



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

Media Release

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Attention: Editors, Reporters, Journalists and News Desks

CGE Concerned with Escalation of Latest Crime Statistics

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is acutely aware of upward trend in crime figures over the past five years, especially the various categories of contact crimes in which gender-based violence tends to manifest itself. The latest quarterly (April - June) crime statistics released by the SAPS on 29th August, revealed that categories of contact crimes such as murder, attempted murder, sexual offences and all categories of assault recorded staggering 60,6% increase, compared to the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

The dramatic increase in contact crimes is of particular concern for the Commission, given that these are the types of incidents where gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) tend to be prevalent against women and girls, including members of the LGBTIQ community. While Minister of Police, Bheki Cele, pointed out correctly that the dramatic increases in contact crimes during quarter 1 in 2021/22, reflected the impact of the Covid 19 Level 5 hard lock down regulations which were in place during that period, this is merely cold comfort.

The reality is that comparisons of contact crime figures during quarter 1 over the past five years reveal that contact crimes have been on an upward trajectory. For instance, in 2017/18, a total of 140 821 incidents of contact crimes were recorded, while in 2018/19, a total of 141 115 were recorded. An increase was noted in 2019/20 where 144 267 incidents were recorded. In 2021/22 the figures have increased yet again, to 145 120. This means that the



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drop that was recorded in 2020/21 was a clear anomaly when the overall figure dropped to 90 376 - the lowest figure recorded in the five-year period. This was an unusual year, due mainly to the Covid-19 hard lockdown nationwide restrictions.

During lockdown, the closing down of taverns, liquor outlets, night clubs, sporting activities and places of entertainment was an important factor in the drop in contact crimes as these places are widely considered fertile grounds for the use and abuse of alcohol and other substances inevitably lead to increased incidents of contact crimes. The Minister of police dubbed this period "a crime holiday" - a statement that inadvertently carries an admission that the drastic drops recorded in the rates of contact crimes during the first quarter of 2020/21 cannot be attributed to any robust action by the police, including efficient policing, but that rather an accidental occurrence due to Covid 19 related hard lockdown restrictions.

The CGE also continues to highlight the lack of gender disaggregated data in SAPS reporting of crime statistics as well as the fact that the statistics do not include gender-based violence as a crime category, especially in a country where gender-based violence has reached epidemic levels. This is a severe practical impediment to understanding the patterns and scale of such crimes to enable effective planning and appropriate resource allocation. The country remains crime ridden, with limited capacity (especially in relation to crime intelligence/detection, investigative capacity and prosecutorial efficacy) among law enforcement agencies to make an impact on the persistently high levels of crimes.

The CGE therefore wishes to reiterate that the adequate resourcing, capacity building and effectiveness of community policing should be prioritised as part of a long-term community policing strategy for bringing down levels of crime in the country, on a consistent and long-term basis. The country cannot



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sustainably rely on the unusual and temporary circumstances of the hard lockdown periods, when the movements of citizens and economic activities in the country are severely restricted, in order to bring down the levels of crime in the country.

The CGE continues to monitor the quarterly crime statistics released by the SAPS to assess the extent to which the country is tackling gender-based violence and other related crimes.

We urge anyone who knows about, or experiences acts of sexual violence and abuse to use our Toll-Free Number **0800 007 709** to report such cases.

ENDS,

Issued by Commission for Gender Equality

Contact Person: Javu Baloyi (Spokesperson)

Cell: 083 579 3306



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.



Toll Free Number: 0800 007 709. GBV Toll Free Number: 0800 428 428, Stop
Gender Violence: 0800 150 150 Witness, Survivors and victims of GBV can send
Please Call Me at *120*7867#