

## Sonke Gender Justice Media Statement



### **Western Cape Outrage: Society Must Act to End All forms of Violence Against Women.**

7 February 2012; South Africa. Sonke Gender Justice joins the growing number of South Africans expressing shock and outrage over the horrific gang rape, mutilation, and murder of 17-year old Anene Booysen. "We send our condolences to her family and to the Bredasdorp community, and call on the authorities to investigate this crime and ensure that the perpetrators are punished to the full extent of the law," says Sonke's chairperson Sisonke Msimang.

Sonke is also appalled by the comments reported in various news outlets today made by Western Cape Safety and Security MEC, Albert Fritz, who stated:

*"We want to call on our young men and women to please ensure they don't get into situations at 03:00 in the morning, where they place themselves in danger. We don't mean to say to people they can't walk around at 03:00 but these are very different and difficult times. Please ensure that you are safe and go with people you can trust, who won't hurt you."*

Anene knew at least one of her killers, just as most women who are victims or survivors of sexual violence. Such comments perpetuate the false notion that victims are to be blamed. Fritz's comments cannot go unchallenged and we urge him to retract them immediately.

Cherith Sanger, an attorney at Sonke Gender Justice has observed that, "Until women and girls can walk the streets of our country without fear of assault, no matter what time of day or night, our country will not know peace."

The current levels of violence against women in South Africa are a national crisis; typical responses are no longer adequate. It is not time to call for vengeful and short-cut solutions. Sonke Gender Justice calls on the National Commissioner of Police, the President of the country, the Minister of Justice, and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities to institute a national commission of inquiry on violence against women. We further recommend this to be a joint initiative of government, civil society and communities, with a mandate to create and support a Special Fund to End Violence Against Women.

In the meantime – and as a matter of urgency – we call on the relevant ministries to allocate the necessary resources to implement the 356 Days National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children. We urge the Minister of Finance to allocate resources for the Plan and eagerly await news in this regard in his next budget speech on 27 February.

We add our voice to those of ordinary South Africans who are calling for urgent action to address the epidemic of violence that is gripping our nation. Sonke's Government and Media Relations Manager Mbuyiselo Botha urges: "We call on men and boys to hold one another accountable for their actions in the public and private spheres. We must say enough is enough, NOT IN MY NAME. Men and boys must rise and take action to stop violence against women in our country".

*ENDS*

Please contact Sonke Gender Justice for additional comments or more information about the ONE MAN CAN CAMPAIGN to stand up against violence against women.

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