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CGE MONITORS POLICE STATIONS AND THUTHUZELA CENTRES IN THE EASTERN CAPE



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) took its Police Stations and Thuthuzela Care Centres' monitoring programme to the Eastern Cape province to assess victims' friendly rooms, resources, working conditions and the processing of gender-based violence cases by police. Commissioner Lindiwe Ntuli-Tloubatla visited police stations in Butterworth, King Williams Town, Grahamstown, Kwanobuhle, Geldanvale, Motherwell and Walmer in Gqeberha. She also visited Thuthuzela Care Centres in Butterworth and King Williams Town. This is a continuation of the monitoring campaign conducted by the CGE in

various provinces since 2021. Ntuli-Tloubatla expressed concern about challenges raised by station commanders, "Most police stations have victims' friendly rooms but lack required resources such as vehicles to transport GBV victims. Some police stations use rape kits that have passed their expiry dates while other stations do not have all the test kits they should have", she said. The Butterworth police station commander pointed out that they do not have enough police officers and vehicles to cater for the high number of communities in their jurisdiction.

ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS ON GENDER ISSUES IN KZN



The 'men and boys' initiative conducted by the CGE in KwaZulu Natal touched on various topics such as child maintenance and support.

The Commission for Gender Equality's KwaZulu Natal office in partnership with Isihlahla Sezinsizwa and Ngcebo Support Group had an engagement initiative with men and boys in Nquthu. The engagement was a platform for men and boys to discuss their challenges, promote gender rights, share solutions to overcome gender-based violence, discuss masculinity and commit to ensuring the protection of gender equality in communities. Mr Rabbuh Raletsemo from CGE's Public Education and Information unit addressed men on various topics including child maintenance.

"Men should not view the court maintenance process as an action against them, but rather as a way to formalise the financial maintenance needs for the benefit of children" he said. "Maintaining a child is something that a man should do willingly and voluntarily," Raletsemo added. The initiative was part of various outreach programmes conducted by CGE's KwaZulu-Natal office across the province, to foster public understanding and knowledge of the CGE's mandate and increase the protection and promotion of gender equality.

CHILD GROOMING WAVE ON THE RISE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gender-based violence and child abuse cases are prevalent in South Africa, one of the growing trends of child abuse is Child Grooming. Child Grooming is an offense where an adult subjects a child to psychological manipulation and violation of their developing sexuality. A perpetrator will make use of their adult authority or economic resources to draw a child into a relationship that is for the benefit of the perpetrator's sexual desires. Sexual grooming is regulated by Section 18 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 32 of 2007. In Mpumalanga, a

mother was recently arrested and charged with sexual assault of minor son. It is alleged that the accused had sexual intercourse with the minor and recorded the incident. The applicable offenses in such a case include amongst others statutory rape, child grooming, sexual assault and incest. Sexual grooming has also been increased by allowing minor children to access social media platform easy and adults use social media to prey on children who are usually unaware of the threat of child grooming. Child grooming has a long-lasting negative effect on victims and society at large.

This form of abuse has a bad psychological and behavioural impact on the child and results in anger, hostility, and lead to an aggressive behaviour later in life. Such behaviour contributes to high numbers of gender-based violence and child abuse cases in South Africa. It is imperative that our Courts takes a tough stance in these types of cases and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences. Harsh penalties should be imposed on perpetrators that are found guilty of child grooming in South Africa. Such penalties will likely serve as a deterrent for other perpetrators.



This opinion piece was written by Sandile Useni, CGE's Legal Officer in Mpumalanga province.

