



Mail & Guardian

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

A CAMPAIGN AGAINST GBVF

**IF I COULD
WHISPER
IN MY
SON'S EAR
CONVERSATIONS
BY MEN,
FOR MEN**



CEO'S FOREWORD

Hoosain Karjieker CEO, *The Mail & Guardian*

Gender based violence in the media is the one way our society can know about what happens in our country. Reporting on Gender Based Violence and Femicide is raw, gritty and reaches into the depths of a writer's talents. It is difficult to write these words, to tell the stories of South Africa's hidden shame. Hiding these stories is evidently no longer a possibility. Our news coverage must tell our population the words that need to be heard. We owe it to the women and children who struggle quietly and in pain, in fear, to help where we can, how we can and when we can.

Reporting can also be dangerous. When journalists tell stories carelessly, or without proper training, survivors suffer the consequences: stigma, exploitation or retaliation.

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa recently introduced three new bills to parliament that are designed to bring justice to the victims of gender-based violence (GBV). His strengthened stance on tackling GBVF gives the country some hope but it is our role as a South African news publication, to continue to show the country what is happening and what needs to be done. What can be done.

The Mail and Guardian is adopting a strengthened position on reporting on the issues around the abuse of women and children. We have created a visual campaign engaging men to come to the forefront of this conversation. We are focusing on influencing men from the home front and at an early age through our theme **"If I could Whisper In my Son's Ear - Conversations by men, for men."**

This project is our contribution to the National fight against GBVF as the Media and will be an ongoing effort from our organisation.

The videos and articles in this special digital campaign and supplement emphasize the importance of news coverage of concerns around GBVF, how the media has covered GBVF in the past and how we are emphasising on reporting going forward. We hope you read and watch the content with an open heart and a determined mind - what you learn can help our society change the future of women and children in South Africa.

A big thank you to all the organisations and participants for being a part of this project and supporting our cause.



Hoosain Karjieker
CEO, *The Mail & Guardian*



ABOUT 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM.

#

16daysofactivismSA

MGagainstGBVF

bymen4men2020

stopGBVF



Over the years, South Africa has observed 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). Statistics show that even before the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, more than 200 million women and girls globally were abused by their intimate partners in the past year. Countries across the world have also recorded an alarming increase of violence against women, especially domestic violence. Data from Stats SA show that GBVF is five times more prevalent in South Africa than any other country in the world.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign, which runs from November 25 until International Human Rights Day on December 10, is a period for our nation to reflect and search for a collective solution to this problem. This year, Mail & Guardian is taking a different approach. We want to listen to South African men from all walks of life as they engage in a candid conversation with each other and the new generation of men on this subject.

Mail & Guardian brings you a visual series titled: "If I Could Whisper into My Son's Ear – Conversations by men, with men, for men."

The series showcases visually compelling and engaging conversations that seek to bring our country closer to unpacking the unspoken and underlying causes of rape culture, and the mental and psychological abuse of women and children.

Our message aims to create an understanding among our audiences that women and children are seeking answers and accountability from men. It is also important for fathers to educate their sons about the importance and meaning of consent, and that this is non-negotiable when interacting with the girls and women in their lives. The conversations in our series are driven from a male perspective in full support of this agenda.

This year, the Mail & Guardian invites you to participate in the conversation and spread the message that GBVF is a violation of the rights of women and children, which very often has broader social consequences. Children should be taught the values of gender equality, however, at the same time they should be protected from all forms of negligence and violence.



UNPACKING THE REALITY OF GBVF: A NATIONAL OVERVIEW.



Over the years during December, South Africa has observed 16 Days of Activism specifically to address violence against women and children. Latest statistics released by the World Health Organisation indicate that South Africa ranks fourth out of 183 countries in the rate of femicide. To address this problem, civil society organisations, academics and advocacy groups have called for a multipronged approach to gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

This year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown regulations, action around the issue has proven to be even more difficult than

usual. Violence against women and young girls has become its own pandemic, with more than 243 million women globally having been abused by their partners over the past few months. According to researchers at the Social Policy Network, more than 120 000 GBVF cases were reported at the South African government's femicide command centre during the first three weeks of lockdown.

But how do men view the GBVF pandemic and how, in their opinion, should it be addressed?

During this year's 16 Days of Activism, Mail & Guardian invites all South African men to engage in a candid conversation on the subject with themselves and the next generation of men. As we've recognised the need for audiences to understand that women and children are searching for answers and accountability from men, the conversation needs to be driven from a male perspective in full support of a multipronged approach to combatting GBVF. We invite men to participate in heart-to-heart conversations among themselves to find viable solutions to the problem and discuss how things could have been done differently.

