

Insession



**‘Wathint’ Abafazi,
‘Wathint’ Imbokodo’**
you strike a women, you strike a rock



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Mace of National Assembly

Vision

An activist and responsive people's Parliament that improves the quality of life of South Africans and ensures enduring equality in our society.

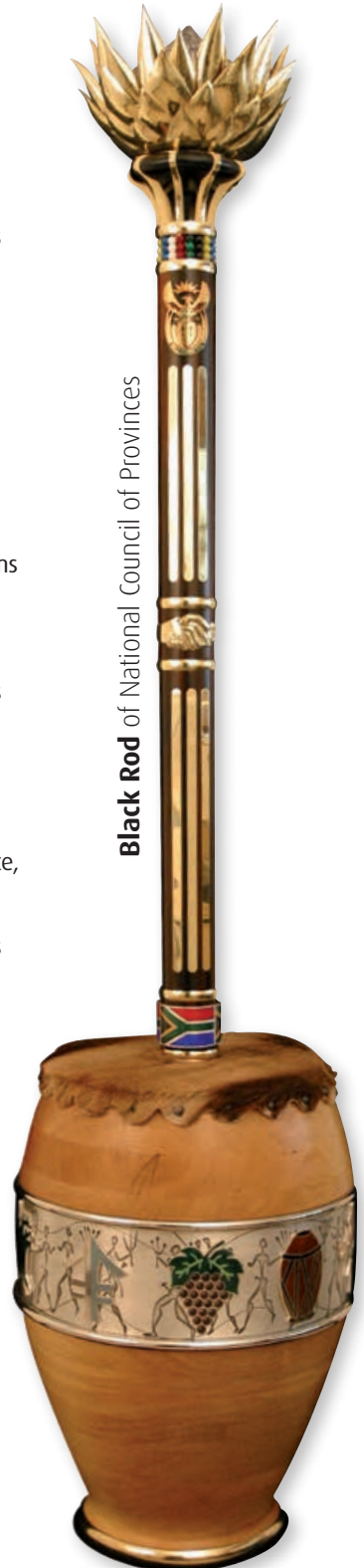
Mission

Parliament aims to provide a service to the people of South Africa by providing the following:

- A vibrant people's Assembly that intervenes and transforms society and addresses the development challenges of our people;
- Effective oversight over the Executive by strengthening its scrutiny of actions against the needs of South Africans;
- Participation of South Africans in the decision-making processes that affect their lives;
- A healthy relationship between the three arms of the State, that promotes efficient co-operative governance between the spheres of government, and ensures appropriate links with our region and the world; and
- An innovative, transformative, effective and efficient parliamentary service and administration that enables Members of Parliament to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities.

Strategic Objectives

1. **Strengthening oversight and accountability**
2. **Enhancing public involvement**
3. **Deepening engagement in international fora**
4. **Strengthening co-operative government**
5. **Strengthening legislative capacity**



Black Rod of National Council of Provinces



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OUR IDEALS
Vision

An activist and responsive people's Parliament that improves the quality of life of South Africans and ensures enduring equality in our society.


Strategic Objectives


Strengthening oversight and accountability; enhancing public involvement; deepening engagement in international fora; strengthening cooperative government; strengthening legislative capacity.


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PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**WOMEN'S
PARLIAMENT**
29 AUGUST 2019

"Gender and Institutionalism: Towards Strengthening the National Gender Machinery as a response to addressing Gender Based Violence in South Africa"



@parliamentofrsa



Presiding Officers condemn brutality and violence against women

Parliament described the recent spate of brutal killings of young women by men as “barbarism” that must be condemned and fought by all peace loving South Africans.

Parliament’s Presiding Officers, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thandi Modise and the Chairperson of the National Council of the Provinces, Mr Amos Masondo condemned the murders of University of Cape Town student, Uyinene “Nene” Mrwetyana and world boxing champion, Leighandre “Baby Lee” Jegels, as senseless killings that should be met with the full might of the law.

