

13 August 2025

MEDIA RELEASE

Post-Extended Executive Council Meeting Statement on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in Vhembe District

The Limpopo Provincial Government convened a Special Extended Executive Council meeting on 13 August 2025, where it received critical reports from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Health's Forensic Pathology regarding the alarming prevalence of gender-based violence and ritual murders in the Vhembe District.

The Executive Council expressed deep concern over the prevalence of these acts, particularly those occurring within close-knit families. Tragically, some incidents involve parents and partners inflicting harm upon one another.

A distressing example highlighted was the case of a police officer who shot his partner in the Collins Chabane municipality. This shocking act was met with community violence, as members of the community took justice into their own hands.

The Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba said: "The Executive Council recognises that while increased police presence may address some symptoms of this crisis, it cannot resolve the root causes that manifest within our homes and relationships. It is vital that we prioritize community healing and mutual support over punitive responses. Our approach must focus on fostering understanding and empathy within families and neighborhoods."

Recognising that merely increasing police presence may not be an effective solution, the Executive Council emphasised the need to address the underlying issues that allow these acts of violence to persist.

It is crucial to prevent community agitation and the culture of retribution. To this end, the Executive Council will fully support the existing plans for a community engagement session to be organised by the Department of Transport and Community Safety, alongside the SAPS, scheduled for later this month. This session aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among community members.

Furthermore, the Premier Dr Ramathuba affirmed that the current actions will build upon the initiatives discussed at last year's gender-based violence and femicide summit.

The Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster has been tasked with re-evaluating the actionable items from the summit and presenting these to the Executive Council during our ordinary meeting later this month.

The Executive Council is particularly concerned about the impact of violence on children and has recommended that the proposed action plan incorporates support for these vulnerable individuals. It will actively engage with traditional healers, traditional leaders, faith leaders and civil society organizations to ensure a holistic approach to healing and support.

“We urge all members of the public to join us in fostering a culture of empathy, support and understanding as we work together to combat gender-based violence and its devastating impacts on our communities,” concluded Premier Dr Ramathuba.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Ndavhe Ramakuela
Provincial Government Spokesperson
[+27 82 200 5357](tel:+27822005357)

Thilivhali Muavha
Premier's Spokesperson
[+27 66 011 7034](tel:+27660117034)

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