Nationally, great strides have been made to address GBVF. In November 2018, the presidency hosted the first-ever GBVF summit after civil society groups took to the streets demanding action against the onslaught. Delegates at the summit concluded that a multisectoral committee – comprising government, civil society, business and labour representatives – should be constituted to coordinate and implement interventions

aimed at addressing the challenges faced by women and children.

An interim steering committee, which was established in April 2019, has since developed the national strategic plan on GBVF. The aim of the plan is to create "a South Africa free from violence directed at women, children and the LGBTQIA+ community". In March this year, cabinet approved the establishment of a national council, mandated to oversee and ensure the implementation of the national strategic plan. The council will be a non-partisan body and, besides fulfilling its core mandate, will monitor and evaluate the progress of the national strategic plan across government departments.

Thus far, government departments have sourced R1.6 billion through budget reprioritisations for the implementation of the national strategic plan. Although the national council has not yet been established, a call for nominations for board members from civil society organisations closed on 20 October 2020.

As we observe the 16 Days of Activism, three sexual violence bills have been amended and tabled before Parliament. The documents have been through public hearings and are expected to be promulgated after presentation to the National Council of Provinces.

The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Bill extends the ambit of the offence of incest, and extends the reporting duty of persons who suspect a sexual offence

has been committed against a child. The National Register for Sex Offenders will include the particulars of all sex offenders, and will be made publicly available. In the case of parole, a complainant or a relative of a deceased victim must be able to make representation to the

parole board. Complainants will also be able to apply for protection orders online.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has taken a firm stance against GBVF. On the role men should play in combatting the problem, he was recently quoted as saying: "As South African men, let us take responsibility for our actions. We must treat the women and girls of our country with care and respect." Mail & Guardian thus invites you, men of South Africa, to endorse our message for this 16 Days of Activism campaign and participate in the conversation.

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PEOPLE OPPOSING WOMEN ABUSE (POWA)



As People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), we are proud of our driver Isaac Raliwedzha being interviewed on his career journey through the Mail & Guardian's "If I Could Whisper in My Son's Ear – Conversations by Men, for Men" campaign. We strongly believe in the participation of men in the fight against GBV.

POWA is a feminist, non-profit organisation established in 1979 that provides advocacy, skills development opportunities, counselling, legal advice, sheltering and court support services to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors. Isaac is the only male working for POWA as its policy states that only women can be employed by the organisation.

Isaac is at the forefront of the fight against GBV through his work driving GBV survivors to court, the clinic, hospital and shelters. His work also involves transporting survivors' children to

school as well as for counselling sessions. As some survivors have to escape perpetrators in a hurry, they sometimes leave important documents at home such as passports and IDs, so Isaac takes them to Home Affairs to access new ones. He adds that he never collects survivors from

"In my daily work, I sometimes have to transport survivors who are so angry and stressed and don't say anything," he says. "I never force them to talk if they don't want to. I just let them be."

their homes as perpetrators may think he is a boyfriend, which may lead to further abuse. POWA CEO, Mary Makgaba, adds that as per POWA regulations, the driver cannot ferry

survivors alone as a man. "There are house mothers (staff in charge of POWA shelters) who accompany him to access services at the South African Police Service (SAPS), courts, clinics and schools," she says. "This is done cautiously because most survivors do not feel free travelling with a man as we all know that perpetrators of GBV are men. Otherwise, they will be scared and this will increase secondary trauma for them."

On 27 November 2020, POWA held a march to the SAPS to hand over Memorandums to Minister of Police, Bheki Cele and the National Director of Public Prosecutions Advocate Shamila Batohi that focused on POWA's demands for the criminal justice system to better support GBV survivors. Many survivors face secondary victimisation from our police and courts.

The Memorandums focus on various issues being addressed, including but not limited to, lack of feedback on the progress of cases, delay on arrest/no arrest at all for perpetrators, no follow up on cases, secondary victimisation of survivors and police referring GBV cases to be dealt with by families at home.

In the memorandum, were the following demands from POWA, which included, but weren't limited to, police offering support services for transportation of survivors to hospital and shelters, placement of well-trained staff to deal with GBV survivors at the SAPS, speedy finalisation of GBV cases and the provision of court preparation for survivors of GBV as well as provision of victim friendly rooms that are well equipped for survivors.

Many working within the criminal justice system – from the police, investigating officers, magistrates, prosecutors, judges and others – are men. They are critical in the fight against GBV and it is crucial that they work on GBV cases with the utmost compassion, commitment and professionalism.

