

All talk with no action from Gauteng Provincial Government with regards to gender-based violence

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Madam Speaker,

On 31 August 2018, there was a Gender Summit with President Cyril Ramaphosa and from this event onwards, very little has taken place to change the lives of South African women, children, and other vulnerable groups such as the LGBTIQ community. We should all remember, two years ago at this Summit, the women who addressed the president naked because they wanted him to understand that they were tired of their bodies being crime scenes. We must be angry if that is how women feel they need to address a president because their plight has simply fallen on deaf ears. Imagine if I came to this house naked – you would think I am crazy – but this is how desperate women in our communities are feeling. In this same house in the previous term, we adopted that the Premier should be the Ambassador for anti-human trafficking - to date no report has been brought to the house telling us about what work the multi-departmental task team has done with regards to human trafficking in this province. I want to remind this house that human trafficking along with drug trafficking are the biggest financial crimes globally. Most people who get trafficked are women and children. Let us remember the definition of human trafficking: the action or practice of illegally transporting people from one country or area to another, typically for the purposes of forced labour or sexual exploitation. Human trafficking therefore falls squarely in the space of gender-based violence and cannot continue to be ignored. We know that even young boys are trafficked.

Last week, MEC Mazibuko responded to my questions on cases related to gender-based violence in Tembisa. These statistics can easily be mirrored in every community in Gauteng. For Tembisa these stats were as follows:

Opened cases: 294

Arrests: 127

Missing cases: 167

Cases that make it onto Court rolls: 125

Cases that get thrown out: none

I agree with MEC Mazibuko, that it is encouraging to know that all cases that lead to arrest make onto court rolls. However, I am worried that many victims in our communities open cases and then drop the cases. The key here is to analyse the reasons why they drop the cases. Let me tell this House about some of the conversations which I

have had with some NGOs in Tembisa around what they are finding to be the reasons why women open cases and then drop them:

1. After opening the cases, many women are intimidated by alleged perpetrators, who in many cases is a partner
2. There is a genuine fear that the case will not result in a conviction and that the alleged perpetrator will be back in the community and will cause further harm to the person who opened the case,
3. If the alleged perpetrator gets bail, they go back into the community and can harm the person who has opened the case
4. There are cultural issues and attitudes where women are told that they should "bekezele", "mamella", "stay" in their abusive relationships because a man never rapes his wife, he is entitled to her body.
5. Other cultural attitudes which say "Mokoko o itsoalla sethole" which basically says that a father has the rights to break his daughter's virginity and then continue having sex with her.
6. I am only mentioning a few but there are other reasons. If these issues are not addressed, we will never begin to address this violence in our communities.

It is time we start we should be anger (!) It is time that when we read the news we do not regard it as normal for elderly people to be raped by their grandsons who then take their pension card. All this is violence – lets be angry about it instead of saying – it is just happening again.

According to previous questions which I asked in this House, Tembisa schools have the highest number of teenage pregnancies in this province – most of these girls fall pregnant from sugar-daddies. An iPhone is not a good enough reason for a grown married man to destroy the future of a teenage girl: leaving her with a baby and in some cases infected with HIV.

Honourable Speaker, it is time, that we stopped talking and creating task teams that do not have anything to show for their work and instead start acting. This corrosion of our moral fibre is the worst and action is required.

I thank you!

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