the political platform only when you opened your debate by pushing blame, as always with your fellow DA members, and all EFF, FF Plus, IFP, and the MKP; you stood on what you are known for, you cursed this important discussion by bringing in blame instead of coming with proposals. Maybe, hon Ryder, you should have put forward that debaters should bring concrete proposals rather than bringing to the fore recitations of what we already know. Thank you to all the ANC members for the concrete contributions they made this afternoon. And that goes also to hon Govender. We wouldn't be here if the government was not doing anything. The fact is, the government is doing everything in its effort to fight the scourge, and here we are; we are debating, and we must, all the time, be positive. The President has shown commitment and consistency in indicating that he is committed to

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responding to this national disaster and allow me to address the issue of the national disaster.

Gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa are a profound human rights violation that demands immediate systemic intervention, particularly following the tragic murder and dumping of women in parts of Ekurhuleni and Soweto. The government formally extends its deepest condolences to the grieving families and vehemently condemns these horrific atrocities. In response to this crisis, a comprehensive national strategy is being deployed across law enforcement, legal frameworks and community structures, and you will have heard what the Hon Minister Chikunga said, and I will invite hon Govender and Hon Ryder and many others to read again the statement tabled today by the hon Minister, as to what this government is doing. The law enforcement response and interagency co-operation are commended for their intensive efforts to track down and apprehend the perpetrators behind these heinous crimes, and hon Deputy Minister Boshielo gave us the update on the statistics. They were not just numbers, but they were real, and that is an update on what our law enforcement is doing on the ground. You cannot stand here today and say the government is not doing anything.

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And this is underpinned by the following: Investigative mobilisation. A high-level multidisciplinary task team has been assembled to aggressively investigate the murders. Tactical expansion. Operation Shanela is actively expanding its footprint across Ekurhuleni to intensify visible policing, search operations and targeted crime prevention.

Thirdly, community appreciation. Deep appreciation is extended to the communities of Ekurhuleni and Soweto. Local residents have provided vital co-operative intelligence that remains crucial in aiding the SA Police Service, SAPS, to locate and arrest suspects. Institutional synergy. The joint co-operation between the SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority has been reinforced to streamline evidence collection, expedite trial readiness and ensure that perpetrators face rigorous prosecution without leniency and easy bail.

And I want to thank all hon members who have made feasible statements against the perpetrators. For far too long, we have been addressing the victims more than the perpetrators. And it's time that our focus should shift now to go to the perpetrators, hon Masiko, and that is something fundamental, as you said, that

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must come in as a change. Hon MEC Mance, hon Farmer, we need to bring men on board and be at the forefront.

Declaring this a national disaster, it is indicated and confirmed by today's debate. Gender-based violence and femicide were officially classified as a national disaster under section 23 of the Disaster Management Act and underpinned by the following structural impact. This classification shifts to co-ordination primarily to the national executive, legally compelling all organs of the state to fortify contingency arrangements, share intelligence and integrate response budgets.

Operational progress in alignment, as hon Chikunga said, with the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide 2020 to 2030, the government has reprioritised core fiscal resources. A pivotal milestone includes the formal operationalisation of the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, as hon Mananiso addressed this aspect, which successfully convened its inaugural board meeting in Pretoria in August this year. Legislative progress, the rigorous implementation and operationalisation of the sweeping GBVF laws signed into law in 2022 by the President continue to advance. These updates strengthened the criminal justice system by

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tightening bail conditions on sexual offenders, expanding the definition of domestic violence, and improving the National Register for Sex Offenders. Victim support and resource allocation and victim support, it cuts across. It is not only focused on women. To mitigate secondary trauma and protect survivors, the state is actively building specialised localised victim-friendly facilities infrastructure.

The establishment of dedicated victim-friendly infrastructure is expanding notably through the roll-out of specialised GBVF desks at local police stations to ensure victims can report crimes in private, dignified, and empathetic environments. Two, the GBVF Information Centre, which is a centralised information centre, has been established at the SAPS Academy, and this specialised hub serves to dynamically track, map, and analyse GBVF incidents across the country to improve rapid response times and deploy early intervention tactics. Hon Chairperson, hon members of the House and nation at large, we call upon all of us to put our hands on deck in a collective action. While state structures are being systematically fortified, the government emphasises that society cannot arrest its way out of this crisis alone.

