



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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"The 16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children is a period wherein proponents advocating against this scourge must be hailed for their efforts and interventions throughout the year. It's time to pause and reflect on the gains government and social movements have made to arrest such abhorrent acts," that's according to KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa who is also the MEC Champion in uMkhanyakude District Municipality. KaMadlopha-Mthethwa was speaking at the Mlamula area near Phelandaba in UMhlabuyalingana, outside Manguzi in the northern part of the province.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has reiterated the government's call that such a period must be a reminder about the journey travelled so far with government, civic organisations, and private companies working together to stem the tide of GBVF. She said survivors of gender-based violence and Femicide still encounter challenges such as stigma, blame and shame which can prevent them from seeking help, adding that physical and emotional trauma also contribute to the survivors not disclosing their experiences. She said that while noting challenges, as government, they have made strides in fighting GBVF.

Speaking at the event, KaMadlopha-Mthethwa also shared disturbing statistics from police's second quarter of 2024 that KwaZulu-Natal has the highest rates of Gender Based violence and Femicide (GBV and F) incidents in South Africa, including domestic violence, sexual assault and Femicide. She said although uMkhanyakude District has a low number of women impacted by GBVF (225) compared to other districts with eThekweni (2003) and uMgungundlovu (672), more efforts and support are provided to the survivors, singling out Thuthuzela Care Centres and victims-friendly rooms built in and around police stations with an intent to provide a safe, private space for the survivors to make statements about crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse, sexual offenses, and gender-based violence.

The event, which was a stone's throw away from the monument of Thandazile Mpunzi, the late anti gender-based violence activist with albinism, was killed for her body parts in 2015. KaMadlopha-Mthethwa said Mpunzi's tragic murder which sparked outrage across the country, must be a constant reminder that women are vulnerable and need to be protected by all. She said that according to the 2016 South Africa Demographic Health Survey, around 21% of women aged 18 and older had experienced sexual violence at the hands of their partners.

She made a clarion call to the public that today, the 10th of December, should actually also mark the continued efforts aimed at advocating for a free GBVF in all communities, and that such a deliberate act in arresting the scourge of GBVF should be fought for 365 days a year.