



**Faith ACTION**  
to end Gender-Based Violence



**WE WILL  
SPEAK OUT SA**  
FAITH COMMUNITIES ENDING SEXUAL AND  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



## Media coverage: GBV in the faith sector

The way the media treats cases of abuse and rape shapes the way the public understand, think and respond to cases. And in turn, the media are mere representatives and mirrors of the public. When it comes to cases involving the church or faith-based organisations there is a clear lack of depth and investigative reporting – which is perhaps reflective of how abuse in the church is silenced in general.

Of recent years, there has been a ‘juniorisation’ of media personnel which has resulted in less critique and less in-depth reporting. Parallel to this has been the rise of citizen journalism with a story of GBV allegations often following the trend of: twitter mentions and comments leading to ‘cut and paste’ media articles then leading to facebook posting and comments. What this essentially results in is a flurry of social and online media responses to a current GBV case, a lull, and then some reporting when a case is in the courts.

With particular focus on the faith sector, in all this lack of continuity and investigation it is difficult to see both the depth of the problem and also the extent. What of the cases that don’t make it to the headlines? How are these being tracked?

During this project, it has become apparent that there is no tracking system of cases involving faith leaders that have been informally reported to service providers, or formally to the police for investigation and then a track of the process of attrition to sentencing.

It is difficult then to get a sense of the full picture in order to formulate any type of formal faith sector response. This also makes it difficult for the faith sector to strategise and act on various issues such as: examining the importance of victim impact reports, formulating interventions within the sector, the church and faith-based organisations, calling for harsher sentences, innovating specific therapeutic needs for survivors of GBV in the faith sector or investigating restorative justice.

We have selected 11 cases reported in the media and highlight these here, suggest some possible story angles that could be considered for future similar cases, then take a brief look at the silence of the faith sector, before offering some learnings to be taken forward.

# 1. Cases

## Pastor 'possessed by demons'

After breaking up with her boyfriend, a part-time pastor, 34-year old Palesa Mothokwa was attacked by him at her work and brutally assaulted while the perpetrator also threatened to kill her children. Her sister first published a photo of Mothokwa online with a message about what had happened to her. She named her attacker: Oscar Ngobeni, 48 years old.

In the initial article, December 2021, Mothokwa said: "Oscar [Ngobeni] has a tendency of using God to hide his demons, as he would beat me up and later say he is possessed by demons and then urge me to pray with him."

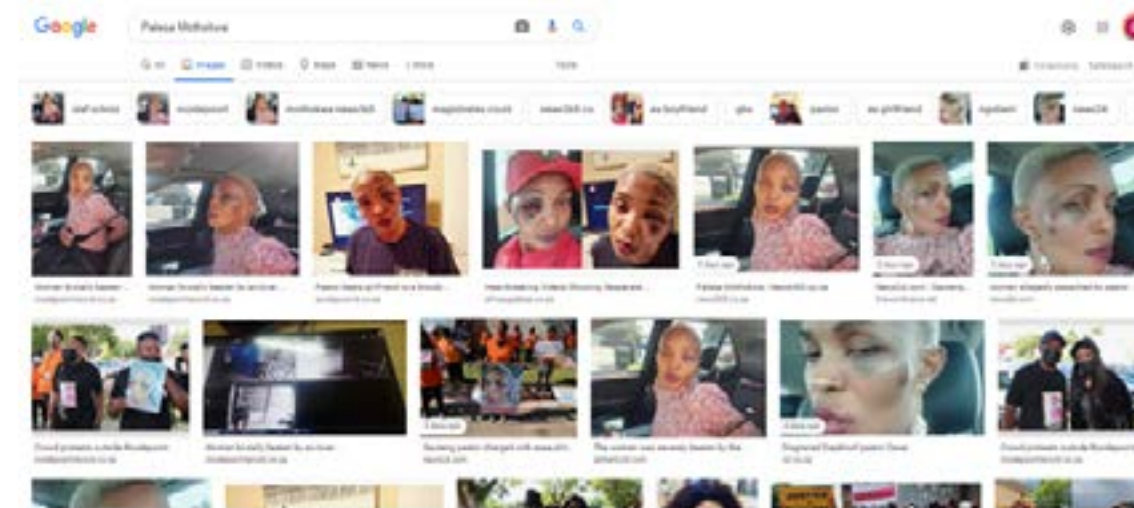
"He would pretend as if nothing had happened after praying, and based on his abuse, I told him that I could not be in the relationship with him anymore."

This story was picked up beginning of February 2022 with his court appearance which was postponed as his attorney failed to appear.

