MEDIA STATEMENT

20 September 2026

IMC ON GBVF CONDEMNS THE KILLING OF WOMEN IN EKURHULENI

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (IMC on GBVF) strongly condemns the killing of women in the City of Ekurhuleni and extends its deepest condolences to the families, friends and communities affected by these tragic deaths.

Nine bodies of women have reportedly been discovered in and around Kempton Park. These heinous crimes constitute a grave violation of the constitutional rights to life, dignity, freedom and security. The IMC shares the grief and concern of South Africans and calls for justice for the women whose lives have been brutally taken.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has directed that the investigation into the killings receive the highest level of attention from government and law-enforcement agencies. A multidisciplinary specialised team has been established to investigate the cases, identify those responsible and ensure that they face the full might of the law.

The IMC calls on members of the public to allow the police the necessary space to conduct a thorough investigation. Communities are urged not to circulate unverified information, graphic material or speculation that could cause further distress to the affected families or compromise the investigation.

Anyone with information that could assist the investigation is urged to contact Warrant Officer Elvis Manyike on **082 465 7249** or call the South African Police Service Crime Stop number on **08600 10111**. Information may be provided anonymously.

The IMC further calls on residents of Ekurhuleni, particularly those in and around Kempton Park, Kwa-Thema and Tembisa, to report missing persons immediately at their nearest police station. There is no requirement to wait 24 hours before reporting a person missing. Early reporting enables the police to initiate the necessary investigation and search processes without delay. Families should provide a recent photograph, a description of the missing person, details of where the person was last seen and any other information that may assist investigators.

The continued killing of women is a national crisis that requires urgent, sustained and coordinated action by government, law-enforcement agencies, civil society, business, communities and individuals. Gender-based violence and femicide are not private or women’s issues. They are societal crimes that demand collective responsibility and decisive action.

The IMC remains concerned that, despite strengthened legislation and interventions to improve the criminal justice response, South Africa continues to experience unacceptably high levels of gender-based violence and femicide. The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide remains the country's collective framework for preventing violence, strengthening the criminal justice response, supporting victims and survivors, and addressing the social and economic conditions that enable abuse.

The IMC appeals to men and boys to become active partners in ending violence against women and children. Men must challenge harmful behaviour, reject misogyny, teach boys to respect women and girls, and report abuse wherever it occurs. Silence, indifference and the protection of perpetrators allow violence to continue.

Law-enforcement officials and all institutions receiving complaints of gender-based violence have a responsibility to respond promptly, professionally and sensitively. Every report must be treated seriously, properly investigated and referred to the appropriate support services.

Classification of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) as a National Disaster

IMC has welcomed the classification of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) as a National Disaster, recognising the urgent need for intensified action to address one of South Africa's most pressing social challenges. The classification strengthens national coordination and enables all spheres of government, together with social partners, to implement a unified response aimed at preventing violence, protecting vulnerable groups, supporting survivors and holding perpetrators accountable.

A strong emphasis is placed on changing harmful social norms, engaging men and boys, strengthening families, addressing substance abuse, improving safety in communities, and ensuring that survivors have access to quality support services. The approach further promotes a whole-of-society partnership involving government, civil society, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, the private sector and communities.

Ultimately, the disaster classification seeks to accelerate implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, improve accountability and resource allocation, and achieve measurable reductions in violence against women and children. The vision underpinning the response is to build a safer South Africa founded on human dignity, healing, freedom, equality and justice for all.

The IMC on GBVF welcome the arrest in KwaZulu-Natal of a man allegedly linked to multiple rape cases.

This demonstrates the importance of intelligence-led investigations, forensic

evidence and effective coordination within the criminal justice system.

While we respect the presumption of innocence and allow the courts to do their work, this arrest sends a clear message: allegations of sexual violence must be investigated thoroughly, survivors must be supported, and those found guilty must face the full might of the law.

Our response to GBVF must be relentless, coordinated and focused on protecting women and children.

The IMC on GBVF makes an urgent appeal to communities in Rustenburg, Phokeng and surrounding areas to work closely with the South African Police Service in helping to identify and locate the person responsible for the brutal murder of 30-year-old Refilwe Matsila, whose identity was confirmed by her family at the Phokeng Mortuary. We call on anyone who may have information about her murder, the movements of the perpetrator, or anything that could assist the investigation to report it to the police immediately.