“It is shocking and disturbing to hear about such intensity of violence perpetrated against women by men,” said Speaker Modise and Chairperson Masondo.

Both Presiding Officers were part of a Women’s Parliament held in the National Assembly at the end of August that called for the declaration of gender-based violence as a national crisis in South Africa, so that emergency interventions and sustenance plans can be successfully executed.



UNITED: Delegates attend the Women’s Parliament.

“South Africa cannot afford to sloganeer and lament when women and girl children continue to die at the hands of men, most of whom are known to them.

It is clear that a war has been declared against women and girl children, and therefore it cannot be business as usual. Extraordinary interventions are called upon to bring an end to these senseless acts of lawlessness. This is a crisis and a war must be waged against these perpetrators to send a message of zero tolerance.”

Parliament must and will do all it can, through its oversight instruments and other constitutional powers, for gender-based violence to be declared a national crisis and to root it out of our society. The criminal justice system

must embrace a business unusual approach in dealing with this scourge.

“Women and girls of our nation have a reason to be afraid and for feeling insecure. As South Africans, we cannot claim to be free when the 55% of the population is daily living in fear of being raped, murdered and abducted.”

The Presiding Officers also called upon all members of society, men and boys in particular, to take responsibility for creating a society free from all forms of violence against women.

Parliament extended its heartfelt condolences to the Mrwetyana, Jegels and other families of victims of gender-based violence. “We wish them strength during these trying times,” they said.🙏

MPs call for tougher sentences for perpetrators of gender-based violence

After the sixth Parliament hosted a successful Women's Parliament in August, the National Assembly (NA) held a debate on the topic "National Women's Day: Gender and Institutionalism – Towards Strengthening the National Gender Machinery".

The discussion took place amid countrywide outrage following the killing of women at the hands of men. The recent killing of the University of Cape Town student, Ms Uyinenne Mrwetyana, dominated the discussions, with the condemnation of femicide and calls for the enhancement of the fight against gender-based violence, which was called a national crisis.

The debate was opened by the Minister for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, with tributes to the 19-year-old Mrwetyana, boxing champion Ms Leighandre "Baby Lee" Jegels, who was shot by her boyfriend – and Ms Lynette Volschenk, and all the women killed recently

Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane told the delegates that she was mentioning just a few of the women who were killed during Women's Month (August).

"We have counted up to 30 women thus far, whose names were in the media, including social media to indicate that this is a national crisis".

The Minister proposed, as a contribution towards a solution, that the country needs to involve several institutions

to end gender-based violence, saying the most important institution is the community. "The community is a structure that reinforces gender stereotypes and if abusive behaviours are frowned upon, challenged and not tolerated, we will have young men who will grow up respecting women in their diversity, and these will not escalate in other institutions," she said.

The Minister added that other key institutions will be put in place to end gender-based violence and rid the society of the killing of women, so that criminals will know that they have no place to hide and will be punished severely.

Ms Nkhensani Bilankulu, the Co-Chairperson of Parliament's Multi-Party Women's Caucus, called on the country to stand up and fight against the killing of women and children.

She said: "Let us all stand up, our nation is dying, our children and women are kidnapped, raped and killed every day, what have we done? Where are women and children supposed to live, on the streets, in their homes, church? Even at the Post Office they are raped, God have mercy, it is enough."

She also told Members of the NA that the Multi-Party Women's Caucus will propose amendments to existing laws, to make provisions for harsher sentences for perpetrators of violence against women and children, with a life sentence as the minimum.

Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament, Ms Nazley Sharif, also said the country is facing a crisis of gender-based violence.

According to her, femicide dominates



WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT:
Delegates sing the national anthem at the start of proceedings.



ENOUGH IS ENOUGH:
The rape and murder of Ms Uyinene Mrwetyana was the catalyst for hundreds of people to protest outside Parliament.

news in South Africa and that there is no safe space for women, they experience violence everywhere, including in their homes.