Many articles appeared with the same information – what had been reported on when the story first appeared. Her photo was posted everywhere yet the reporting failed to 'humanise' her and the quotes from her did not show any depth of emotion, which goes to the way the media posed questions and interpreted information.



An image search of Palesa Mothokwa brings up multiple images of her battered face, and also some of the crowds in support of her at the court case.



Interestingly, in an image search for Oscar Ngobeni, 5 out of the first 9 photos are variations of Palesa's battered face

Possible media angles and stories:

- Feature on how violence when leaving an abusive intimate partner often escalates and how to deal with this, esp through the support of the faith sector
- Focus on the response to a survivor taking to social media – to capture comments and possible trends

## Child rape at the YMCA

There was brief reporting on the case of a 61-year-old man raping a 8-year-old on the premises of the YMCA in KwaMashu where he and the family of the child were tenants. The YMCA is a faith-based NGO that mainly focuses on youth development and provides safe spaces and power spaces for youth to untap their potential. A key programme is youth justice, working with youth at risk or in conflict with the law to sharpen their resilience and encourage them to be active citizens.

Each local YMCA is autonomous and is then chartered to be a YMCA in good standing under the South African YMCA and its leadership council. It was unclear from reporting if the man put himself across as a leader of the YMCA or as a tenant and articles reported that he may have been the caretaker but the YMCA came out strongly that he had no leadership position. It also emerged that the child was allegedly his sixth victim in one of the reports. The news reports were scanty.

Support from local organisations, activists and the SAYMCA was apparent at court hearings, including the bail hearing. The SAYMCA put a statement out condemning the act. See annex 1. WWSOSA partnered with the Gugu Dlamini Foundation to run an online petition to oppose his bail – which was indeed denied. See annex 2 While the case happened towards the end of 2020, there has been no follow up reported in the media.

Possible media angles or stories:

- Article on what safe spaces means in faith-based organisations
- Codes of conduct for faith-based organisation leadership, including background checks and police clearance for working with youth and minors
- Role of faith-based organisations and NGOs in preventing GBV



## Sexual grooming of young boys

Picking up on a recent case, a 51-year-old pastor failed to appear in court for a bail hearing in January 2022, even though he was in prison.

The suspect is the founder of a church that also has branches in Daveyton on the East Rand, as well as Bergville and Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal. This case involves him allegedly sexually grooming boys. He faces three counts of rape and four counts of sexual assault. And it has been reported that more charges are expected. This case involved a whistleblower Zelda Masango who walked in on the pastor when he was with one of the boys. She involved social workers which led to one of the parents' going to the police.

“In his statement, Bishop Marothi Mashashane, president of the SA National Christian Forum (SANCF), said he was relieved that the pastor was finally facing the law after previous attempts to bring him to book failed.”

Interestingly, a senior pastor of the church said of the executive: “We’ve decided as the executive that we should give our father a chance to face whatsoever allegations he is facing... We are not commenting on the charges, on whether they are true or false. We are giving our father and his family space to deal with whatsoever they are facing.”

This case has been treated only as a news story and there do not appear to be any background articles about the boys. Only recently has there been public coverage and understanding of the extent of rape of young boys so it is important that these cases lead to media coverage that looks at the nature and extent of the damage this does to boys and how this feeds into a generation of boys growing up who are bottling up the hurt and often become abusive as men, or commit suicide.

Possible media angles or stories:

- Feature on what sexual grooming is
- Series for parents, teachers and faith leaders on what signs to look out for
- Effect on men from boyhood sexual abuse



## Making God angry

Pastor Timothy Omotoso is the founder of the Jesus Dominion International church. He has been imprisoned since 2017 on 97 charges, including rape, human trafficking and racketeering. Some of the girls caught in the web, were as young as 13.

The 63-year-old televangelist was denied bail three times during the court proceedings, and has had motion for mistrial denied – currently his leave to appeal that was lodged has been postponed to March 2022.

The case has been reported extensively over the years. His two co-accused – Lusanda Sulani and Zukiswa Sitho, both women – allegedly recruited girls and young women for sexual exploitation by Omotoso.

The case has involved testimony of numerous women, with many witnesses testifying to the alleged ordeals and sexual abuse they endured at the hands of Omotoso over a long period of time while they were members of his congregation.

One young woman spoke of moving provinces to go to Omotoso's church (and house) on the promise of him paying for studies. The very first night he attempted to sexually assault her, saying: "If I made him angry, I'm making God angry".

Another woman was homeless and got caught in the web by joining crusades. One of the witnesses spoke of what she called "happy hour" where Omotoso would throw sweets and biscuits in the air and female congregants would have to jump to catch the treats. She claimed he would also at times rub the sweets on his private parts and then throw it in the air to see who would jump highest to catch them.