MGagainstGBVF

1

A woman is murdered every 3 hours in SA (2017/18)

2

7.7% of SA men believe it is acceptable to hit his wife (2018)

3

33.8% of women think it is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife.

4

Rape femicide was identified in every 1 in 5 women killed (19.8%)

VINCENT MPHETHO AND LOUIS MOLOPO



Vincent Mphetho and Louis Molopo define GBV as the abuse of women and children. Both men agree that communication, rather than violence, is the best course of action for resolving any domestic problem. According to Louis, many women are hurt or abused because of minor incidents, such as taking money from a partner's wallet without their knowledge. In

many cases, there's a lack of communication around important issues and, owing to this, emotions flare up. Vincent believes that arguing and fighting with your partner will only land you in jail and leave your children without proper care. Both men are adamant that mutual respect is key in any relationship.

33.8%

of women responded that it is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife if the wife is guilty of one or more of the five "wrongs"

PEOPLE OPPOSING WOMEN ABUSE (POWA)



Isaac Raliwedza, is the head of transport and logistics at POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse). The father of two boys says there are days when he is targeted and ridiculed by other men, however, he remains steadfast in his fight against gender-based violence and abuse. He says 15 years as a POWA employee

has changed his socio-cultural view on violence against women and children. His duties include the transporting of POWA clients from the organisation's various offices to shelters and also to courts where they come face to face with perpetrators.

1.3%

of men consider striking a woman is acceptable if woman burns food (2018)

SANTACO

President of the South African National Taxi Council, SANTACO, Phillip Taaibosch says its members respect one another and clients, regardless of gender or age. The council is running a national campaign to raise awareness about the ills of gender-based violence among the 15 million South Africans who support the taxi industry each day.

Taaibosch hopes the campaign is able to get through to the young men of today and spread the message that it takes a real man to respect a woman. He is also pleased with the increase in female representation in the country's taxi industry and that women feel safe in this previously male-dominated space.



WATCH
PROMO
< HERE

NGWAKO, CHRISTOPHER & ISMAEL



WATCH
PROMO
< HERE

Christopher, Ishmael and Ngwako from Windsor East in Johannesburg agree that people in a relationship should discuss their problems rather than resorting to violence. Christopher considers gender-based violence as a modern-day "curse" that emerged from changes such as equal rights for women, which he says doesn't sit well with some men. Ishmael thinks every man should

treat his partner as he would treat his sisters and mother – with respect. Ngwako says no man should have the power to abuse a woman just because she doesn't meet his expectations. These men are adamant that young people need to be taught about the meaning and importance of consent in a relationship.

VODACOM SPEAKS OUT ABOUT GBV



During the Covid-19 lockdown, there was an alarming increase in GBV. Recognising the need for action, the Vodacom Foundation recently announced the launch of a cutting-edge application to fight GBV in South Africa, which coincides with the annual United Nations' 16 Days of Activism campaign.

"According to statistics by our gender-based command centre, there has been a visible increase in GBV-related calls since the start of the lockdown in March this year. Between March and the 3rd of December, the centre received 153 442 calls, of which 5 051 were GBV-related," says Takalani Netshitenzhe, Vodacom South Africa's external affairs director. In comparison, the centre received only 393 GBV-related calls between January and March this year.

Netshitenzhe says the Bright Sky app is part of Vodacom's vision to use technology to respond to some of the social issues plaguing South Africa. The company's involvement in the fight against GBV goes back to 2014, when it partnered with government. Since then, Netshitenzhe says the command centre's innovative use of technology has enabled it to identify GBV hotspots.

