



Commission for Gender Equality
A society free from gender oppression and inequality

Media Release

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To: Editors, Producers and Reporters

Commission for Gender Equality Calls for Increased Protection of Children from Domestic Violence

As the country continues to observe Child Protection Week under the theme: "Let us all protect children during Covid-19 and beyond", the Commission for Gender Equality is calling on national government to ensure that Thuthuzela Care Centres and other shelters of safety have sufficient capacity to receive victims of domestic violence and their children.

"In 2020 the Commission released a report on the state of shelters in South Africa. Following the Commission's investigation and hearings, which found that many shelters meant for the safety of Gender Based Violence victims, did not have enough facilities to accommodate abused women and their children," said CGE chairperson Ms. Tamara Mathebula. The CGE's investigations also found that many shelters did not receive sufficient funding from government to cover all their interventions. Ms. Mathebula said this is a concern as abused women need to take their children along when escaping from environments of domestic violence. "While women are main victims of GBV, their children are secondary victims for obvious reasons," Mathebula added.

The commission further calls on government departments to address the findings contained in a report by the UN committee on the elimination of discrimination against women. The report revealed that South Africa committed grave violations under the convention, by failing to protect a significant number of girl children and

women from domestic violence and failing to provide them with protection and adequate access to justice. "The committee recommended that government should avail skills development programmes in shelters in all provinces, and fully implement



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the recommendations made in the 2019 CGE report on the 'State of Shelters in South Africa'" Ms. Mathebula said.

In conclusion, the Commission welcomes the adoption by the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services, of the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill, Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Bill, and Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill. These Bills were tabled in parliament with new provisions meant to provide more protection to victims of domestic violence. "The adoption of these Bills will go a long way in protecting the rights of children and safeguarding them from abuse, neglect, and maltreatment, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" Mathebula said.

END

To report violation of gender rights or lodge complaints with the Commission for Gender Equality, people can call CGE Toll -Free Number **0800 007 709** or visit the website at www.cge.org.za to lodge complaints online.

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The Commission for Gender Equality is established in terms of Section 181 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development, and attainment of gender equality.

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