

GBV encapsulates all forms of violence based on sex or gender,<sup>1</sup> from physical to financial. Woman and girls disproportionately suffer from GBV, and men disproportionately perpetrate.<sup>2</sup>

GBV is extremely prevalent in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> It is one of the most unsafe places in the world to be a woman, with some of the highest rates of intimate partner violence.<sup>4</sup> During Covid-19 lockdowns public spaces were mostly closed, forcing victims of abuse to stay at home with their abusers thus increasing domestic abuse, a form of GBV.<sup>5</sup> This is illustrative of the underlying discriminatory attitudes towards woman, which were brought to the fore by lockdown circumstances.

South Africa has ratified international human rights instruments in order to protect the rights of woman and girls, therefore obliging it to eliminate discrimination against woman and girls, and to adopt legislation to do so.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the Constitution promises equality, human dignity and freedom and security of the person to all people.<sup>7</sup>

Current South African legislation is ineffective at curbing GBV.<sup>8</sup> Our President has recently introduced 3 new bills to parliament that are designed to bring justice to the victims of GBV.<sup>9</sup> While we are cautiously optimistic about these Bills, it is important to note that they are not aimed at preventing GBV, rather at securing justice after the fact.

We therefore urge South Africa to adopt these Bills, and to take further steps to prevent GBV, to ensure that woman and girls can live the rights afforded to them by international law and our Constitution.

Thank you

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/series-what-does-mean-gender-based-violence>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/gender-based-violence-in-south-africa>

<sup>3</sup> Colpitts, E. (2019) Engaging men and boys to prevent gender-based violence in South Africa: possibilities, tensions and debates, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, 40:3, 423-439, DOI: [10.1080/02255189.2018.1491393](https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2018.1491393)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.justice.gov.za/vg/gbv/NSP-GBVF-FINAL-DOC-04-05.pdf> pg 2.

<sup>5</sup> <https://methodist.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/200601-Gender-and-Theology-Part-2-Prof-Mzi-Nduna.pdf> pg8.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/safrica/ZA-FINAL-09.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/SACConstitution-web-eng-02.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Mogale, R. S., Burns, K. K. and Richter, S. (2012) 'Violence Against Women in South Africa: Policy Position and Recommendations', *Violence Against Women*, 18(5), pp. 580–594. doi: [10.1177/1077801212453430](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801212453430).

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/south-africa-new-laws-gender-violence-what-to-know/>

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