

# President signs GBVF declaration in Oakdene

Lucky Thusi

HISTORY was made in the South when President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Presidential Summit Declaration against Gender-based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) at the official opening of the Booyens Magistrate's Court on March 28.

Presidential delegates, ministers, local officials and guests attended the event in Oakdene.

Unveiling the plaque for the court were Ramaphosa, Minister of Public Works Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Michael Masutha and Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi, who was the acting Gauteng premier on the day.

Lesufi, on welcoming the guests, asked the survivors of gender-based violence to stay strong, assuring them that they are not alone.

He also urged the victims to walk away from abusive relationships.

"We are serious about eliminating gender-based

violence and the opening of this court is part of the government to give justice to all.

"On a daily basis women are violated and attacked. Today we are saying enough is enough. GBVF must end now. Not in our name shall women suffer," he said.

Masutha said he was pleased to celebrate the official opening of the court with the president and thanked him for coming. He also mentioned that the court was finished in record time and within budget.

#### **Treat women with dignity**

In his keynote address, Ramaphosa promised to protect the community against gender-based violence and this opening of the court was the promise to the people.

"We need to treat our women with dignity and empathy. Today we are making a bold and unequivocal statement against GBVF. Our women no longer feel safe in their homes, work, churches, towns, cities and on the streets.

"Gender-based



CIVIL SOCIETY SIGNATORIES: His Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Michael Masutha and Civil Society representatives. *Photo: Lucky Thusi.*

violence impacts us all. No day passes without hearing harrowing stories of how women and children are being killed and raped. At the National Gender-Based Violence Summit held in November 2018 we said there is no acceptable level of abuse. We don't want to bring it down but to eradicate it," he said.

The opening of the court and the signing of the GBVF declaration are two

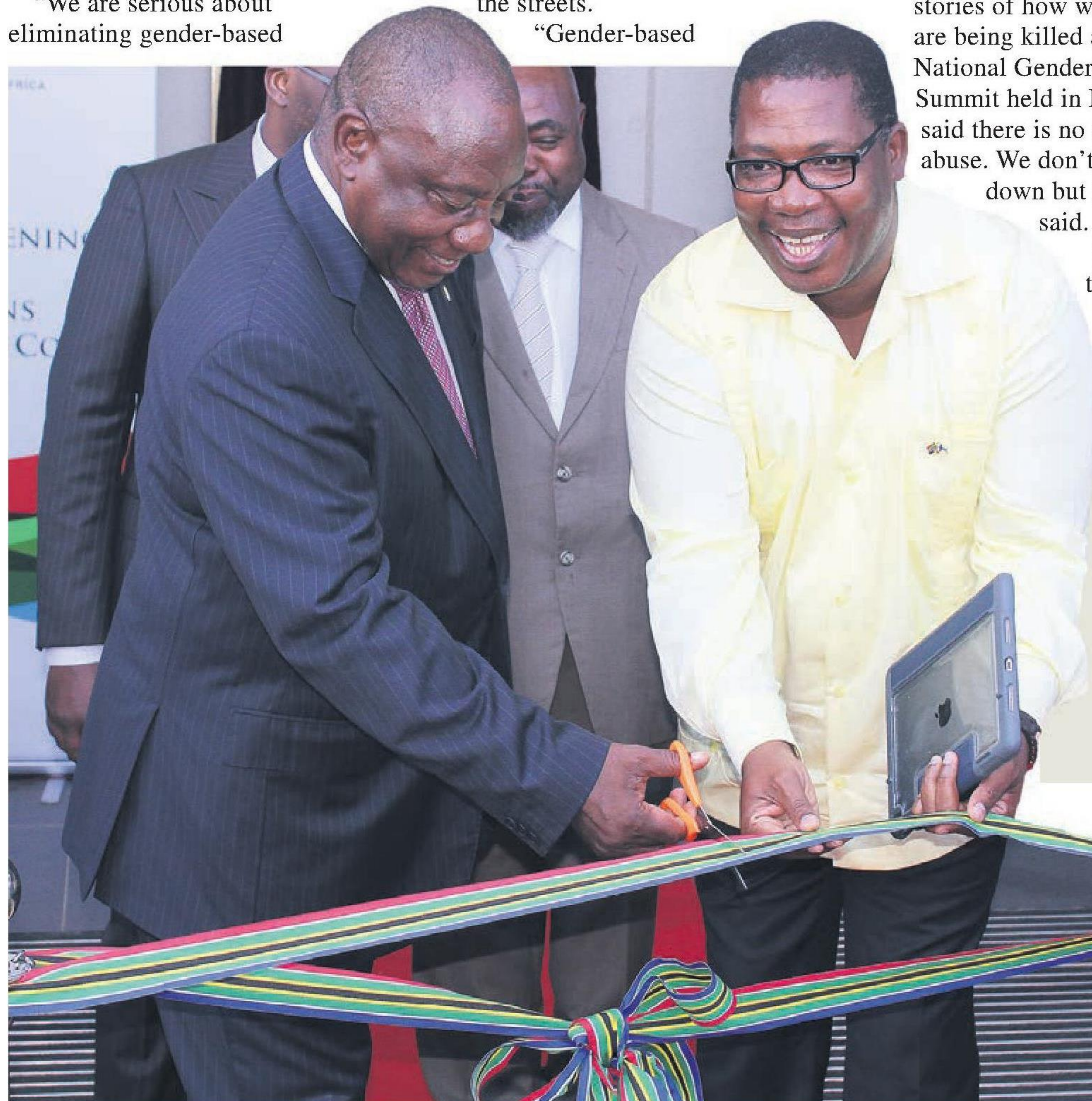
of the measures that have been put in place since the Presidential Summit convened in November last year. The declaration outlines a plan of action to end gender-based violence in South Africa.

Minister of Higher Education Naledi Pandor was the programme director. Minister of Women in the Presidency Bathabile Dlamini also called for proper training for all officials who work in the justice system. Advocate Brenda Madumise, who represented civil society, said

this court must deliver justice without delay.

"We want action now and we will continue to hold the president accountable on that and we also want this court to remain in this state for years to come," she said.

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Civil Society signatories: #The Total Shut Down – Sibongile Mthembu, Call for Action – Nonhlanhla Sibanda, Genderlinks – Lindiwe Khoza, KZN Network on VAW – Nazaam Edwards, National Shelter Movement of SA – Zubeda Dangor, Shukumisa Campaign – Shaheda Omar, STOP GBV Campaign – Rakgadi Mahlahlane, Women Inkwelo Network – Lesley Anne Foster and Women on Farms Project – Rebecce Mort.

OFFICIAL OPENING: President Cyril Ramaphosa and Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi, who was acting Gauteng premier on the day, cuts the ribbon. *Photo: Lucky Thusi*