

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND
COMMUNITY SAFETY HON. MAKOMA MAKHURUPETJE
ON BEHALF OF LIMPOPO PREMIER STANLEY
MATHABATHA, DURING THE PROVINCIAL LAUNCH OF
THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM ON NO VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ZAMENKOMSTE VILLAGE,
MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT**

24 November 2017

Programme Director; Cllr Lindiwe Mogale;

Executive Mayor for Vhembe District Municipality; Cllr Florence
Radzilani

Mayor for Makhado Local Municipality Cllr Mildred Sinyosi

Speakers. Chief Whips, MMC's and all Councillors present here
today;

Chairperson of Vhembe Local House of Traditional leaders,
Thovhele Vho Vele Prince Kutama na Mahosi othe are fhana;

The SAPS Provincial Commissioner; Lt Gen Nneke Ledwaba
Makhado Cluster Commander;

Human Rights Commission Provincial Head Mr Victor
Mavhidula

Commission on Gender Equality Mr Tshepang Mokgokong;

Progressive Women of South Africa rep Ms Maria Manamela;

Chairperson of Community Policing Forum Board Mr Frans
Kgasago;

Chairperson of the Provincial Community Safety Board Mr Kgorutle

Women and Children Rights Organisations; Men's Forums;

Pastors from various denominations;

Ladies and Gentlemen; Comrades and Friends;

Good Morning, Ndi matsheloni, Avuxeni, Thobela

The Premier of Limpopo Province Ntate Chupu Stanley Mathabatha should have been here with us but due to other pressing matters of the State he cannot be here. He has delegated me as MEC for Transport and Community Safety to represent him today as we launch the provincial chapter of this year's 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children Campaign.

Before I go any further with my speech, I want to indicate that the Executive Council of Limpopo and the Premier have expressed their disgust at the continuing incidents of violence against women and children and want it to be known that such incidents are an abomination to the people of this province.

Each one of us gathered here, knows someone who has been violated by a partner, spouse or a closer relative. The abuse directed at women is also felt by their children; and again, the abuse directed at children is also felt by women as mothers.

As government, we are here to simply say; NO to such incidences. As the Provincial executive of Limpopo we will work together with SAPS led by the Provincial Commissioner, General Ledwaba and the Justice Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster to do deal decisively with those who are responsible for bringing shame in the lives of our women and children.

Programme director

We have descended here in Zamenkomste – the land of the Vha Venda warrior King Makhado to declare this territory safe and to further reclaim it from criminals.

Under the theme: *“Count me in: together moving a non-violent South Africa forward,”* we meet here today because the scourge of rape and other forms of violations against women, children, people with disabilities and elderly persons are threatening to take over the historically peaceful province of Limpopo. On a daily basis we file reported cases of rape against women, children and the elderly.

This year was no better when it comes to the abuse of women, children and persons disability. How can we easily forget the brutal murder of Karabo Mokoena, a promising 22 year old woman who died at the hands of her partner. Such incidents

shows that our society is sick to say the least. It further sends a chilling message down our spine that we are still very far away from stemming the tide against gender-based violence in our communities.

In the six months period between April and September this year we registered a record increase of attempted rape, sexual assault and murder in our province. Compared to 2016, attempted rape went up by 3.08%; sexual assault by 34.62% and murder by 54.72%. This is an indication that something must be done to fight gender-based violence. We need to effect more arrests, more lengthy convictions and more public awareness campaigns.

Programme director

Our meeting here today is informed by the need to fight gender based violence. This is a responsibility that must be shared by everyone - whether one is old or young, rich or poor, urban or rural. Every South African and every sector has a contribution to make to ensure that the message of 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children becomes a lived reality and not a passing slogan. This is the 19th year that South Africa has been participating in the 16 days campaign.

The campaign took a formal shape in 1999 in the country and

has since then grown from strength to strength This year's campaign builds on the successes of previous years and our intention is to mobilize Limpopo citizens to recommit themselves to act against the abuse of women, children, the elderly and people with disability.

Our sole intention is to propagate the message that violence and the abuse of our women and children must eventually come to an end sooner rather than later. Government runs the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to create public awareness on the negative impact of violence on women and children and to encourage collective action against all types of abuse.

Our 16 days campaign is part of the broader South African 365 days national action plan to end gender violence which was launched on 8 March 2007. The vision of the 365 days campaign is to see a South Africa free from gender based violence where women, men, girls and boys can realize their full potential.

The goal of the campaign is to ensure that we mount a sustained prevention and awareness campaign that extends the 16 days of activism period into a year-long campaign that involves women and men across the country. At the formal end of this campaign we shall say that we have achieved success when we begin to see rapid change in the attitudes and

behavior of both men and women. We would have reached our goal when we begin to see a much different treatment of persons with disability and the elderly. The goal is to ultimately reduce amongst others cases of rape by at least seven to ten percent per annum.

