

MEDIA STATEMENT

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

Attention: Journalists and News Editors

Sunday: 14 September 2026

MINISTER CHIKUNGA DEMANDS URGENT ACTION AS WOMEN ARE ATTACKED WHILE EXERCISING IN PUBLIC SPACES

Pretoria: The Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga, has raised serious concerns about the growing reports of attacks on women exercising in public spaces. Minister Chikunga has condemned these incidents as a direct threat to women's fundamental right to move freely, participate in physical activities and use public spaces without fear of violence, harassment or intimidation.

The Minister's concern follows reports of women being attacked while running and exercising, including the reported murder of four women in Kempton Park and the incident of another woman who was mugged and lost her cellphone in Centurion Rooihuiskraal while coming from the gym. These cases are deeply disturbing and underscore the urgent need for a coordinated and decisive response to women's safety in public spaces.

"Women should not have to choose between their safety and their health. No woman should fear for her life simply because she has chosen to run, walk or exercise in a public space. Women must be free to exercise, walk and run without fear. This is unacceptable," said Minister Chikunga

The Minister has called for immediate and visible action by law-enforcement agencies, municipalities and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen the safety of public spaces, particularly areas commonly used for walking, running and recreational activities. This must include increased police visibility, effective community-based safety measures, improved lighting and infrastructure, rapid response mechanisms, and stronger collaboration between law enforcement, municipalities, community organisations and residents.

Minister Chikunga further called on communities to reject the normalisation of violence against women and to actively support efforts to create safer public spaces. The safety of women cannot be treated as an occasional public concern that receives attention only after tragedy has occurred. Preventing violence requires sustained action, accountability and a visible commitment to ensuring that women can live, work, exercise and participate in society without fear.

The Ministry will continue to engage relevant stakeholders on measures to strengthen the safety of women and girls and to ensure that incidents of violence against women receive the urgent attention they deserve. Women have the right to occupy public spaces. Women have the right to exercise. Women have the right to come home safely.

Minister Chikunga makes a clarion call to all law-enforcement agencies to act with urgency and determination to ensure that the perpetrators responsible for these heinous attacks are identified, arrested and brought before the courts to face the full might of the law.

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