Mr Nqabayomzi Kwankwa of the United Democratic Movement said most of the country's policies and laws on gender only exist in name. Women still find themselves extremely marginalised in the economy. "There is a need for an audit on our current laws to see what works and what doesn't. Then we can begin the process of charting the way forward," he said.

He also questioned the effectiveness of the women's ministry and said something must be done to make it more effective in the fight for the emancipation of women. Mr Kwankwa said that campaigns against gender-based violence must become a common feature in political party constituency work. "It is not a women's battle, it is a battle for all South Africans," he said.



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



#Women

WOMEN

2019 "Twenty-Five Year



nsParliament2019 #WomensCharterReview @ParliamentOfRSA

WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT

Charter Review of the Women's Charter for Effective Equality"

Women's Parliament reviews Women's Charter

The first instalment of Women's Parliament in the sixth term took place with the theme "Gender and institutionalism: Towards strengthening the National Gender Machinery as a Response to Addressing Gender-Based Violence in South Africa". The goal of the gathering was to review the Women's Charter for effective equality, which was adopted 25 years ago, reports Abel Mputing.

Speaking on the Women's Charter: An Unfolding Trajectory of Women's Struggle, Women's Power and Women's Voices in History, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thandi Modise, narrated the long history of women's struggle for freedom and the events that led to the inception of the Women's Charter. She emphasised that one cannot talk about the charter

without talking about the pain of black females.

The charter is non-partisan, she said, and involved black and white women, for "the pain of women knew no colour, even during apartheid. As we were counting the bodies of our dead children, the white women were doing the same. As such, they could also relate to the life of a black woman at that time." She stated how the charter was compiled. "We went from village to village, from town to town, from city to city, to hear the demands and wishes of women and out of that long shopping list, the charter emerged."

Women's agitation for equal rights continued well into the democratic transition. "When negotiations of a new democratic government were held, Ma Albertina Sisulu questioned the absence of women in that process. Although that did not make us popular, women were later represented."

Ms Modise stressed that the land question is at the centre of women's advancement. "Women's advancement

is tied to their access to land, especially in rural areas. Because land is tied to the economy, we can't separate women's rights from economic freedom."

She called for the strengthening of women's caucuses in the legislatures, for that could be an instrument that could advance gender machinery and oversight over women's rights. "We need women's caucuses for we need to sit and talk to ourselves in the legislatures. And if we think that as women we can do it alone, we are mistaken."

The Deputy Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities in the Presidency, Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize, spoke on gender machinery.

"After 1994 we ended up with a certain number of women representation in Parliament. But that was not enough because the women's struggle for equal rights did not end due to that, hence we needed a gender machinery that would benefit not the few, but embrace all women in dealing with



CALL TO ARMS: National Assembly Speaker Ms Thandi Modise addresses the women in Parliament.



their inequalities." Thereafter, she pointed out that there was a debate whether we need a women's ministry to advance women's rights. "There were disparate views on the matter. One was that women's issues would be marginalised by such a ministry. But eventually a consensus was reached that a ministry is needed, hence we ended up with one."

She recognised the women's ministry's role in ensuring that gender machinery is embedded into the seven key priorities of government to ensure that women's issues are not marginalised. "As a result, women's issues are now not an afterthought, they are, instead, at the centre of these priorities."

In her view, gender violence cannot be isolated from economic issues. "If we don't talk about economic issues and how they are related to gender violence, it will be difficult to address gender violence." She called on women to stand together. "If we underestimate the need to stand together, we will lose our battle and the gains of those who came before us."

Speaking on the "Role of the Ministry of Police in Budgeting for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence", the Deputy Minister of Police, Mr Cassel Mathale, condemned the high levels of gender

violence. He assured delegates that his department is doing something to curb it. "We have introduced a six-point plan that sees to it that the victims of this crime are treated with dignity and in a sensitive manner to avoid second victimisation. Now, the victims and their families will be subjected to medical examinations and given psychological assistance and will be given feedback on their cases regularly."

