

KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE HONORABLE MAYOR CLLR ZUKISWA NDEVU DURING 16 DAYS OF ACTVISIM CAMPAIGN IN KWABHACA ON THE 03 DECEMBER 2021.

Madam Speaker

Executive Committee Members

Chief Whip and Whippers

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Municipal Manager and Senior Management

Media Houses

Government Officials

Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Ladies and Gentlemen; As I address you today, somewhere in this country a woman or a child is being abused, beaten, assaulted or terrorised. They face violence on the streets, at school, on campuses, at work, places of worship and, worst of all, in their own homes.

In a country with the most progressive of constitutions, which promises equality and dignity for all, the women and children in KwaBhaca and EmaXesibeni live in fear of violence every day.

As we launch this year's campaign we ask: **for how long must this continue to go on Madoda aKhwBhaca nasemaXesibeni?**

For how much longer must we say, 'enough is enough', only for it to continue? It simply cannot go on.



I think we all agree that the rights of women and children are immutable, and both must be upheld and enforced. We must also agree that this is a societal problem, and our government can only do so much to aid the matter.

To create a society in which women will enjoy safety, dignity and respect it is first and foremost our own attitudes that must change. We must reclaim that most cherished of values to us as Africans, that we are our brother's and sister's keeper.

And yet, as I have said, ending gender-based violence is also highly complex. We know that we are in a crisis. And that this crisis demands we step up measures to protect women and girls and advance their rights.

The government has since have improved the provision of essential services, making evidence kits available at our local police stations in KwaBhaca and EmaXesibeni. Our government has also set up more survivor-friendly rooms and established a better process in dealing with Sexual Offences in courts.

We have witnessed a national interest by sector departments to improve the services being provided at shelters and places of safety in our area. Not so long ago, we were visited by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Social Development, Mme Ipeleng Bogopane-Zulu, who came to assess the state of one of our safety shelters in KwaBhaca.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, I cannot disclose the area of the safe house, however plans have been set aside to improve the conditions of that place.

Ladies and Gentlemen; We have seen a drastic improvement in the emergency response teams within Umzimvubu. Our law enforcement agencies are working tirelessly to ensure that we address case backlogs in the criminal justice system and to review GBV cases that were not properly investigated. Indeed, our strides as a caring Municipality are not in any way minor.



Fellow Councillors; The Amendments have been made to the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Bill, the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Domestic Violence Act, will strengthen existing laws to protect women and children.

Among other things, these laws should regulate the granting of bail to perpetrators and the sentencing of offenders, and place new obligations on the providers of social services, law-enforcement officials and the courts.

Allow me to applaud our justice system for apprehending one of our well-known figures in the area. Earlier, I made mention that these activities occur in our safe spaces and by people whom we dearly trust. The arrest of Rev. Phakade should be an indication that our justice system favours no one and that we are all equal before the law. Enough is Enough!

Ladies and Gentlemen; Supporting women-owned businesses is crucial if we are to take full advantage of the local economic opportunities that present themselves on a daily basis. The alienation of women when it comes to economic participation is loud and glaringly not accepted.

As part of my 100 day tenure in office, I committed to ensure that women led SMMEs are prioritised and should benefit from the Municipality's Agricultural programmes. This will also create employment opportunities and address one of the 3 key government priorities: Unemployment, Poverty and Crime.

Lastly, allow me to pay tribute to the men and women of Umzimvubu who support the fight against GBV in their daily lives; and to the dedicated activists and workers in civil society.

You are our valued partners. We will win this war if we work together. In remembering the many lives we have lost to gender-based violence, let us work with urgency and determination for a time when no women or child should ever again fall victim to violence.

Let us work for a time when we no longer need these 16 Days of Activism. A time for peace and harmony.



With those few words,

I thank you.

Delivered by the Honourable Mayor,
Cllr Zukiswa Ndevu