During the time of the case, with all its protracted delays and court shenanigans, Omotoso was declared a prohibited person and could be deported if released from custody. The Executive Director of CJMR, Hezekiah Deboboye Olujobi, stated that "we are severely disturbed at the nature of prosecution/persecution that the South African Government is meting down on a Nigerian citizen without any hope of justice in view." He also spoke of strong political interference and a "xenophobic attitude" towards Nigerians due to the treatment of Omotoso's wife.

The reporting in the media has been regular and extensive. However, an online search for this case brings up many more articles on the technicalities and legal manoeuvrings than on the actual nature of his alleged crimes and the effects.

It would be most beneficial if the nature of the human trafficking allegations were unpacked more as this always involves a large network, specific regions and can apply to labour as well as sexual trafficking.

Possible media angles or stories:

- Trafficking through religious webs
- The hype of crusades and link to GBV
- Focus on the positive stories of survivors (subject to anonymity needs)



## Using the 'sons' to rape the 'daughters'

Self-proclaimed Prophet, Shephard Bushiri's case made headlines for quite some time during 2020 and continues today. The Enlightened Christian Gathering church he founded is said to be one of the most popular and richest churches on the continent.

39-year-old Bushiri and his wife were accused of fraud and money laundering totalling R102 million. As the case progressed, eight rape charges were added of girls as young as 16 and up to mid-20s.

In an expose, it was portrayed that through his network of 'sons' and 'prophets', Bushiri used the ECG church to recruit his victims. The men would eavesdrop and engage in conversations with churchgoers to collect information that Bushiri then used to lure and befriend the girls and young women and their families at church. It was claimed that, "Many of them believed he received visions from God, not knowing that he obtained information beforehand."

The families as well as the girls and young women then trusted Bushiri to privately communicate with these daughters, whether for advice, counselling or special prayer sessions.

It is alleged that he drugged some, and even sexually assaulted others while praying. He paid money to some as bribes for their silence, and others he used threats of violence.

One of the survivors was said to have been in a consensual relationship as it is claimed that he asked her to marry him. Another became pregnant and was allegedly forced to terminate.

After receiving bail, Bushiri and his wife fled SA and went back to Malawi. The case continues in Malawi.

While the sexual violence and misconduct allegations are very powerful, they seem to have dropped off the radar in this case in how it has been reported. Apart from a couple of articles, there has been no mention of this, as the case continues to make headlines for the money laundering and fraud charges and the complex conditions of the SA/Malawi case considerations.

Possible media angles or stories:

- Feature on silence and speaking out in cases of faith leader sexual impropriety
- Positive relationships between young men and women in faith spaces
- Focus on the positive stories of survivors (subject to anonymity needs)



## It's our secret

In an ongoing case, the Rivers of Living Waters Church leader, 55-year-old Bishop Bafana Stephen Zondo is facing 10 charges against him, including rape.

The case is in court now and there have been questions as to whether the alleged survivors should be interrogated on their earlier evidence before the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural Religious and Linguistic Communities.

One woman who has testified alleges that she was raped in 1980 when she was 7 years old and Zondo was a teenager. She told the story of her being 'selected' to wash the Bishop's socks and the other children playing outside were told not to come in and bother her and the Bishop.

She looked upon him as an uncle and said, "I said uncle, you are hurting me... afterwards he told me it's just our secret. He gave me R1 and said I must spend it at school." He also gave her some sweets. This was the beginning of a series of such incidents of rape.

In her testimony last year, she said that her uncles had called a family meeting and Zondo was present and admitted and apologised. Her uncles tried to pressurise her to drop the legal case. And she claims she was offered a 'consolation' which included cattle.

Bishop Zondo's senior female pastor had previously told the commission that his rape accusers were lying.

Much of the reporting thus far has been on technicalities of the case, although the information cited here does show the type of luring that



sexual predators do with children – that said, this was reported in court so more investigation on impact could be done. The issue of open court or in-camera testimony is being decided on a case by case basis of each of the women giving testimony.

Possible media angles or stories:

- Feature on the need for safe spaces for children and for women at church
- How to talk to your children about their bodies and sexual rights
- Focus on the positive stories of survivors (subject to anonymity needs)



## “Blessing” women through sexual violation

In September 2021, a pastor was sentenced to 37 years in prison for the rape of 5 women congregants, being found guilty of 19 counts of rape and three counts of sexual assault after the women eventually told another pastor at the God is Love Ministries. The pastor was a Congolese national and was also found to have been in the country with a falsified residence permit.

