

Press Release
August 31, 2017

CSVR launches groundbreaking research on why Violence Against Women persists

Reversing patriarchy depends on the collective commitment of society, said Minister of Women in the Presidency, Susan Shabangu during a keynote address at the launch of research findings on Violence Against Women (VAW) in South Africa.

The research, commissioned by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in partnership with Oxfam South Africa, contributes toward explanations of the high prevalence of VAW through exploring the experiences of its survivors based on the research question; *Why does VAW persists in South Africa, and what needs to be done to address it?*

The minister referred to the collective efforts taken by women who took part in the 1956 march for freedom. "Women came together to oppose patriarchy, class and sexism to change both their lives and that of men," she said. "What we need to see happening next is the research translating into action."

The research is unique in that it is done from the perspective of the experiences of women affected including focus group discussions where small groups of people who have experiences of the research topic were interviewed.

Fieldwork was conducted in four provinces: Gauteng, Limpopo, Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) and the Free State. Due to the vastness of the provinces, the study selected four community district localities; two urban (Gauteng and KZN) and two rural (Limpopo and Free State).

"The study found that sexual and domestic violence were the most common forms of VAW. This means that women aren't safe even in their homes" said Nonhlanhla Sibanda-Moyo Gender Specialist at CSVR. The findings also disclose that types of violence experienced by women and female children in South Africa include deliberate exposure of children to violence, neglect and deprivation, discrimination based on sexuality, race, economic status, and in the context of their social positions as conjugal partners, daughters, sisters, students, workers, neighbours and more.

Women remain in abusive relationships due to financial dependence on their partners. In addition, they do not speak out due to uncertainty of what would happen when they do and a lack of trust and confidence in the police.

The research recommends a varied and multi-faceted approach to VAW.

"Are the existing interventions fit for the problem or are we rehashing the same methods?" asked Kwezilomso Mbandazayo from Oxfam South Africa.

Sibanda-Moyo concurred: "VAW in SA is at crisis levels and we must urgently review our current interventions, including whether policies are implemented in an effective and coordinated manner."

Nomfundo Mogapi, Executive Director at CSVR welcomed those in attendance and officially opened the program. Other speakers were Aluwani Mauda, Acting Knowledge and Learning Manager at CSVR; Anne Githuku-Shongwe from the UN Women's South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO); Corlett Letlojane, Executive Director; Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA); Ndumi Mayekiso, Deputy Director responsible for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the office of the status of women (Office of the Premier, Free State); Nhlanhla Mokwena, Executive Director at People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA); Patience Mungwari Mpani, Women's Rights Unit Programme Manager at the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria.

Download the research report here <http://tinyurl.com/y7zn8u2n>

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Issued by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

For more information and interviews, contact:

Nonhlanhla Sibanda (Gender Specialist, CSVR)

Tel: +27 11 403 5650

Cell: +27 74 581 9401

NSibanda@csvr.org.za

Boitumelo Molusi

Tel: +27 11 888 0140

Cell: +27 79 713 5953

bmolusi@frayintermedia.com