



South African Council of Churches

15 SEPTEMBER 2026

MEDIA STATEMENT

FROM THE DESK OF THE GEN. SECRETARY, REV MZWANDILE MOLO

SACC DEMANDS ACTION AS SIX WOMEN ARE FOUND DEAD IN GAUTENG

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) receives, with shock, profound grief, and outrage, the news of the discovery of women's bodies in Kempton Park and Olifantsfontein in Gauteng over the past two months, and a sixth body discovered in Springs this morning. This is a scandal for a nation that just celebrated the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March. This reflects a national moral collapse and absence of a comprehensive governance system that protects women.

We offer our deepest condolences to these families as they grapple with the loss of their loved ones. We hold in prayer the family of Elizabeth "Tsontso" Moselakgomo, and we stand with the families of the four women still awaiting formal identification, who wait in anguish for word of their own. "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

It has been less than a year since Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) was declared a national disaster by President Cyril Ramaphosa, following a petition of more than one million signatures, yet these atrocities continue. These discoveries, together with the countless other women and children who continue to be abused or killed, often by people known to them in homes where the violence goes unseen and unreported, demonstrate how far we remain from delivering safety for the women and children of our society.

While a suspect remains in custody in connection with the first of these murders, no arrests have been made in the remaining cases, and police have yet to establish whether one perpetrator or several are responsible. Understandably, this has sent a wave of anger and fear across the country. Six women's lives have been brutally cut short, for no reason other than that they are women. Such crimes can only be described as a desecration of the sanctity of life and a betrayal of the Constitutional commitment to safety for all.

"Women and children in our country have every right to live and move in safety and freedom. They should not have to restrict their movements and activities for fear of predators in our midst," said Rev Mzwandile Molo, General Secretary of the SACC. "This is a moral outrage that must compel us to action, in defence of women who continue to be hunted in our streets and stolen from their families."

A country that experiences more than 5 500 women murdered every year, which is an average of over 15 women killed every single day, should hang its collective head in shame and confess before God and nation, its failure to protect the vulnerable amongst itself. "Guided by our moral obligation, we must recommit ourselves with everything at our disposal, including legal and judicial instruments, moral teaching, community safety activities to change this pattern of wounding and death for the women of South Africa. We can change the trajectory of the lives of girls and women by holding ourselves accountable to the principles God has given us," said Rev Molo.

Our faith condemns the persecution, abuse and killing of women. Every woman is made in the image of God, with equal dignity before Him: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). God's word leaves no room for ambiguity about His response to those who prey on the vulnerable: "Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to Me, I will certainly hear their cry... My anger will be aroused" (Exodus 22:22–24).

The SACC is, therefore, calling for a fast-tracked implementation of the national disaster declaration into visible, funded, and monitored actions. Every woman from every walk of life needs to know and experience what the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF is.

To build women's confidence in the nation's commitment to their safety, we need every case of violence and abuse against a girl or woman opened at a police station to be properly investigated and effectively prosecuted. We call on the courts and judiciary to hear GBVF-related cases with the urgency they demand, and to sentence the perpetrators to the fullest extent of the law.

And we call on every man in South Africa, especially those of faith — to examine himself, to reject the silence and complicity that allow this violence to continue, and to actively stand for the protection of the women and girls around him.

We call on the Church to commit itself to continuous teaching and action that unmasks patriarchy, confronts GBVF, builds communities of prayer and proclamation that stand in society for the defence of women and the elevation of their dignity. This must include the commitment for the Church to root out GBVF and exploitation amongst its own ranks. Our faith demands better of us, our women depend on the Churches voice and action.

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