



TO : ALL MEDIA
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PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA CONDEMNS SURGE IN MURDERS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called on all South Africans to end the culture of silence around gender-based violence and report perpetrators to the South African Police Service (SAPS).

This comes as the body of a young woman was found dumped under a tree in Dobsonville, Soweto on Friday.

Since the country entered coronavirus alert level 3, there has been a surge in gender-based violence and femicide.

“It is a dark and shameful week for us as a nation. Criminals have descended to even greater depths of cruelty and callousness. It simply cannot continue,” President Ramaphosa said.

The President said: “We note with disgust that at a time when the country is facing the gravest of threats from the pandemic, violent men are taking advantage of the eased restrictions on movement to attack women and children.”

“As we still struggle to come to terms with the brutality inflicted on Tshegofatso Pule, Naledi Phangindawo, Nompumelelo Tshaka and other women in the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal whose bodies were found dumped this week, another woman has lost her life,” President Ramaphosa said.

The manner in which these defenceless women were killed points to an unconscionable level of barbarism and lack of humanity, the President added.

Tshegofatso Pule, who was eight months pregnant, was found stabbed to death and hanging from a tree in an open veld last week. It is also suspected one of the murdered Eastern Cape women was a victim of a mob killing.

Authorities in KwaZulu-Natal say this week an elderly woman was raped and a child was found dead in a field, and two young women shot dead.

“According to the SAPS there has been an increase in violent crime, especially murders, since we entered alert level 3. We need to understand what factors are fuelling this terrible trend and, as society as a whole, address them urgently,” the President said.

The President is deploying Ministers and Deputy Ministers to meet with community leaders in all districts around the country as part of national efforts to combat COVID-19. During these visits



they will be engaging with communities on this upsurge in gender based violence so that everyone can work together to prevent the killing of women.

President Ramaphosa noted that South Africa had among the highest levels of intimate partner violence in the world, and that as much as 51% of South African women have experienced violence at the hands of someone with whom they are in a relationship.

“In far too many cases of gender-based violence, the perpetrators are known to the victim, but they are also known to our communities. That is why we say this is a societal matter, and not a matter of law enforcement alone. Gender-based violence thrives in a climate of silence. With our silence, by looking the other way because we believe it is a personal or family matter, we become complicit in this most insidious of crimes,” President Ramaphosa said.

Citing the case of 36 year old Sibongiseni Gabada from Khayelitsha who was found murdered last month, the President said survivors of gender-based violence believe the criminal justice is failing them. Despite Gabada’s boyfriend allegedly confessing to the murder, the case against him was dropped, reportedly due to lack of evidence.

“For public faith in the criminal justice system to be maintained, gender-based violence needs to be treated with the urgency it deserves by our communities working together with our police” President Ramaphosa said.

“I urge the SAPS to act swiftly to track down whoever was involved in these murders and ensure there is justice for the murdered women and children. I also urge our communities to end the culture of silence and speak up. In doing so you will be saving lives,” President Ramaphosa said.

The President has urged communities to work with the police and report any tip-offs they may have to the Crime Stop Hotline on 08600 10111 or send an anonymous SMS to Crime Line at 32211, or to call the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre at 0800 428 428.

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