



public works
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MEDIA STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, PATRICIA DE LILLE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DONATES ITEMS TO ASSIST THE KERR HOUSE IN DURBAN CARING FOR ABUSED WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Today as part of Women's Month activities, the Deputy Minister, Noxolo Kiviet and I visited the Kerr House shelter for abused women and children in Durban.

The Kerr House has been in existence since 1951 and provides a safe haven for abused and destitute women.

The hospice provides a temporary and secure homely environment for women in crisis with a view to restore their sense of well-being and self-worth.

Kerr House offers professional support service to women by providing counselling, relief and rehabilitation in partnership with other relevant professional organisations. The Hospice operates 24 hours a day and most women are admitted to the shelter by referrals from welfare, community and religious organisations.

Gender-based violence and femicide has become the second pandemic in our country with women and children being abused and killed on a daily basis. It is an illness destroying the fabric of our country and one which needs all South Africans to stand together and act to end this scourge.

We need all men and women to stand together and speak up against the horrific violence perpetrated against our women and children each day. Sadly this month should be about celebrating the many wonderful woman in our country but it is marred by the fact that we need to place the spotlight on issues like GBVF.

There are many organisations across the country who provide a safe haven where abused women and children need to escape to, to find refuge.

I applaud the work that many of these shelters do and we call on communities to support these shelters.

Our women and children are the backbone and future of our country and should be protected and respected by the very perpetrators who harm them.

The Kerr House provides refuge to women and children in crisis by providing them with safe, clean and comfortable accommodation for up to 17 mothers and children. Their support includes three meals a day, skills training, counselling by resident social workers, therapeutic group work and individual rehabilitation/Care plan.

Kerr House works closely together with other service providers including The Department of Social Development, Lifeline, Famsa, Sanca, Child Welfare and others in order to rehabilitate the residents of Kerr House.

The women in crisis face various issues like divorce, violence and abuse, rejection and stigmatisation by family and community, deal with a range of life traumas and some are survivors of rape.

These are issues that many of our women and children face and have sadly become the norm. We simply must do more to restore the fabric of our country, to restore families, by installing good values in our young boys and having men stand up and help the men in our society who need help.

These are issues that are not only for women to solve, it is vital that we see more men stand up and do something to restore what is so broken in our society that leads to the abuse and killing of women and children.

In this regard, I salute the work that the Kerr House does but especially that they have developed a program targeted at boys and young men which provides them with an alternative model of behaviour which we hope will give them more positive choices in their relationships with women and thereby saying "no" to crime.

To the women of our country, the Deputy Minister and I want to say to you: “You are worthy of the best, do what is best for yourself and your children and do not stay in abusive relationships. Seek help, the help is out there. Do not protect your abusers and speak out. To all women and men: do not keep quiet, please speak up and help when you know of abuse happening in your extended family or in your community”.

As part of assisting the valuable work that the Kerr House does, the deputy Minister and I today handed over donation including bedding, kitchenware and building materials such as paint and plumbing equipment to assist with some of the needs the Kerr House has.

As a country, we must do a lot more to protect our women and children and ensure that those who perpetrate crimes against women and children face the full might of the law.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has so far released 12 State-owned properties (6 in Gauteng and 6 in the Western Cape) to be used as shelters for victims of GBVF and we have also installed more than 15 billboards at police stations in various provinces with Anti-GBVF messaging and the helplines for where women can report abuse and get help.

We are have identified 80 more State-owned properties of which 47 were selected by the Department of Social Development in other provinces for use as GBV shelters as part of our contribution to the fight against GBVF.

Women and children who are being abused, we appeal to you, to report abuse and find help by calling one of the following numbers: **National GBV Hotline 0800 150 150 or the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre on 0800 428 428**

ENDS

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