

MEDIA STATEMENT.

Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Attention: Journalists and News Editors
Sunday: 21 September 2025

.....

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE (GBVF).

The fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) remains one of the most urgent human rights and social justice challenges facing South Africa. Too many victims and survivors continue to encounter barriers when seeking justice, ranging from stigma and secondary victimisation to slow judicial processes and a lack of adequate support services.

Access to justice for victims and survivors of GBVF is not only a constitutional right but also a moral imperative. It demands that victims and survivors are empowered to report abuse in safe and supportive environments, that their cases are investigated thoroughly, and that perpetrators are held accountable without fear or favour. Government, civil society, and all social partners have a shared responsibility to ensure that justice is victim-friendly, survivor-centred, accessible, and responsive.

This includes expanding *specialised GBVF courts and victim-friendly police services*. Strengthening free legal aid and psychosocial support for victims. Training all service providers within the criminal justice system dealing with GBVF matters, including police, prosecutors, magistrates, intermediaries, court preparation officers, court clerks, and health care providers. to handle cases with ***sensitivity, urgency, agility, and professionalism.*** ***Ensuring that protection services and shelters are available, particularly for women, children, and individuals with disabilities. Promoting awareness and messaging campaigns linked to rebuilding social cohesion and challenging misconceptions about the justice system*** to ensure that all communities are aware of their rights and the

available avenues for justice. No victim and survivor should suffer in silence or be re-victimised by the very systems meant to protect them. Breaking the cycle of GBVF requires a justice system that is accessible, fair, and firmly committed to ending impunity. As a nation, we reaffirm our dedication to improving access to justice for all victims and survivors of GBVF. Together, we must build a society where victims and survivors are protected, perpetrators are held accountable, and the rights of women and girls are fully defended and upheld.

END.

Media Enquiries Contact: Cassius Selala, Head of Communication: Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities on **060 534 0672 OR Nompendolo Mkhathshwa**, Spokesperson for the Minister in the Presidency For Women, Youth and Persons With Disabilities on **083 406 6496**

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