



**Oral Statement at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Item 3: ID on the report of the SRSG on violence against children**

**Date: 15 March 2023**

**Delivered by: Rutendo Mugwara**

Mr. President

All children in South Africa have the right to be protected from abuse, violence and neglect. <sup>1</sup> The Children's Act further reiterates the importance of protecting children from abuse, harm and neglect as well as the various services and resources available to help protect the needs of the child.

Despite this, South Africa continues to be a violent environment for children to live. It is estimated that the child homicide rate is 5.5 per 100,000, twice the global average. <sup>2</sup> It was further estimated that nearly half of all child homicides in South Africa were due to abuse or neglect. <sup>3</sup> This violence negatively affects children in various ways. Psychological consequences of violence against children include depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, suicide as well as unwanted pregnancy and HIV. <sup>4</sup> Experiences of childhood violence also have the ability to stunt cognitive development, leading to long-term consequences within the life of the child. <sup>5</sup>

Edmund Rice International and the Justice Desk therefore recommends that the Government:

1. Should prioritise the protection of all children through the creation of a separate portfolio committee to address the issue of violence against children.
2. Create parent and guardian specific programs that will prioritise and promote positive parenting interactions and the skills needed to parent effectively.
3. Work within communities to create and implement child protection and safeguarding strategies to address and reduce instances of child abuse.
4. Conduct increased trainings with teachers and caregivers to properly identify and report instances of abuse.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> The South African constitution, 1996 (28)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.savethechildren.org.za/sci-za/files/47/47ab7077-1d0d-4c37-8ae2-161b18ae427a.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.savethechildren.org.za/sci-za/files/47/47ab7077-1d0d-4c37-8ae2-161b18ae427a.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.ci.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image\\_tool/images/367/Child\\_Gauge/South\\_Africa\\_Child\\_Gauge\\_2014/ChildGauge2014\\_preventionagenda.pdf](http://www.ci.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/367/Child_Gauge/South_Africa_Child_Gauge_2014/ChildGauge2014_preventionagenda.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/long\\_term\\_consequences.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/long_term_consequences.pdf)