

We must all stand against the oppression of the LGBTIQ+ community

By Nazley Sharif MP - DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Thank you house chairperson

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, *“if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor”*.

This does not ring truer than when you put it in the context of protecting, advocating and standing up for the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community. The fight for sustained, consistent equality cannot be a fight that only those who are affected speak out on. We all have the responsibility to ensure the LGBTIQ+ community is protected under our constitution and the rights afforded to every single human being, no matter your race, age, gender or sexual orientation and must always, under all circumstances be protected. It is the responsibility of this Parliament to ensure that no person ever be excluded in the attainment of equality.

Just like Archbishop Tutu, I stand here today as an ally to the LGBTIQ+ community to use this platform to advocate for the safety of this community. The senseless killings of too many people at the hands of a intolerant, hating and violent society that has no regard for human life, has to stop.

Let us remember and celebrate the lives of:

- **Zwelenkosi Zulu** who was axed and burned in Eshowe;
- **Liyabona Mabishi** – brutally killed by three men in Khayelitsha;
- **Kirvan Fortuin** – stabbed several times by a teenage girl in Cape Town;
- **Simangaliso Dyasi** was shot several times in Soweto;
- **Lindokuhle Cele** – brutally stabbed in full view of a butcher in uMlazi; and
- **Portia Mtsweni**, who was stabbed in Tweefontein

May their souls rest in peace.

The level of intolerance in this country is beyond shocking, it is lethal.

South Africa continues to lead the African continent in legislation that recognizes the LGBTIQ+ community, was the first to legalize same-sex marriages, and continues to lead the rest of the continent in the attainment of equality. But however great the success is, we must never sit back and assume that the work is done because those who identify as LGBTIQ+ are being targeted by hate crimes every single day. Mr President, 35% of hate crimes are reported by the LGBTIQ+ community. This number is not only too high, it is indicative of the type of society we continue to cultivate.

A society that remains neutral in situations of injustice, one that says nothing in the face of injustice and deprioritizes large amounts of people because of our own rigid belief systems, a society so caught up in the superiority of views and opinions that we consciously contribute and perpetuate to the eraser of millions of peoples identities and take away the right of choice and the right to exist. How dare we?

There is absolutely no person on this earth that can confidently say that they have the power of God to determine how people live their lives! Imagine how narcissistic we have to be to believe that we have the right to determine autonomy over others.

History continues to teach and show us that when we are unable to be open ourselves to different beliefs, different ideologies, different ways of living and the infinite possibilities of who and what we can do and become, we automatically reject change and reject differences.

We must ensure that we do not stand on the side of the oppressors and unapologetically without fear and favour speak out against all types of oppression regardless of your own belief systems and ideologies.

I thank you.