48-year-old William Emeka’s modus operandi was to tell victims they had a problem that he could resolve by praying for them and “blessing” them (by raping them). He told one of the survivors that she would not be able to conceive unless he “removed” the obstacle to her becoming pregnant, which entailed a “blessing” (him raping her).

At the court hearings, most of his supporters were women, both in and outside of the court room. Their demonstrations at the bail hearing clashed with supporters of political party EFF, who had burnt down the church’s main branch that weekend.

Emeka’s son said his father was targeted by South African priests who wanted to take over his church. He said the priests used to be members of Emeka’s church, but were struggling to recruit more people.

“The people behind these allegations are jealous and they have a problem with foreign national prophets and pastors running successful churches in South Africa. My father did not rape or sexually assault anyone.”



What was interesting here is the clash in those supporting him and those opposing him in organised ways. This could have lent to more background reporting on xenophobic allegations, especially since the EFF was opposing him and have a stated stance that is anti-xenophobic so the background could have gone beyond the surface here.

Possible media angles or stories

- Unpacking the role of spiritual leaders
- Debunking xenophobic responses
- Focus on the positive stories of survivors (subject to anonymity needs)

## Life sentences in Limpopo province

In August 2021, a 50-year-old pastor was sentenced to five life terms in prison after being convicted on five counts of rape of children aged between 11 and 13.

The National Prosecuting Agency explained that the children were parishioners of Pastor Setabo Elias Molepo at his Global Life Changing Ministry Church. He used to provide their families with food parcels as they were in desperate financial crisis. The NPA spokesperson in Limpopo said, “He used to visit their families and he (would) then convince the parents to allow him to take the girls to the shops to buy them clothes, and that is where he got a chance to rape them.”

Media reporting of this case spoke of the victim impact report, the mothers’ testimonies of the effects on their children and of how the children and families “looked up to him as a prominent member of society and as their pastor but he took advantage of their poor financial background.”

While there was not much continuity in this case or the next, there was a good article which linked with a case the previous year. In this case, Pastor James Thubakgale, aged 57, another Limpopo-based pastor, was originally convicted on two counts of rape of girls aged 14 and 16 and sentenced to two life terms.

It was reported that the parents had been told to bring the one girl to receive a prophecy but first she had to have a snake in her stomach removed (by him raping her) and the other to get deliverance from evil spirits (by him raping her). While serving his sentence, he received a third life sentence for rape, assault and calling a congregant a witch.

Possible media angles or stories

- Feature on the importance of a victim impact assessment
- Food insecurity and the church



## Removal of Anglican Priest's rights

The Synod of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa confirmed a sentence of “degradation” in September 2021 on a former priest of the Diocese of Natal after his conviction for sexual harassment.

Reverend Roland Prince was sentenced by a disciplinary tribunal of the Diocese of Natal in July. Under the Canons, degradation is the most serious disciplinary action that can be taken against a priest. This means that the sentence had to be confirmed by the Synod of Bishops.

In the language of the Canons, a sentence of degradation removes the person’s right to be referred to as “Reverend”.

In April a board of preliminary inquiry recommended that charges be brought against him. He resigned at the end of that month. The disciplinary tribunal sat in July. Two days after Mr Prince confirmed he would attend, he indicated on the day of the tribunal he would not attend. The tribunal went ahead in his absence.

Mr Prince was convicted under the Canons of: sexual harassment, conducting himself in “a sexually immoral manner”, and involving himself in “inappropriate relationships and activities which gave just cause for scandal or offence.” All those he preyed upon were members of his congregation.

Mr Prince's name was placed on a register maintained by the church's Safe and Inclusive Church Commission to ensure that he cannot be licensed as a priest in any other diocese of the Anglican Church.

While this most certainly is a case that shows responsibility and justice of the church, it received very little coverage in the media. This is open to interpretation: was the case too 'positive', not seen as 'significant enough' or not promoted enough by the church so as to be picked up as a news story?



Possible media angles or stories:

- Focus on importance of sexual harassment policies and procedures for churches
- Role of the church in ensuring a firm stance on internal cases of sexual violence



## Hunger strike for justice

After a highly charged one-woman movement, driven by social media, the Anglican Church Tribunal exonerated Rev Melvin Booyesen of rape charges brought by June Dolley Major.