There is also a plan to recruit women to work in the facilities that take care of gender violence victims "to make them more receptive to the victims". To illustrate that police are

serious about gender violence, he said "658 life sentences that have been meted out to perpetrators of gender violence. This has helped the families of victims to find closure".

Ms Lindelwa Ntlonze, the Chairperson of South African Local Government Association (Salga) Women Commission, said they will have a gender budgeting instrument that will monitor and evaluate the progress of the advancement of women's rights at local level. "This budget will be used to set indicators and to assess their progress. And they will form part of the Integrated Development Plan of the municipalities." 🌸



OUR POWER: Crowds gathered outside Parliament to condemn violence against women.



Gender-based violence: a national crisis

The Women's Parliament included a session to discuss how to adequately resource the strategies and plans aimed at combating gender-based violence. In her opening remarks, the facilitator, Interim Steering Committee Member of Gender-Based Violence in the Presidency, Ms Tamara Braam, proclaimed that the time for talking is over. If the national strategic plan to combat gender-based violence is not adequately financed and resourced, she said, it will not succeed. Abel Mputing reports.

Ms Braam pointed out that a "a serious conversation needs to be started about budgeting and this includes human resourcing and technical infrastructure". Government must identify its key priorities for a strategic plan to deal with gender-based violence, she said.

A representative of Action Aid, Ms Nondumiso Nsibande, agreed with her on the need for urgency and resources. "What is critical in the fight against gender-based violence is not only the articulation of priorities, but their implementation." Support also is needed for shelters that care for the victims of this violence, she added. "We need to provide quality services to victims. This requires increased budgets. Currently, we are not resourcing these places of care adequately."

Gender-based violence should be declared a national crisis, according to Ms Liezl van der Merwe, a member

of the Women Caucus's Steering Committee. "Women must declare that enough is enough. Gender-based violence should be declared a national crisis, so that it can be accorded the urgency it deserves in terms of treatment and resources."

"It's sad to think that as a country we are spending R5 on a shelter per day and R350 on a criminal in prison," she continued. "There is a discrepancy there and our resourcing should prioritise shelters rather than criminals."

"We need a committee that will be dedicated to gender-based violence, so that we can come up with the necessary legislation and oversight mechanism that will deal with this scourge, rather than dealing with it in an uncoordinated manner."

A representative of South African National Aids Council, Dr Matom

**WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT:
Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP
Ms Sylvia Lucas addresses the
delegates.**

Kganakga, said that to combat gender-based violence we need to adopt the same zeal as used in the fight against Aids. Dr Kganakga also believes in a long-term approach that deals with the root causes of this scourge. "As long as the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality are still with us, the inroads that would be made in the fight against this scourge would be minimal."

The effects of gender-based violence are compounded when victims are victimised further by the criminal justice system, said a representative of Women's Legal Centre, Ms Seehaam Samaai. "Currently, there is no one uniformed response to victims of this crime at police stations. Often, victims are subjected to multiple interviews and questioning. This often constitutes second victimisation, for victims would be required to re-tell their ordeals again and again, often to different personnel."

The ministry of women has to reflect deeply to "determine what it can do differently in this regard," said the Whip of the Multi-Party Steering Committee, Ms Andiswa Masiko. Victims' ordeals should not be reduced to data, which is often silent on the magnitude of their ordeals. "We need to add faces and stories to this scourge, not just data. To narrate the pain that its victims have gone through, we should not hide these stories behind data. Let's unmask data and bring the human element to the fore."

She also emphasised the need for increased budget resources. "We can't sit and fold our arms when women's projects are under-funded. We have to ensure that gender budgeting takes priority in various government departments."

To get value out of it, "we need to monitor all government programmes to ensure that they improve the economic plight of women".





