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Inspecting Police Stations' State of GBV Readiness Across South Africa

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) has been on a countrywide campaign to visit police stations and assess their readiness to assist victims of sexual assault. The inspection visits have been carried out by CGE commissioners as part of the chapter 9 body's mandate to monitor compliance with gender equality laws and instruments.

Police stations are the first point of call for victims of rape, sexual assault, and general gender-based violence, and are therefore obligated to have tools such as sexual assault evidence kit, private rooms for GBV victims, and police officers who have been trained to assist and support such victims. CGE chairperson Tamara Mathebula said the police station oversight visits started after they subpoenaed SAPS provincial and national commissioners to discuss the DNA kits backlog in the 2018/19 financial year.

"The oversight visits are part of activities we are doing to monitor the DNA backlogs, bottlenecks, and tube-feed," Mathebula said.



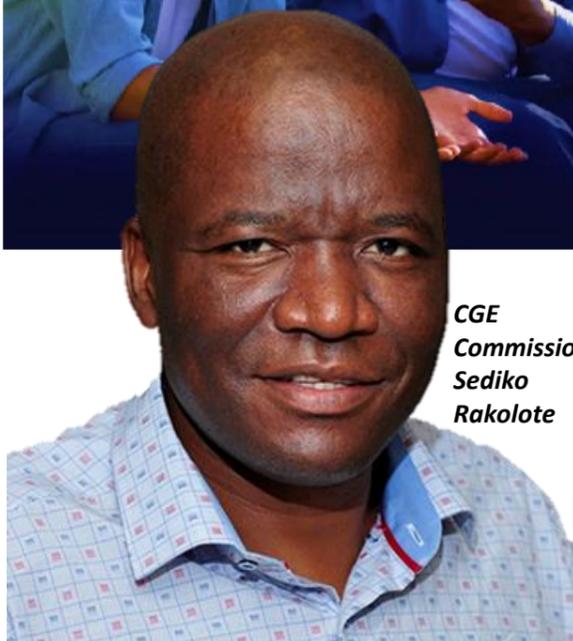
Chairperson Tamara Mathebula (ABOVE) was on an oversight visit to police stations in the Limpopo province this week.



"The outcome will be to compile a CGE report and call for a high-level meeting with the Minister of Police to discuss its (report) recommendation" she added. Since the beginning of the

year, CGE's commissioners have visited police stations in all nine provinces, in rural, semi-rural, and urban areas including townships.

Involving Men and Boys in Fight Against GBV, Toxic Masculinity



CGE Commissioner Sediko Rakolote

CGE Commissioner Sediko Rakolote provided an opening statement on toxic masculinity during a webinar organised by Government Communication and Information Systems and the Department of Social Development on Tuesday. The webinar – whose purpose was to challenge the culture of toxic masculinity to combat violence - was part of government's activities towards the 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse period.

It was also the implementation of the National Skills Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. "Key drivers of toxic masculinity include traditional, cultural and religious practices and beliefs that promote men and relegate women to secondary positions" Rakolote said in his panel remarks.

South Africa is battling a pandemic of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Efforts are being made by both government and civil society to educate communities and individuals on matters related to reporting, prevention, and empowerment. These efforts include sensitising men and boys on some of the societal norms that continue to give life to the GBVF scourge.

Meeting The CGE Faces



Boitumelo Zwane is the Education Officer for the CGE in the Free State. She grew up in Mahikeng, in the North-West. "I enjoy engaging with community members at grassroots levels on the realities of how gendered narratives impact on our lives daily. It is always amazing to listen to and see life from the perspective of others whilst using the opportunity to impart knowledge so that they may begin to introspect" she said.

She hopes for the CGE to win the fight against GBV. "This can be achieved by ensuring that crime no longer persists with impunity". Boitumelo believes inequality is being progressively addressed in formal sectors through women empowerment and gender equality policies and other programmes. "There's still a concern in the domestic space where male domination remains, and gender rights are not valued or respected, hence the high levels of GBV. There is a saying that 'we are a sick society', it is time that mental health and emotional abuse are given the attention they deserve as they are some of the factors allowing gender inequality to persist" she concluded.