Major alleged that the rape occurred in 2002, that the state had refused to prosecute and the church had refused to deal with the matter. In 2016, Major went on a hunger strike to force the hand of the church but not much happened. She staged another hunger strike in July 2020 in winter during COVID restrictions outside the home of the Archbishop Makgoba and said she would do so until he met with her and agreed to finally deal with the matter. At this stage she had publicly named the alleged perpetrator on social media. Before and during the hunger strike, Major mobilised social media support, and opened a specific Facebook page where she made regular updates. Along with her supporters, she staged a 'panty protest' by hanging women's underwear along the fence outside the Archbishop's private residence. This case attracted much interest and support from individuals and organisations working against GBV.

Almost a week into her second hunger strike, the Archbishop came out to meet her and gave Major his assurance that a tribunal would be actioned. Booyesen obtained an interim order to have her prohibited from continuing to use his name, which was later overturned.

At the conclusion of the tribunal in October 2021, which was publicly screened on YouTube by the Anglican Church, Booyesen was exonerated and the tribunal found Major's account to be inconsistent with a series of circumstantial factors in her story that Booyesen had raped her. The tribunal also found that there was no evidence of Major having made any allegations or informing her Bishop prior to 2016.





The tribunal did find Booyesen guilty of breaching ministerial conduct “by apparently invading the complainant’s private space in their lodgings.” It said therapy and retraining have been recommended to the bishop.

In an interesting turn, the tribunal stated that, “Major continues to represent herself as an active Anglican priest in good standing, which by her own choice, she has not been since she resigned some years ago. We recommend that the Bishop of Table Bay clarifies the truth to the public.”

Major responded to the tribunal findings by saying she was saddened that the clergy she once looked up to had so “brazenly distorted” the truth and chose to deny the help, support and protection which she needed.

She said that “...truth has a habit of revealing itself. I pray for the day that not only my case, but the many cases of others, who have suffered a similar plight, and whose pleas for help fell on deaf ears, or were ignored by the pillars of the church, will be investigated.”

While most media articles have focused on Major as the victim-survivor on a crusade for deserved justice, the story of Booyesen’s innocence did not receive much coverage. There was a documentary aired on TV. The 2020 hunger strike and subsequent happenings have created a cult-like following for Major who continues to mobilise on social media, had undertaken other symbolic actions like a 40-day walk against GBV and has made herself a spokesperson available to the media not only against GBV but also against the church.

Possible media angles or stories:

- Focus on process of church handling rape accusations
- Focus on the effects of being (falsely) accused as a faith leader
- Report on an alleged previous sexual harassment case brought by Major in 2003 where she won the case and the accused was expelled from the seminary where they were both students and permanently excluded
- Investigate the circumstances surrounding Major’s resignation from the church and the breakdown of relations between herself and ACSA, and how this might have influenced the case.



## Christian community a living hell

The horrors of KwaSizabantu Mission in KwaZulu-Natal have been an open secret for going on two decades with sporadic media coverage of stories or statements of people who have ‘escaped in the night’ or embarked on a ‘torturous exodus’. In the last few years there has been gaining momentum in media coverage and in 2020-21, the Mission has made headlines again with many articles and clips published.

KwaSizabantu Mission is an enclosed Christian community ruled with an ‘iron fist’ by its founder, Erlo Stegen, and built on a huge farm that sells vegetables and bottled water to South Africa’s biggest supermarkets and the export market.



Last year Erika Bornman launched her book Mission of Malice which gives her account of how KwaSizabantu waged emotional, psychological, and sexual warfare on her until she finally managed to break free and walk away at the age of 21. It was her story in 2000 that opened up the way for others to begin to come forward. A fascinating story, this did receive some decent media coverage.

Recent articles reported the allegations of severe abuse, torture, sodomy, rape and virginity testing at KwaSizabantu Mission’s Domino Servite School (DSS) that were outlined by a witness who testified at a CRL Rights Commission probe into the mission on behalf of students from last year and going all the way back to the 1960s.

The reporting said that when these crimes were reported to the mission leadership, they were “covered up, or the victims themselves were blamed and expelled from the mission and/or the school.” Apparently proper medical care was not provided either.

Also heard by the Commission in public hearings that have been reported in the last year are allegations of rape, assault, fraud and money laundering.

One of the witnesses spoke of both her and her niece being raped, saying she had been sexually abused by one of the leaders, but was “made to believe it was okay”. A local resident said it was known in the community what was happening but it had gone unreported for years.

“They would kick people out of the mission and leave them to fend for themselves. No money, place to stay or even arrange somewhere for them to go. They were able to control people. Everything the leaders at the mission said was correct in that it was ‘an instruction from God’. No-one would question it.”

In all these articles, the media did not interview or quote faith leaders on their take on the KwaSizabantu series of sagas. News24 did a deeper investigation but their online news is subscription based so is not available free.

