

## **Gender-Based Violence and Femicide victims still left behind by government**

### **Speech by Nazley Sharif MP, DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities**

Thank you Madam Speaker;

With all due disrespect, Mr President, spending only 3 minutes of your speech on GBVF is appalling. Declaring GBVF a pandemic without proper ring-fenced budgets, prioritizing implementation, proper resourcing of GBVF frontline workers and without any political will is misleading and patronizing.

The crime stats from 2017/18 to 2022 are staggering.

Total number of sexual offences: **281 806**;

Rape: **223 544**;

Sexual assault: **40 909**.

These numbers represent real lives ruined through violent crime.

Mr President, I want you to think long and hard about this: it's estimated that only 4% of sexual offences are reported, which means the actual number of people who have been raped since 2017 could be as high as 5.5 million. I'll give you a moment, Mr President, to let that sink in.

You spoke on the second Presidential Summit on GBVF to assess the progress of the National Strategic Plan. Let's discuss the progress on the implementation of the NSP. The establishment of the National Council on GBVF is moving at glacial pace. Instead of a Council as promised, we have a Secretariat that fails to meet its targets. The GBVF Council must be fast-tracked. Is this what you call the fight on GBVF, Mr President? Because it's pretty weak.

Let's continue to talk money, since the economic aspect is the only thing you addressed in your SONA speech. 52% of the R21 million budgeted and allocated for the NSP has been used and only 22% of targets have been achieved. That is a massive failure, any way you look at it. 35% of targets not achieved is even worse. You must all hang your heads in shame. Clearly your fight against GBVF is failing. The lack of progress lays solely at the feet of this ANC government, we must keep them accountable.

Mr President, you focused on loadshedding, but failed to consider and address its effects on GBVF. Like everything in society, gender-based violence and its interventions will be impacted

by the energy crisis. In a country that already hates womxn, being in total darkness so often, poses many risks to the direct safety of womxn.

You swiped over Sexual Offences Courts, but failed to address the effects of loadshedding on continuous and increased postponements of multiple court cases across the country. Loadshedding has forced the Johannesburg High Court, for example, to return to online hearings or finding alternative venues where appropriate. And magistrates and regional courts may have resource constraints that limits their ability proceed with hearings online. The continuous postponement of cases causes major secondary trauma to victims, while in many cases the perpetrator is out on bail. Loadshedding has a direct impact on GBVF and yet you say nothing.

President Ramaphosa, I would urge you to stop using GBVF as a talking point and a tick box exercise. When you look at the evidence, this government is failing so badly that, thinking about it, you really weren't able to speak on GBVF for more than 3 minutes. What would you speak about? Your lack of intervention?

Mr President, you have to fire incompetent Ministers, prioritise the implementation of intervention strategies and take accountability for failing womxn in this country. Then maybe in your reply tomorrow you can attempt a rebuttal.

I thank you.