

MEDIA STATEMENT.

Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Attention: Journalists and News Editors

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MINISTER CHIKUNGA CONDEMNS PERSISTENT ACTS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE BY INTIMATE PARTNERS.

Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga, calls upon all South Africans to rally behind the country's fight against persistent acts of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBV-F), including those perpetrated by intimate partners and family members. As this has become a national crisis, there is an urgent need to move beyond slogans. There is an urgent need to invest adequate resources to respond to the GBV-F pandemic and all forms of discrimination by the whole of society and the government.

In its 2020 report titled "Killings of Women and Girls by Their Intimate Partner or Other Family Members - Global Estimates," the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that, on average, a woman or girl is killed by someone in her own family every 11 minutes. A year later, estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO) further found that one in three women worldwide has suffered from physical and sexual violence in her lifetime and that one in five women who have had at least one partner has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.

The General Secretary of the UN acknowledged during the 2021 Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture that "everywhere, women are worse off than men, simply because they are women. Inequality and discrimination are the norm. Despite the exponential high level of commendable advocacy and policy commitment, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains

one of the most frequent forms of violence against women and girls. Recent studies affirm that despite decades of activism, advocacy, and action by state and non-state actors, the available evidence shows that progress in stopping IPV and related violence has been deeply inadequate.

While our government has heeded this call and elevated the fight against GBVF into one of its top priorities, we are the first to acknowledge that, in the past 30 years of democratic dispensation, the plight of women and girls in South Africa has remained deplorable and far from ideal.

“As we begin the 7th administration, our message has to be clear when it comes to the fight against GBVF; the master's tools will not destroy the master's house. We need new tools, and we need them urgently. South Africans have bestowed on our shoulders a responsibility to recognize and respond appropriately to the systemic and structural nature of discrimination, and violence against women and girls. We can no longer tinker on the edges and expect systemic results” said Minister Chikunga.

Across educational, religious, cultural, sporting, and creative environments, all our values and practices must be put into question and deliberately repurposed to support the fight against patriarchal chauvinism in all spheres of life. “We need systemic change, and as a department, we are committed to enforcing gender equality throughout government and society as a constitutional imperative and not as an afterthought that emerges when the next victim is lying cold” concludes Minister Chikunga.

In the words of Maya Angelou, consistent with the reality endured by our ancestors, women of the world can no longer “grow the fruit but eat the rind.” Women have been and continue to be the basic foundation of all human civilisation, and yet we wake up every day and petition a man for the right to survive until the end of the day.

Minister Chikunga calls on all citizens to reject this reality. We need community intelligence—researchers, scholars, advocates, and activists who will go beyond reproducing mainstream narratives and get a granular picture from communities that face violence at a community or even street level, to ensure that justice is served.

END

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