It is also the aim of the campaign to ensure that the South African Police Service takes seriously the reported cases of domestic violence and that there is significant reduction in femicides and cases of domestic violence each year. The goal of the campaign is also to reduce contact crimes such as murder, assault, and GBH by over 10% per annum.

Programme director

This week, President Jacob Zuma announced the appointment of General Khehla Sitole as the new National Commissioner of the South African Police Service. General Sitole is a career policeman and therefore not new to the SAPS having served for a number of years in many various senior roles including being the Provincial Commissioner of the Free State, Deputy National Commissioner and quite recently as the Divisional Commissioner responsible for Protection and Security services.

On behalf of Limpopo province, may I take this opportunity to convey our well wishes to General Sitole as he assumes his

new responsibility as National Commissioner of the South African Police Service.

We want the police under his leadership not to think twice when confronted with cases of women and child abuse. We want the newly appointed National Commissioner to take seriously these cases so that perpetrators are not simply released on bail but are instead given lengthy sentences.

We also want the active participation of communities in preventing the occurrences of these cases because the police alone cannot occupy every square metre of this province. As government we are committed to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with Men's Forums such as *Munna Ndi Nnyi?*, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), faith-based organizations, traditional leadership and healers as well as the business sector.

We want more partners to come on board so that we can implement a more effective and rigorous 365 Days National Action Plan. Victims of abuse are further advised to utilize services that are available and designed to protect them.

The SAPS has a unit called the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences unit whose focus is to deal with crimes that are prevalent amongst vulnerable groups. There are 16 of these units throughout our province. Let us utilize

them. There are 81 stations in the province with victim friendly rooms to help victims of gender violence. Our message is that let us use these centres.

Programme director

The unfortunate reality we face is that violence based on gender remains unacceptably high. This is despite our constitutional provisions and laws that we have put in place. The violence takes different forms such as sexual harassment, abuse, assault, rape and corrective rape, domestic violence and other cultural practices that are harmful to women and children.

Despite a sharp drop in sexual offences in the provincial crime statistics for 2016 we know that cases of Domestic Violence in particular continue to happen at unimagined rate. This is because crimes of this nature happen at home and in other private spaces where police are not able to detect perpetrators. At the rate that domestic violence is taking place we are sure that more deaths are taking place unnoticed, leaving many families broken apart or headed by children. This consequently give rise to street kids, incestuous rapes, repetitive rapes, single parenthood and poverty.

Our society cannot afford to raise children who are psychologically tormented because of domestic violence. Our society cannot afford to raise children without mothers and fathers, without brothers and sisters, and without grandparents simply because of domestic violence. Men must become positive role models.

This year, the focus of our campaign is to encourage a greater participation of men in the effort to prevent violence against women and children. The voices of men are crucial in the fight against violence and abuse as men often tend to become perpetrators themselves.

Men can no longer afford to be passive bystanders. The 19th of November of every year is celebrated globally as International Men's day. The day serves as stark reminder of the need for men and boys to play their part in building a safer and more socially cohesive society. It is our responsibility as government and civil society to popularise this day.

On this occasion of the commemoration of 16 days of activism, we make a call to our younger men and boys to be inspired to take action and commit themselves to become activists against gender based violence. It is now known that men who have grown up within abusive family environments become even more abusive themselves in relationships. These men must

become our target.

We call on responsible father figures to instill the values of human dignity, equality and respect in young men and boys. We must mentor and teach young boys about how they can be men enough in ways that do not involve degrading or abusing girls and women.

Abusers, blessers, murderers and rapists have no place in our community, and they must be held accountable for their actions. Now is the time to make our voices heard and declare publicly that enough is enough.

All cases of abuse, especially in rural areas need to be reported to authorities for immediate action. We must work with the police, prosecutors and magistrates to make sure that these criminals are arrested and convicted of their crimes. There is no need to protect the abuser simply because he or she is a breadwinner.

As the festive season approaches let us take stronger precautionary measures to heighten our guard so that we do not find ourselves vulnerable to incidences of abuse.

It's our responsibility to ensure that we look after ourselves and work together with our CPF and CSF to assist the SAPS to enforce the Law.

If we know of a man or a woman who is beating up their spouse let us speak out. If we know of a mother who is not taking care of her child, let us speak out.

If we know of a mother or a father who is abusing their disabled child let us speak out. If we know of a mother or a father who is not taking their child to school, we must speak out as a community. If we know of someone who is abusing social security grant of an elderly person through alcohol or gambling, let us speak out.

Only by speaking out will perpetrators be brought to book and serve their full sentences. Hand to hand we can move a non-violent South Africa forward!

I wish you a happy and safer festive season! Working together we can build a province where all people are safe and feel safe.

Let us all Arrive Alive! Ndi a Livhuwa! Thank you!