Rape victims face excruciating questions in the SA courts

The Women's Parliament, assessed progress on the programmes included in the Women's Charter of 1994.

*The programmes include law, economy, education, development, infrastructure, political and civic life, family life and partnerships, customs, culture and religion, health and the media. These programmes were referred to as "Articles" and each province was responsible for an article, reports **Mava Lukani**.*

Making a statement on Article Two, Law and Justice, the Eastern Cape representative, Ms Masiko-Mapako, told the Women's Parliament that, in as

much as the Constitution outlines the equality of men and women under law and justice, practically women still need to go an extra mile to be on the same level of justice and law with men.

Ms Masiko-Mapako used a scenario of a rape case in a South African court to support the argument of inequality between men and women under the law and justice. She said it is the rape victim that must prove in court that she was raped. According to her, the man, the perpetrator, would be enjoying his right of innocence until proven guilty by his traumatised victim.

There is a long list of painful steps which the victim must meet before she can reach the first step of the process of the application of justice. However severely the victim may have been traumatised by the rape, she must go to the doctor for examination within a certain period of time, and go to the police to open a rape case. Under the South African criminal justice system,

the rape victim carries a heavy burden to prove that she was raped.

Insession spoke to some observers in the Women's Parliament on the Justice and Law Article of the Women's Charter. Ms Victoria Mdyogolo of Philippi township in the Western Cape, said although the justice system is non-sexist, its requirements such as going to a doctor for proof should be reviewed from time to time, to remove anything that increases pain to the victim. "The questions such as 'how did he penetrate you? What did you (the victim) wear?' These are the kinds of questions that should be avoided as they inflict more pain," said Ms Mdyogolo.

Ms Nolusindiso Xazolo of Mossel Bay said, from her observation, oppression of women by men will be stopped by the judgement of God. "We can't trust the government to stop it as it is perpetuated by senior government politicians and officials.



Our Constitution and laws that are supposed to be arms and ammunition to be used to fight gender-based discrimination and violence, are used by the perpetrators for their defence, and that is a very serious contradiction," Ms Xazolo said.

Under the article on customs, culture and religion, Ms Xazolo said customs, culture and religion are very big and complicated sources of male chauvinism and sexism in South Africa.

"We hoped that the male born-free children would be immune from these poisons. However, we didn't realise the power of the African culture and religion in particular, in socialising our male children," emphasised Ms Xazolo.

She attributed the problems of gender and sex discrimination largely on African culture and religion. The problem of the stereotype of witchcraft is as alive as it was in the ancient times in the African communities. "We hear horrific news of torture and death of young and old ladies in the villages on grounds of suspicion of witchcraft. The worst of all is that these horrific acts are committed by born-frees," said Ms Xazolo.

Members of the Women's Parliament also made statements on gender-based violence and equality in South Africa on behalf of their political parties. The Minister of Public Works, Ms Patricia de Lille, made a statement on behalf of the GOOD Party. She appealed to women to speak with one voice in the fight against gender-based violence and femicide. She urged women to break all the barriers that weaken their fight against the scourge of gender discrimination. "You don't need to be black in order to fight gender discrimination. You don't need to be a lesbian in order to fight homosexuality," reiterated Ms De Lille. She said, by just being a woman, join other women in the fight. "No other condition." 🌹



OUR SOUTH AFRICA – THE SUN

The sun heals the divisions of the past, improves the quality of life of all South Africans, frees the potential of each person and builds a united and democratic South Africa, taking its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.



OUR PEOPLE – THE PROTEA LEAVES

Our people, building on the foundation of a democratic and open society, freely elect representatives, acting as a voice of the people and providing a national forum for public consideration of issues.



OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM

The drum calls the people's Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, to consider national and provincial issues, ensuring government by the people under the Constitution.



OUR CONSTITUTION – THE BOOK

Our Constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is the supreme law of our country, and ensures government by the people.