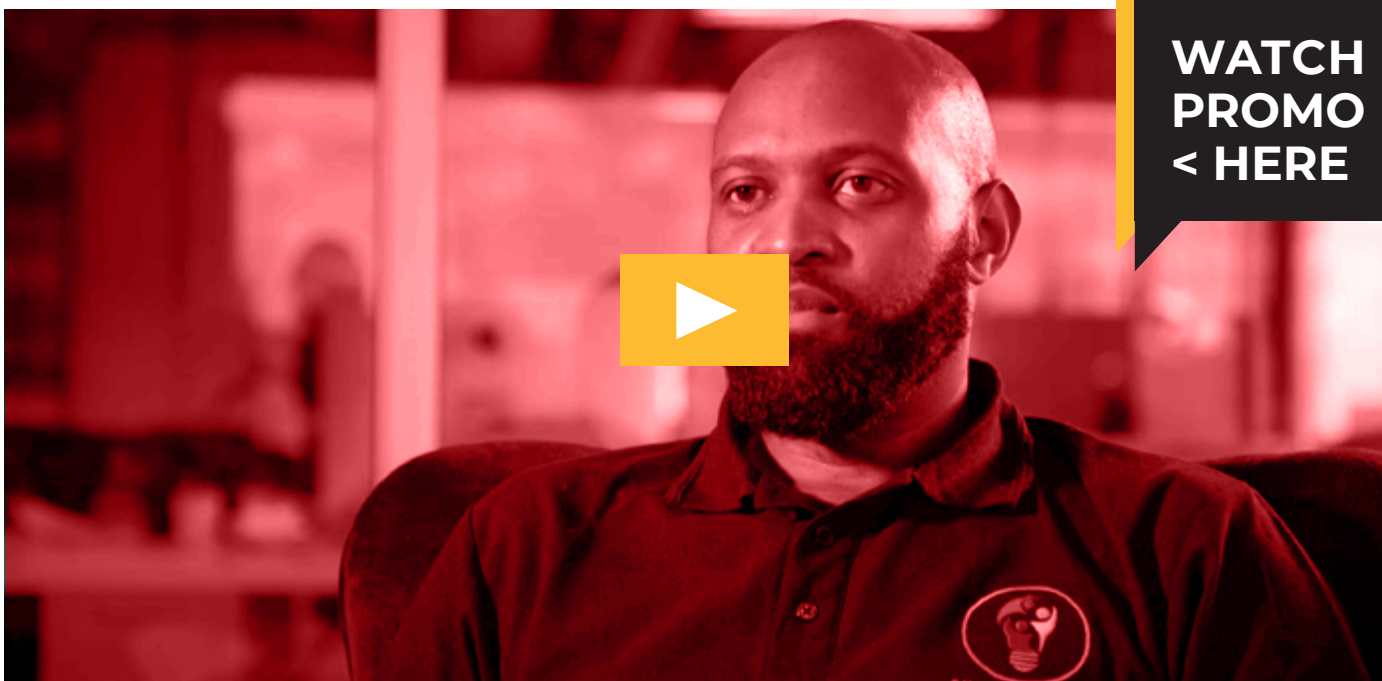
"The command centre allows us to monitor

national trends. For example, most calls are from Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape," she says. Being empowered with these statistics enables the government to employ and deploy law enforcement officers and social workers in the right areas.

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Bright Sky was designed primarily to support GBV-prevention initiatives, and interfaces with the gender-based command centre to provide response and victim support. The app provides help and information for anyone who might be in an abusive relationship, or for those concerned about someone they know. It is available in English, isiZulu and Sesotho. "The app is mainly an online awareness tool. It is free to download on both iOS and Android devices. The app can be used on a mobile phone or other smart devices," says Netshitenzhe.

FATHERS FIT 4 GENERATIONS (NPO)



The issue of absent fathers is just one of the many social ills the non-profit organisation Father Fit for Generations deals with daily. Siphumuzo Gama, the organisation's founder and chief executive officer and FF4G member Vernon Reddy say they aim to change the narrative on fatherhood and the consequences of gender-based violence. For fathers and their children

to reconcile and salvage their relationships, old wounds need to be healed, says Gama. If men can face these old wounds, they can play a critical role in addressing GBV, he says. Father Fit for Generations conducts research in communities with the aim of reuniting families and curbing GBV.

JONATHAN WEST

Jonathan West, a 22-year-old law student born and raised in Johannesburg, says he is committed to finding solutions to curb Gender Based Violence and Femicide as well as what he calls a "toxic masculinity problem" in the country. West says this problem exists because of the socio-cultural environment men are raised in. According to him, even though young boys know that rape and the abuse of women is wrong, they succumb to peer pressure. The solution, West says, is for men to be honest and to admit their mistakes. He is adamant that men should play a more prominent role in solving the problem of GBV and abuse women and children in South Africa.



'NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT'

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is an international development agency that promotes the right of every person to enjoy a healthy life with equal opportunities. In doing so, the organisation constantly strives to curb GBV and its effects.

The UNFPA's gender specialist for eastern and southern Africa, Julie Diallo, says their tagline – "From 16 to 365 ... the march continues in Africa" – is proof of their commitment to root out GBV. Instead of encouraging "armchair activism", the UNFPA's focus, according to Diallo, is on sustained commitment and daily action and urgency.

Statistics indicate that violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation and child marriage, has increased by a staggering 30% globally since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. This, Diallo says, is threatening to erode critical gains made in securing the right of women and girls to live their lives free of violence.

