

16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women Campaign is an international United Nations-endorsed initiative. It takes place annually from 25th of November (International Day of No Violence against Women) to the 10th of December (International Human Rights Day). Since 1999 the South African Government has run a parallel campaign that includes issues relating to violence against children. Other key commemorative days during this period include World Aids Day on 1st December and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, which falls on 3rd December of every year.

This campaign focuses primarily on generating an increased awareness of the negative impact of violence on women and children as well as society as a whole. This has been highlighted by the continued call for the campaign to be implemented throughout the 365 days and the public call for a move from an events-based approach to a more substantive action in dealing with women and child abuse.

The Northern Cape Provincial Government today launched the Provincial 16 Days of No violence Against Women and Children Campaign in Carnarvon, in the Pixley Ka-Seme District Municipality under the Theme #HearMeToo:End Violence Against Women and Children. The engagement took the form of a community dialogue.

This event was attended by the Executive Council Members, Senior Government Officials, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organisations Faith based organisations, South African Police Service, the Kareeberg Municipal Mayor, Pixley Ka-Seme District Mayor and members from the surrounding communities.

Member of the Executive Council for Education, Ms Martha Bartlett in outlining the purpose of the Day, encouraged the Faith Based Leaders to stand together and fight the scourge against women and child abuse. The MEC further asked the community to work with government and the relevant stakeholders to fight human trafficking and abuse.

MEC for Social Development Mr Gift Van Standen who was standing in for Premier Sylvia Lucas whilst she was attending the National Prayer Service in Gauteng, in his opening remarks asked the men in attendance very significant questions. Questions such as "Are we really the men that we want to be? Is violence our identity?" He further stated that gender based violence continues to be a despicable crime and a costly public health and economic problem. In his speech MEC Van Staden mentioned that Provincial Government has last year implemented a Thursday in Black Campaign where government calls on men and women in the Province to wear black on Thursday to raise awareness on Gender Based Violence and encourage community members to join in the fight thereof. "Gender Based violence is a fight that government together with its partners, alone cannot win. It is only with collaborative efforts of all key stakeholders and the community that real changes can be effected," stated MEC van Staden.

Community members joined in the discussions and gathered information from the exhibitions by SAPS and Government Departments on how they can join in on the fight against violence and abuse.

