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ACTSA is deeply disturbed by the killing of women in South Africa. Commitments must now become action.

Women cannot be expected to live smaller, more cautious lives to compensate for a failure to prevent violence against them.

Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) is deeply disturbed by the recent killings of women in Gauteng and expresses its deepest condolences to the families, friends and communities mourning their loved ones.

“We cannot continue to respond to the killing of women with statements of concern, international pledges and appeals for women to be more cautious. Women should not have to calculate whether they are safe when going to the post office, walking through their communities or inside their own homes. The responsibility for preventing violence belongs to those who commit it and to the institutions responsible for protecting women and ensuring accountability.”- Rachel Palma Randle (ACTSA Director)

KEY FACTS / INFORMATION:

- Recent killings of women in Gauteng have once again highlighted the persistent threat of gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa.
- The United Nations in South Africa has described the killings as reflecting the “persistent and deadly violence” faced by women and girls.
- ACTSA calls for stronger protection, prevention, accountability, deterrence and access to justice.
- South Africa has made national and international commitments to address gender-based violence and femicide. The urgent challenge is to translate these commitments into sustained, measurable action that makes women safer.
- Public messaging must not normalise violence by placing responsibility on women to modify their behaviour, movements or routines in order to avoid becoming victims.

“Women are routinely told to take precautions: do not walk alone, do not go out at certain times, do not trust strangers, be careful who you let into your home. These messages may be presented as practical advice, but when they become the dominant response to violence, they risk shifting the burden onto women rather than confronting the systems and individuals responsible for that violence. Caution cannot be a substitute for protection, prevention and accountability.” - Anele Gcwabe (ACTSA Campaigns and Communications Officer)

Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) works in solidarity with people across Southern Africa in the struggle for justice, equality and human rights. We believe that every woman and girl has the right to live free from violence and fear, and that governments and institutions have a responsibility to uphold and protect these rights.

The repeated killing of women demands more than expressions of condemnation after each tragedy. South Africa’s commitments to addressing gender-based violence and femicide must be matched by effective prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution and accountability, supported by the resources and political urgency required to make those measures work.

“International and national commitments matter only if they change what happens to women in their homes, workplaces, communities and public spaces. We need action that prevents violence before another woman is killed, institutions that respond effectively when violence occurs, and accountability when perpetrators attack women. Women should not have to become experts in avoiding danger simply because society has failed to make them safe.” - Rachel Palma Randle (ACTSA Director)

Notes to Editor:

ACTSA’s statement responds to the recent killings of women in Gauteng and the broader crisis of gender-based violence and femicide facing women across South Africa.

ACTSA recognises that the safety of women is not achieved through repeated appeals for women to change their behaviour or become more cautious. The responsibility rests with perpetrators, institutions and the state to prevent violence, protect women, investigate crimes effectively and ensure accountability.

The statement comes amid renewed concern over the ongoing crisis of gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa following the recent killings of women in eastern Gauteng. ACTSA calls for strengthened prevention, protection, accountability and access to justice, while emphasising that national and international commitments must now translate into tangible improvements in the safety and rights of women.

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