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Every sector of society, including local communities, the religious fraternity, civil society movements, and individual citizens is urgently called upon to break the silence. And hon Ryder, you have made good reference to the Moral Regeneration Movement. I think it's time that we revisit the programme once more, again, because it has the basis of what we need to do to recapture the moral fibre of society, which seems to be currently decaying and is going out of their own way from where it is supposed to be. It has been shelved for a moment, and this is the time that we need to bring it back to the fore because it will help us to deal with the fundamentals of GBVF.

In conclusion, ending GBVF requires an unyielding, unified stance to dismantle toxic masculinity, challenge patriarchal norms, and actively report warning signs before they escalate into violence. Finally, hon Chair, if you or someone you know is facing abuse, please report it immediately to your local police station or contact the toll-free Crime Stop hotline at 0860010111. Thank you very much, hon Chair. I am sure, hon Ryder, you will draft a declaration. All men in Parliament should sign a declaration titled: Not in our name. Thank you very much.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon House Chairperson, I would like to thank the Chairperson of the NCOP for acceding to the request to discuss this important matter today. I know that this is a topic that is close to her heart as well, as we have had good discussions in her office, and the Chairperson has explained a painting to me that at first glance you do not see the meaning, but it is a depiction of gender-based violence, GBV, happening in progress. So, thank you very much, Chairperson.

Hon members, I want to thank all the speakers who contributed today. This is a hard topic to discuss, and it is one that we cover all through regularly. However, discuss it, we must, until we make progress, because the needless passing of our compatriots must be marked.

We must not forget Busisiwe Mahlangu, Itumeleng Kekana, Nomfesane Mjobo, Gracious Nkomo, Elizabeth “Tsontso” Moselakgomo, Vutomi Mathebula, Dineo Evelyn Motapane, Jabulile Ntimba, Ntombifuthi Nxumalo, Boitumelo Gift Mashita and the two victims from Ekurhuleni who have not been identified. But also, the thousands of victims from around South Africa whose deaths have not been highlighted in the media. My brain cannot

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comprehend what you endured in your final hours. May your souls rest in peace.

I ask: Where is Ubuntu? Where is the respect for one another or just common decency? Where are our morals? Where is the respect for the law?

Hon members, our role in this House is massively important. Please take your work seriously. Our Select Committee on Social Services keeps oversight over key role-players in this fight. The Select Committee on Security and Justice has oversight over others. It is important for me to acknowledge the work of all of those committee members.

I would like to single out the hon Gotsell for his relentless work in ensuring that police stations are equipped with appropriate rape kits. But this is our last resort, if we cannot prevent gender-based violence from happening, we must ensure that we catch the perpetrators, we convict them and we clean up our country. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

So, we must find it unacceptable that after all the promises made from President Ramaphosa ... the SA Police Service, SAPS,

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revealed in a portfolio committee two weeks ago that they omitted to report statistics on GBV because they do not yet have an accurate and credible system to do so. Our committees must please watch this closely.

I would like to focus, as well, on the inputs from SA Local Government Association, Salga, as the sphere of government that is closest to the people, the work of listening to women, so that the government's interventions can be properly directed falls to you, listen to the women and girls living and working in your spaces, hear their fears, take action where you can and make recommendations to the other spheres where appropriate.

Hon Masiko said it best, we must move from conviction to prevention. I cannot agree more.

Hon members, our discussion today covered many aspects. Every input today is appreciated. There have been great ideas proposed and sentiments expressed.

Hon Noe in his defensiveness being the only one who did not follow the tone. Thankfully, none here today have repeated the advice that was uttered in the other House last week, that

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mothers must phone their daughters more often. Because the women of South Africa do not need more advice, they need action. Action, and not advice! That is up to us as government, as those who have oversight over government and as human beings.

But, let me emphasise again, hon members, good men of South Africa, stand up! Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Ryder, for your input and for introducing the topic for today. I think that each and every delegate who was here on the platform appreciate the gravity of this debate. We can say without fear or favour that no family is not affected by this femicide and gender-based violence. It came at the right time that we discuss this.

Hon delegates, I would like to thank the Minister, the Deputy Minister, permanent delegates, Members of the Executive Council, MECs, and special delegates and Salga representatives for availing themselves for this sitting.

Hon delegates, that concludes the business of the day. The House is adjourned. Thank you.

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Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 16:55.

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