

21 APRIL 2021 JOINT STATEMENT: SPATE OF HATE CRIME MURDERS
- LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE SAY MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

South Africa, it is enough

Over the past two and half months, South Africa's LGBTIQ+ community has been rocked by a series of brutal hate crimes against its members - from KwaZulu-Natal to Gauteng, from the Eastern Cape to the Western Cape. At least six lives - that we know of - have been snuffed out in cold blood.

- Bonang Gaelae, 29, whose throat was slashed in Sebokeng on 12 February.
- Nonhlanhla Kunene, 37, whose body was found half naked in Edendale, Pietermaritzburg on 5 March.
- Sphamandla Khoza, 34, who was beaten, stabbed and had his throat slit on 29 March in Kwamashu, Durban.
- Nathaniel 'Spokgoane' Mbele, who was stabbed in the chest in Tshirela, Vanderbijlpark on 2 April.
- Andile 'Lulu' Nthuthela, 41, whose mutilated and burned body was found on 10 April in KwaNobuhle, Kariega.
- Lonwabo Jack, a young LGBTIQ+ individual who had just celebrated his 22nd birthday on 17 April. His lifeless body was found on a pavement the next day in Nyanga, Cape Town.

Also,

- A lesbian couple who was refused service at a health institution after they had been assaulted on the University of Fort Hare Alice Campus on 16 April amid a claim that "ibutch isithathela amacheri" (butch lesbians are taking our women).
- This morning we learned of another suspected hate crime case in the Eastern Cape, the circumstances of which are still coming to light.

We have been here before.

Since the dawn of democracy, LGBTIQ+ South Africans have been brutalised, raped and killed across our nation. The list is long. Names like Sizakele Sigasa, Salome Maoosa, Eudy

Simelane, Gift Makau, Sana Supe, Nare Mphela, Kirvan Fortuin and Lindo Cele may stand out but so many others did not make headlines. So many more have gone unrecognised as hate crime victims at all because even today we still have no hate crime legislation in this country.

Today we still fear to simply be ourselves, to dress how we choose or to share an embrace - not only in public but also among those who we may count as friends and neighbours. They too are our murderers; sometimes children as young as 14.

Not only do we fear for our very lives, but we continue to face discrimination all around us. Social media platforms are replete with queerphobic words, threats and slurs with no consequences. Religion continues to be used as an excuse to debase our community in ways that would never be tolerated when it comes to other citizens or groups. Our state dehumanises us in police stations and government offices.

Our community's plight is a bloody stain spreading across our constitutional democracy and our leadership. We've seen a seemingly endless stream of conferences, workshops, task teams and statements but truthfully there has been little action.

South Africa's Constitution does not just come with rights but also responsibilities, including leading by example. Our great continent is still plagued by LGBTIQ+ hate that has roots in its colonial past; a twisted heritage that we simply refuse to acknowledge or shake off and have misguidedly embraced as African.

Today, we are here to say enough. We are tired of lip service. We are tired of promises. We are tired of excuses. **Today we demand the following:**

- That by the end of this week (Friday 23 April 2021) the **President of the Republic of South Africa** unequivocally speaks out, condemns and calls for an end to the violent attacks on the LGBTIQ+ community.

Furthermore, the **Government of South Africa** must:

- Urgently finalise and enact the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill, which was first drafted in 2016 and was approved by Cabinet in 2018.

- Properly fund, resource and restore the functionality of failing entities such as the National and Provincial Task Teams and the Rapid Response Team that were meant to address violence against LGBTIQ+ South Africans.
- Create dedicated LGBTIQ+ Desks in each province to address the needs of LGBTIQ+ citizens.
- Ensure that sensitised and safe shelters are provided or are funded for LGBTIQ+ people who are in crisis in each province.
- Embark on a mass LGBTIQ+ sensitisation programme of government institutions, especially the SAPS and the Department of Home Affairs.
- Speed up proposed changes to South Africa's identity laws and related government policies to allow LGBTIQ+ individuals to self-identify when it comes to their gender and sex.
- Combat heterosexism on an administrative and government level: This includes providing inclusive forms in all government departments; gender-neutral bathrooms, gender-neutral hospital rooms, and gender-neutral detention centres.

We also demand that **Religious, Spiritual and Traditional Leaders and Organisations:**

- Speak out and condemn the violence perpetrated against the LGBTIQ+ community as unacceptable and immoral.
- Stop using so-called religious, cultural or traditional values as excuses to exclude or discriminate against members of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Live the values of our Constitution and actively work to promote the inclusion and acceptance of LGBTIQ+ people in congregations and communities across the country.

We also demand that the **South African Media** more comprehensively report and speak out on these incidents to raise awareness and provide information to society.

Finally, we demand that **all of South Africa's citizens** take responsibility to stamp out the abhorrent queerphobic views and actions of their friends, families and neighbours.

South Africa, enough is enough!

This statement is supported by the following organisations:

- Access Chapter 2 (AC2)
- The Aurum Institute (POP INN)
- Exit
- Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW)
- GALA Queer Archive (GALA)
- Gay and Lesbian Alliance of South Africa (GLASA)
- Gay and Lesbian Network
- Gender and Religion Program at UKZN
- Gender Dynamix
- Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions
- Inclusive & Affirming Ministries (IAM)
- Iranti
- Just Detention International-South Africa (JDI-SA)
- KwaZulu-Natal LGBT Recreation
- Lawyers for Human Rights
- MambaOnline.com
- Matimba
- The Other Foundation
- OUT LGBT Well-being
- Pan Africa ILGA
- Parents, Families & Friends of the South African Queers (PFSAQ)
- PASSOP

- PATHSA (Professional Association for Transgender Health South Africa)
- Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA)
- Same Love Toti
- Scope
- Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition
- S.H.E
- The Thami Dish Foundation
- Triangle Project
- The Ujamaa Centre at UKZN
- Vaal LGBTI
- We're Queer My Dear (WQMD)

#SpeakUpCyril #JusticeForQueerSA #EnoughIsEnough

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