

## **SAPS men pledge to intensify efforts in the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence**

**17 September 2019**



Through its Men for Change structure, the South African Police Service (SAPS) men held a mobilisation awareness campaign in Pretoria. The awareness campaign led by men in blue sought to raise awareness on the scourge of violence, with a view of mobilising society to play an active role in assisting the work of the Police in detecting, preventing and fighting Gender-Based Violence within communities. The campaign brought together 1500 men in blue from various stations components and divisions from various parts in Gauteng. Police trainees who are yet to graduate from Tshwane SAPS Training Academy also formed part of the campaign.

The Minister of Police, General Bheki Cele, Deputy Minister of Police, Mr Cassel Mathale, Acting National Commissioner of the SAPS, Lieutenant General Bonang Mgwenya and male senior management from the Department of Police led the campaign. Proceedings commenced at Church Square, proceeded to Sunnyside Police Station where the Minister of Police conducted a compliance visit to assess the state of service delivery and the quality of services rendered to Gender-Based Violence victims at police stations. General Cele utilised the platform to remind the men in blue on what steps ought to be followed and how a GBV victim ought to be treated when reporting a case of GBV at a police station. The Minister issued a stern warning to officers who are found to be turning back GBV victims who come to report cases. "Police stations must be a safe space for victims of gender based violence, many women who report to you are already traumatised, don't further traumatise them by asking them silly questions about what they were wearing before they were violated. This secondary victimization must come to an end."

Minister Cele added "Never turn a woman away and don't turn away anyone who reports abuse and advise them to go back home and negotiate, you are not social workers, your job is to investigate, make arrests and ensure victims are safe from the perpetrators." The Minister also urged detectives to thoroughly investigate GBV cases to ensure convictions. From Sunnyside Police Station, the awareness

campaign proceeded to Jubilee Park where civil society groups were afforded the opportunity to voice concerns and also gave advice on how the SAPS can improve its services to the people of South Africa. The Acting National Police Commissioner, Lieutenant General Bonang Mgwenya emphasized the need for improved police-community relations. "With Community Policing being a fundamental pillar towards effective policing, as the SAPS we cannot overemphasize community involvement in assisting the work of our police in overcoming this scourge. We therefore call on all citizens, other government departments and law enforcement agencies, civil society and community members to rise against these abhorrent acts by supporting the work of the police in detecting, preventing and reporting such incidents timeously. This will ensure that together we realise the National Development Plan's Vision of 2030 where women can walk freely in the streets and children can play safely outside". The public is further reminded that there is no waiting period to report a missing person.

Communities can assist the SAPS when reporting a missing person by following these steps:

- Produce a recent photograph of the missing person, if possible.
- Give a complete description of the missing person's last whereabouts, clothes that they were wearing, as well as any information that can assist the investigating officer.
- Complete and sign a SAPS 55(A) form. This form safeguards the SAPS from hoax reports and indemnifies the SAPS to distribute the photograph and information of the missing person.
- Obtain the investigating officers contact details, and send any additional information that might become available.
- If a missing person is found or returns voluntarily, inform the investigating officer immediately. A SAPS 92 form must be completed to inform the Bureau of Missing Persons that the missing persons report can be removed from the circulation system.

Major General Bafana Linda, the SAPS Head Of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit reminded the officers about adhering to the Ministerial Six Point Plan. The plan was implemented in 2017 and is posted visibly in all police stations. Members of the public are urged to familiarise themselves with these laws when reporting matters relating to GBV as this plan seeks to ensure that proper procedures are followed during the reporting of such cases.

#### Ministerial Six-point Plan

- All victims should be treated with respect, dignity and interviewed by a trained police official in a victim sensitive manner;
- Victims should be assisted in a Victim Friendly Room (VFR) or an alternative room where the statement will be taken in private or other location providing victim support services;
- Victims will be referred/taken for medical examination by a healthcare professional to obtain medical evidence and complete a medical report including seeing to the health of the victim;
- The investigation should be conducted by the Family, Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Investigation Unit (FCS) or a detective with relevant training;
- The families and victims of sexual offences, femicide and infanticide should all be referred to victim support services that are available within the precinct for legal, medical, social and psychological help; and
- Victims should be proactively given feedback on the progress of their cases on a continuous basis

The proceedings culminated in the signing of a pledge by all involved where all committed to intensify efforts in curbing Gender-Based Violence.

The pledge also saw the men in blue commit themselves in providing improved services to victims of Gender-Based Violence at police stations.

The Men for Change structure was formed in 2004 and is a formation within the South African Police Service that addresses matters of Gender-Based Violence and challenges faced by men in policing.

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