

Mayor launches 16 Days of Activism against GBV

Knysna Executive Mayor Elrick van Aswegen spoke out in support of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children 2020 campaign, launched by the National Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

“Enough is enough,” he said. “It has been documented that the rate of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa is five times higher than the global average. How can we, as local government, as a community, as neighbours, friends and family members, allow this to continue?”

“We must, as society, stand up and shout: no more! We cannot remain silent as men continue to abuse and murder women and children. We must all realise that, as an individual, I have a role to play in ending GBV.”

Van Aswegen made his comments as President Cyril Ramaphosa officially launched the national campaign on 25 November. The theme for this year’s campaign is *Women’s Economic Justice for a non-violent and non-sexist South Africa*. This national theme focuses on how persistent patriarchal systems that continue to subject women to economic violence, unequal pay, harassment in the workplace, corporate glass ceilings and many more degrading inequalities that are simply – and incorrectly – based on the perceived servitude of women to men and society at large.

“This is a perception that needs to change,” van Aswegen continued. “The need for this unfair economic suppression to change is just as great as the need to stop the physical violence against women and children. The fact that we as a community allow these injustices to continue, is a very harsh indicator of the moral degeneration of society.”

“To initiate this change, we need men and women to fully understand the meaning of words like love, honesty and integrity. We need men and women to truly respect the rights of others,” he said. “The family unit plays an integral role in shaping values, attitudes and behaviour. This is where the greatest potential for generating change lies. This is where we must teach our sons and young men that any form of gender-based abuse is wrong. And this is where we must teach our daughters and young women to speak out against abuse and to report any transgressions made against them.”

“We must all stand together and take collective responsibility for the current situation,” van Aswegen said. “We must work together to eradicate this scourge of inequality and, in particular the violence against women and children. And we must put an end to the bystander culture that silences communities about the violence that takes place.”

“We are running a number of initiatives to make a change and we support all programmes run by national and provincial government,” he concluded. “But we cannot do this alone. We must work together to build a society where morality takes prevalence. I call on all men, women, boys and girls to join us in this fight. It is one that we must win if we wish to create an inspired, innovative and inclusive Knysna.”

ENDS