Possible media angles and stories:

- When religion becomes a cult, the role of the faith sector
- Interfaith reaction and response to the Mission's alleged crimes
- The need and available support for faith-based trauma healing accompaniment



## 2. Silence of the faith sector

In most of the cases that were reported on, there was little input from the faith sector. Further, there has been little to no investigative articles linked to these news reports, which appear at current and key milestones of each case. There were no articles seen that linked the individual acts/cases to talk of GBV perpetrated by faith leaders – which is probably why there is also silence on behalf of the faith sector. This shows there is huge opportunity for the Faith Action to End GBV Collective to step in, give comment and work with media in the handling of these cases.

That said, there have been many occasions where the church or faith-based organisations have made bold public statements. For instance, when it comes to WWSOSA:

- In 2019, WWSOSA's annual conference focused on the theme of churches addressing GBV internally, with speakers from the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist Churches, as well as one Pentecostal Church. A public statement released after this quoted the Anglican Bishop of Natal saying that a key way forward was to debunk the misuse of Scripture to promote male dominance and female submission through the 'head of household' concept.
- WWSOSA has published statements on various cases since 2017, and most recently published a powerful statement that was published on the website and on social media called Words Fail Us. (see Annex 3)
- WWSOSA was involved in co-creating a petition together with the Gugu Dlamini Foundation, YMCA and local churches in the KwaMashu area, demanding that the perpetrator in the rape case on YMCA premises be refused bail. , as he had already begun intimidating witnesses through his family. (see Annex 2)
- The Coordinator of WWSOSA is also a Lay Canon (Gender and GBV) in the Anglican Diocese of Natal and supported the investigative process which achieved justice in the Roland Prince Case, amongst others. She is also a member of ACSA's Safe and Inclusive Church Commission

There are many more examples of the faith sector institutions and organisations making bold and innovative statements. Sonke Gender Justice has had fairly good media coverage. It remains now for others like WWSOSA, and many many others in the faith sector to collaborate within the sector and with the media to change the narrative.



Through our work as Faith Action to End GBV, especially through the 120 Day Campaign, the Collective has created awareness and discussion through social media and awareness through mainstream media on the important role the faith sector has to play in GBV. This centrally involves being vocal in public spaces such as the media. Thus the Collective and/or its partner organisations are able to take up the opportunity to shape more focused and in-depth coverage.

Through this media tracking in this project, we see now the urgency in ensuring these public statements are picked up by the mainstream media and on social media, and our people are seen as thought leaders and experts to shape a new narrative of the role of the faith sector in turning the tide against GBV in South Africa.

### 3. Learnings

Consequently, the learnings from this project that the Collective can take forward are:

1. Monthly tracking of cases in media involving faith leaders and GBV.
2. Making comment on the above as the case progresses through the media cycles: appearances, bail etc
3. Intentional commentary on terminology as during our tracking we saw that the use of the word 'survivor' was not used, although we do take into account that much of what was available was legally-oriented with the use of the word 'victim' seeming appropriate.
4. Preparing 'tips' and 'signs of abuse' and 'what to do' info sheets and then basing media engagement on this.
5. Amplifying the voice of the protestors and activists present at the court appearances
6. Spearheading investigative pieces on faith leaders and GBV to explore sexual violence as well as support and the role of positive faith leaders - through various formats such as suggesting to work with a journalist/holding safe space dialogues/producing a poetry e-book/working with the arts for drama and art projects, video.
7. Continuing to use 'calendar days' to make comment or for photo opportunities – 16 Days of Activism, Women's Day, NGO Day etc.



The above actions are certainly doable provided there is capacity and funding. The bigger issue remains the lack of an overarching tracking system of faith-based cases which when taken together with qualitative and lived experience, would give the faith sector incredible information and insight for innovative interventions for change.

The Joint Statement of Repentance and Commitment and Signature Campaign that the Faith Action to End GBV Collective is now embarking on will be well positioned and executed to ensure maximum media coverage. This provides many possibilities for news, human interest, features, polls, stories of change. As this is rolled out, a communications plan is going to be integral to the process and will build on the success of the 120 Day Campaign.



## 4. Annexures

### Annexure 1



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#### SAYMCA STATEMENT – KWAMASHU RESIDENT RAPE

The South African YMCA has received with great pain, news of the horrific rape of a five-year-old girl at the premises of the YMCA building at KwaMashu by a former resident of the Kwamashu YMCA hostel.

The SAYMCA expresses its utmost disgust at this inhumane and barbaric act on an innocent child. The YMCA as a Christian organisation working with young people, recognizes the emotional damage on the child, as well as the trauma that she and her parents are going through. We are pained with the burden the community is having to carry, worsening this continuing social evil of gender-based violence in South Africa.