Do not remain silent and do not shield a perpetrator. Even the smallest piece of information could be the crucial lead that investigators need. We urge the community to stand with the families, cooperate fully with SAPS and help ensure that the persons responsible are arrested and brought before the courts. We cannot fight GBVF if communities remain silent. Speak up. Report. Help save lives and bring justice.

Expanded community involvement

The IMC emphasises that communities are essential partners in preventing gender-based violence and femicide, supporting investigations and creating safer public spaces. Residents must remain vigilant and report suspicious conduct, threats, harassment, missing persons and incidents of violence to the police without delay.

Community members who have information about the killings in Ekurhuleni are urged to cooperate fully with investigators. Information should be reported directly to the police rather than circulated through social media or informal community platforms. The sharing of unverified allegations, graphic images or the personal information of victims may cause additional trauma to families, fuel fear and prejudice, or compromise ongoing investigations.

The IMC calls on community policing forums, ward committees, street committees, traditional and faith-based organisations, civil society formations, schools, businesses and neighbourhood associations to strengthen their coordination with local policing structures. These formations should help communities identify safety concerns, improve reporting mechanisms and connect victims and survivors with appropriate protection, psychosocial, health and legal-support services.

Community structures should conduct regular safety assessments of neighbourhoods to identify poorly lit streets, abandoned buildings, overgrown open spaces, illegal dumping sites and isolated routes that may increase safety risks. Identified concerns should be formally reported to the relevant municipality, ward councillor or law-enforcement authority for urgent attention. Communities should also participate in lawful initiatives to clean and maintain public spaces, improve visibility and promote shared responsibility for neighbourhood safety. The Love Your Street campaign encourages communities and municipalities to clean, maintain and improve local environments, including addressing overgrown grass and illegal dumping.

Businesses also have a responsibility to contribute to safer communities. Shopping centres, transport facilities, entertainment establishments and other businesses operating in public spaces should ensure that lighting, security systems, emergency procedures and surveillance infrastructure are functional. Where legally permissible, businesses should cooperate promptly with police requests for information or security footage that may assist an investigation.

The IMC encourages community organisations to establish clear and confidential referral pathways for victims and survivors. Community volunteers should not attempt to investigate allegations themselves, confront suspected perpetrators or publicly identify people accused of crimes. Their role should be to listen without judgement, prioritise the immediate safety of the affected person, preserve confidentiality, assist with access to professional services and support the reporting of criminal conduct to the relevant authorities.

Families, neighbours and colleagues should take reports of abuse, stalking, threats, coercive control and harassment seriously. Warning signs must not be dismissed as private family matters. Where a person may be in immediate danger, community members should contact the police or emergency services and avoid interventions that could place the victim, witnesses or other residents at greater risk.

Men and boys must be mobilised as active partners in preventing violence. Community, sporting, workplace, educational and faith-based programmes should promote positive models of masculinity, respect for women and girls, non-violent conflict resolution and accountability. Men must challenge harmful attitudes, reject misogyny, refuse to protect perpetrators and speak out when they witness abusive or threatening behaviour. Parents and caregivers also have a responsibility to teach children that violence, harassment and discrimination are unacceptable.

Schools and youth organisations should strengthen age-appropriate awareness programmes on personal safety, respectful relationships, reporting mechanisms and available support services. Teachers and other responsible adults should be equipped to identify possible signs of abuse and follow the prescribed safeguarding and referral procedures. Care must be taken to protect the privacy, dignity and safety of children and survivors at all times.

The IMC further encourages residents of Gauteng to familiarise themselves with available emergency-support mechanisms, including the Gauteng e-Panic service, which enables users to request assistance through a mobile phone when facing threats such as domestic violence, assault, stalking, robbery or other emergencies.

Victims and survivors of gender-based violence may contact the **24-hour Gender-Based Violence Command Centre** on **0800 428 428** for assistance. Incidents of rape, assault, domestic violence or other criminal conduct should be reported at the nearest police station or through SAPS Crime Stop on **08600 10111**.

Ends

Issued by:
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

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