

Democratic Alliance speech by  
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# Gauteng Provincial Government should prioritize ending gender-based violence to ensure safety of women and children

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**Madam Speaker,**

A year ago, as a country we mourned the tragic death of a Cape Town student who was found dead, after she was brutally raped and murdered. A little girl was kidnapped in Gauteng in the same week and a student in KZN was kidnapped, drugged, raped, and dropped off in front of her parents' house, just to die a few days later. A Wits student was drugged and raped. All of this in a matter of days. As a country we thought this was a week of darkness, but in fact this was just another normal week. We submitted a motion to this house in November last year when we called for the following:

1. The Gauteng Provincial Government creates a database of blacklisted sexual and/or gender-based violence perpetrators.
2. That the Gauteng Provincial Government lobby National Government, particularly the Department of Justice, to fast-track the establishment of special courts to deal swiftly with acts of sexual and/ or gender-based violence.
3. That this House reports back within 60 days as to the status of resolutions in (i) and (ii).

This motion was debated, but never voted on as was ruled by the Speaker at the time.

I also submitted oral questions to this house at the same time about yet another student from the University of Pretoria, who reported her rape ordeal in February 2019, yet her rape kit has not yet been tested. It is already 18 months later, and still no tests have been done. Another rapist roaming the streets of Gauteng freely, preying on more girls who will fall victim to his cruel habits and evil deeds.

The 2019 crime statistics released by the Department of Police revealed the depth of this crisis. The police recorded nearly 178,000 crimes against women. Of these, 82,728 cases were assaults while 54,142 were assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. In addition, 2,771 women were murdered, translating to seven deaths per day, with a further 3,445 attempted murders. In 2019 alone, the SAPS received 87,000 cases of gender-based violence complaints.

Fast forward, a year later, we find ourselves in 2020 during a pandemic. A pandemic that forced people into lockdown. Some might think this was a good way to limit the spread of the virus, but have we honestly asked the question as to how many women and children were forced to be in lockdown with the very people who cause suffering and pain to them on a daily basis. Locked down with their abusers.

This time they had nowhere to go, they cannot hide at work, at school or amongst family and friends, they were forced to be locked down in a house of horrors waiting for their next beating, the next rape, sometimes praying for it to end, and sometimes it did end and not in a good way. Suicide rates have increased during this time, and more gender-based violence cases have been reported during the lockdown. President Ramaphosa said that gender-based violence in South Africa should be considered as a second pandemic in the country – as serious as the Coronavirus.

But we have somehow forgotten about the movement “Am I next”, we have somehow forgotten about our motion and preventative measures we wanted to put in place to protect rather than kill.

**Madam Speaker**, it is a disgrace that a year later we wish to debate and resolve that we **now** need to consider changing legislation to speed up the GBV processes, where we could have prevented more killings and more injustices to women and the LGBTI community through gender-based violence over the last year.

Are we merely tabling this motion to sooth our conscience that we are trying to do something to stop gender-based violence or are we actually serious about this?

The Democratic Alliance has called for gender-based violence to be taken seriously on numerous occasions. What will these legislation changes entail, and how will this protect the most vulnerable from getting hurt amidst this sick society that we live in today?

We have failed our children. We have failed the women of our society, the daughters of our country, the future mothers of our nation.

I hope that this motion is not in vain, and that we will consider the proposals submitted by the Democratic Alliance previously, and that we as a provincial government will channel the same amount of energy we used to tackle the Coronavirus pandemic on the prevailing gender-based violence “pandemic” within our borders.

Having strict legislation is not enough, the implementation thereof is more important, otherwise the legislation will not even be worth the paper it is written on. Enough is Enough. It is time to take our vulnerable communities seriously and stop the violence now. Let this motion be the start of addressing the problems, but let it not end here. Let us not return in a years’ time in 2021 with a similar motion yet again, but rather lets listen and debate a report in this house showcasing the improvements made to address the violence in our society. There is a need of not only the amending the legislation, but also for law enforcement and educational programmes, and shelters with socio-psychological assistance, where our focus will be on healing and creating an open opportunity society for all people where no one will be more fortunate than another, but will all be granted access to a safe and secure environment free from abuse, free from violence, and free from femicide.

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