The SAYMCA released a statement in 2019 and July 2020, categorically condemning all acts of gender-based violence and committed the movement to action that will eradicate this social evil. The SAYMCA reiterates this position and commits the movement to increased diligence through all local YMCAs, towards protecting the rights of children and young people, to ensure their safety. The leadership of the movement will work tirelessly to ensure that such a tragedy does not happen again.

We commend the police for swift action in arresting the accused. We trust that the accused will have his day in court and that the law will take its full course.

We reiterate our remorse and sadness at the pain enforced upon this child, her parents, family and the broader community. The YMCA will offer whatever support is necessary to the family as they seek to recover from this terrible act of violence against their daughter.

The Statement released by

**Philani Mabaso**

**YMCA KwaZulu Natal Regional Chair, and member of the National Executive Committee**

10/18/2020

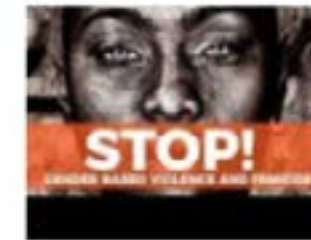


## Annexure 2



To: Minister Ronald Lamola, Department of Justice,  
 Minister Bheki Cele, Department of Police and the  
 Ntuzuma Magistrates -Court B

**Demand that the Ntumuza Magistrate -Court B does not grant bail for the perpetrator of child rape**



On the 20th of November 2020, we celebrate Children's day in South Africa but what is there to celebrate when the right to education and the right to safety and security for children is compromised? The rights which children rightfully deserve are stripped off from their duty because of people who don't care to adhere to the law. In the community of KwaMashu in KZN, an 8-year-old child was raped and the mother pressed charges. The perpetrator has sent threats to the mother and other people who want to lay charges. This is totally unacceptable as we have seen such people in our communities. WE DEMAND ACTION NOW! We demand,

- \*That the accused arrested under SAPS reference CAG: No 200/10/2020 not be granted bail.
- \*The police must make sure that the child and the mother are safe.
- \*That justice is served for the child and community.

#### Why is this important?

Children are the future of this country. We need to ensure that they are protected from people who want to harm them. The rape of the 8-year-old child has resulted in such outrage among community members of KwaMashu and the surrounding areas that, if the accused is released on bail, public protests may ensue.



UNTAGGED

Gender based violence

#tagged

#### Reasons for signing

## Stop Gender based violence  
 Reason: 10/11/20

973 of 1,000 signatures

Sign the petition

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email \*

Phone Number \*

Yes, keep me up to date with this campaign and other campaigns

By signing this petition, you are expressing your support for the people of this campaign. Such as allowing you access to the petition creator. We will never give your personal information to any other person. We will never give your name to any other person. We will never give your name to any other person. We will never give your name to any other person. We will never give your name to any other person.

First Name	Last Name	Email	Phone Number
Wendell		081 11 11	
Makhele		081 11 11	
Thabane		081 11 11	
Shabane		081 11 11	
Ukela		081 11 11	



## Annexure 3

### Words Fail Us: Statement

*WWSOSA would like to invite organisations and individuals to endorse this statement. If you would like to do so, send an email to the coordinator.*

As a nation, we are once again deeply traumatised by the most horrendous violence against one of us. Perpetrated by one of us.

How did we get here? Again?

The We Will Speak Out South Africa website ([wwsosa.org.za](http://wwsosa.org.za)) contains various statements published over the past few years decrying the brutality of GBV. Reviewing them, it becomes clear that speaking out is not enough as it does not lead to real change.

We heard last week that 23 000 teen pregnancies were recorded in Gauteng in a year and that 108 women and girls were raped every single day between 1 April and 30 June 2021.

While we were still digesting this, we heard of Nosiselo—a young woman with her whole life ahead of her and plans to lift her whole family out of poverty—being butchered by a man supposed to be her partner, friend and lover.

In the past 24 hours, the KZN Provincial GBVF Working Group—that includes high-level leaders of key Government and other service providers to fast-track intractable GBV cases—received reports of two cases in separate rural areas: a young woman's lifeless body dumped beside a river and a 17-year old child who lives alone with her baby who went missing after reporting being sexually assaulted.

We may never hear of them in the media – but they are part of us; they are us. And the perpetrators, too, are part of us. Are they also us?

Words fail us.

Instead of trying to find the 'right' words to speak into this situation, we can only cry out in desperation an adaptation of Jesus' own words:

“Forgive us, Lord, for we know not what we do”!