Men and boys are not excluded from the UNFPA's awareness process. Initiatives where they are encouraged to either effect change or change themselves and reflect on their behaviour are also supported by the UNFPA. These initiatives include social media campaigns and engagements, outreach through music, and community dialogues.

The UNFPA is the UN's lead agency in coordinating GBV responses in emergencies. Through the organisation's programmes, service providers are trained to manage GBV cases, offer psychosocial assistance, and provide rape kits and medical treatment to survivors. "We work with governments to ensure a multisectoral approach to prevent and respond to GBV," says Diallo, adding that according to the Sustainable Development Goals, "we only have 10 years left to eradicate GBV, meaning now is the time to act".



UNFPA Regional Director for East and Southern Africa Dr. Julitta Onabanjo dances and sings while girls under the Spotlight Initiative during her visit at Tilimbike Safe Community Space in Chiludzi village, Dowa, Malawi on November 2, 2020.

Other examples of the UNFPA's involvement in the fight against GBV are its essential services package for survivors, currently rolled out in several eastern and southern African countries. The organisation also assists governments with collecting and analysing data, which is used to develop evidence-based GBV programmes.

According to Diallo, school closures due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions have made young women and girls even more vulnerable to GBV. Statistics show that about 13 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19 years) have experienced forced sex during this period. In light of this, the UNFPA plans to increase its engagement with traditional leaders to work on community-led initiatives that lead to sustained norm changes and the end of all forms of GBV.

MARTIN GOMBA



Martin Gomba grew up in a community where GBV was common. According to him, many men are raised without a proper understanding of what GBV is. Due to the lack of education around the issue, these men tend to react violently rather than talking through their problems with their partners in order to find solutions.

Over the years, Martin has taught himself to communicate as a way of avoiding unnecessary tension and arguments. He lives by his motto: "If you know you are wrong, it's best to apologise immediately." He is adamant that violence and abuse is not a solution to any problem.

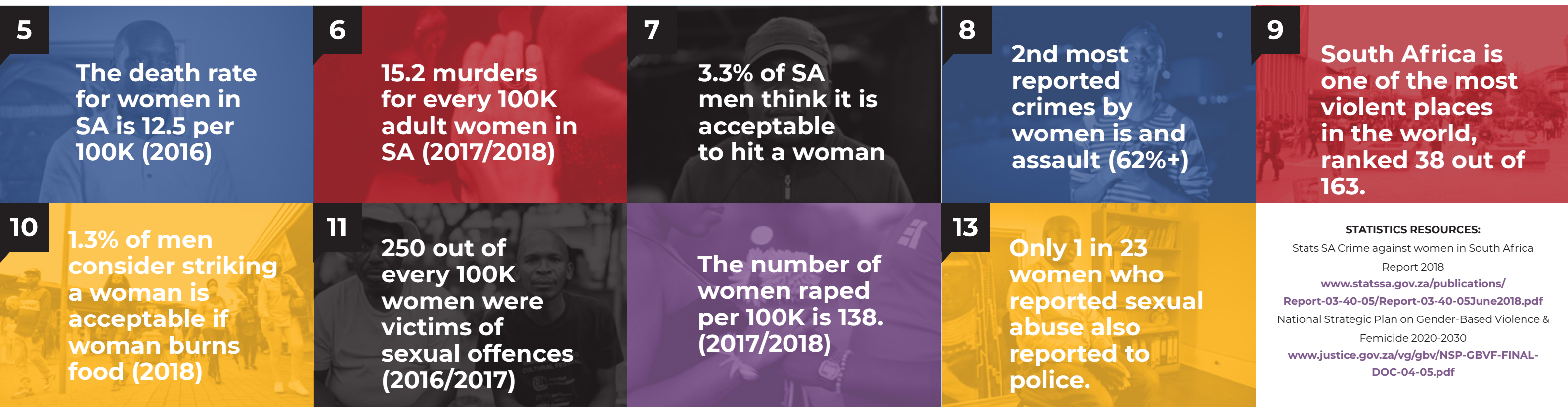
bymen4men2020

MR MASONDO



Mr Masondo, originally from KwaZulu-Natal, refers to himself as a high-ranking queue marshal for taxis travelling between Randburg and Diepsloot. He believes men need to learn to deal with conflict to avoid domestic violence, abuse and tension in their relationships.

He says men should learn to forgive women even when they are wrong, and instead prioritise the welfare of their children. But he also adds the caveat that women are not always forgiving, and in many cases involve the law in domestic issues. Men are also abused, he says, but little attention is given to their cry for help.





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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