Forgive us for what we do as churches and other faith communities that undermine the presence of God in women, making men believe they have a right to control women's lives and bodies, even their families and their future. How have our teachings, theologies, and practices contributed to creating a society in which such crimes can ever be considered a course of action?

Dr Nontando Hadebe, International Coordinator of the Side by Side Network hosted by WWSOSA and a leader in our Faith Action to End GBV Collective, recently referred to the need for a “Reverse Propheticism” in which life ‘speaks back’ to religion. She warned that the ideals of our religions “mean nothing unless they make a tangible difference to the concrete daily experiences of women's lives.”

As long as women are the poorest, most marginalised members of our societies, and their bodies are degraded, beaten, raped and even cut into pieces, we have failed to respond to God's call to minister peace, love and justice. We need to continue to beg forgiveness.

But when we are honest: is it because “we know not what we do”?

It is time we become silent. So we might begin to hear the whispered, screaming lament of the millions of violated women and might even recognise them in our own hearts.

On almost the same date in 2019, we published yet another media statement in response to the brutal slaying of a young woman known to the public as Uyinene.

We repeat the final sentence:

“Let us hold one another to account- to act, to live, to say YES to be the change we dream of, every day of the year”... until we can be the change, see the change, live the change, so others may simply live.

Developed by WWSOSA



Endorsed by (as on 1 January 2022):

### Organisations

ACT Ubumbano – Ashley Green Thompson  
Diocese of Natal Gender Ministry – Archdeacon Forbes Maupa and Daniela Gennrich  
ELCSA Development Service – Ashmeer Joseph  
Faith Action to End Gender Based Violence (Collective) – Ms Nomgqibelo Mdlalose  
Hands of Compassion – Ps Xana McCauley  
Harry Gwala Council of Churches – Bishop M Mngcwengi  
Helping Hands Social Society – CEO Ambassador Mehreen Mia Cassimjee  
Institute of Afrikology – Dr Yaa Ashantewaa Archer-Ngidi  
International Federation of Christian Churches (IFCC) – Ps Giet Khosa  
Justice & Peace Ministry in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg – Tshepo Ratsomo  
Justice & Peace: Bryanston Catholic Parish – Judy Stockill  
KwaZulu Regional Christian Council – Bishop Bheki Buthelezi  
KwaZulu Regional Christian Council (KRCC) – Sthembile Sibiya  
KZN Network on Violence Against Women – Cookie Edwards  
Liberating Evangelical Lutheran Church – Rev. Lucas Morena  
MARFAM (Marriage and Family Renewal Ministry) – Toni Rowland  
Masakhe Youth Foundation – Ntwenhle Majozi  
Methodist Church of Southern Africa – Bishop Purity Malinga  
Methodist Women’s Manyano, Mokala Montle Synod – Sarah Phepheng  
Midlands Christian Council – Rev Dr CB Thenjwayo  
Mthonjaneni Community Resource Centre – Pastor Irene Buthelezi  
Phephisa Survivors Network – Nompilo Gwensa  
Rhema Bible Church North – Ps Xana McCauley  
Rhema Family of Churches – Ps Larry Elliott  
Ru’ha Community – Rev Dianne Willman  
Side by Side – Dr Nontando Hadebe  
Sonke Gender Justice – Rev Bafana Khumalo  
Southern KwaZulu Natal Christian Council (SKZNCC) – Bishop Ngcamu  
The M.E.A Company – CEO Ambassador Mehreen Mia Cassimjee  
The Well Health Company – Sixolile Ncgobo  
Thukela Amajuba Mzinyathi Christian Council – Rev Sonto Thusi  
Tugela Amajuba Mzinyathi Christian Council – Rev Sicelo Sikhosana



### Individual Endorsements

Aaron Matshediso  
Amy Benn  
Bishop Bheki Buthelezi  
Bishop M Mngcwengi  
Bishop Purity Malinga  
Daniela Gennrich  
Esperande Bigirimana  
Gil Harper  
Ian Booth  
Lyn van Rooyen  
Marx Manqokontsi  
Mehreen Mia Cassimjee – UN Peace Ambassador  
Moses Cloete  
Nompilo Gwensa  
Ntwenhle Majozi  
Pastor Irene Buthelezi  
Pastor Xana McCauley  
Paul Tyler  
Phindile Dlodla  
Prof. Lulama Makhubela  
Rev. Bafana Khumalo  
Rev. Desmond Lesejane  
Rev. Merrishia Singh-Naicker  
Saydoon Nisa Sayed  
The Venerable Rodney Whiteman  
Toni Rowland

