

6 March 2013

**International Women’s Day, 8 March:
Gender equality activists take to the streets in Cape Town and Johannesburg
to Ring the Bell against violence**

This International Women’s Day (8 March), in South Africa and across the world, thousands will Ring the Bell to stop violence against women. Ring the Bell is a global initiative that encourages individuals and organisations, both public and private, to take concrete action on violence against women.

In South Africa, people will Ring the Bell to:

- Remember those women who have not survived gender-based violence
- Break the silence around violence against women
- Call on men to take concrete actions to stop violence
- Call on government to launch an emergency R1 billion fund to ensure adequate services for survivors of violence and for a national violence prevention campaign
- Call for a national commission of inquiry to investigate why government policies and programmes are not being adequately implemented.

Sonke will take to the streets in Cape Town and Johannesburg on 8 March, International Women’s Day, to Ring the Bell (see below). It will be joined by its partners: the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum, the South African Faith and Family Institute, Central Methodist Church, Scalabrini Centre, Triangle Project and Inner Circle, amongst others.

Patrick Godana from Sonke says that, “men can and must take concrete action to change the conditions that fuel violence against women. This means speaking out when they see or hear violence in their homes, on the streets, in taxis and in the workplace.”

“We are calling on government to take decisive action by setting up a dedicated fund to address violence, and by establishing a national commission of inquiry to investigate why government laws, policies and programmes are not being adequately implemented. It is only with dedicated resources and definite action that we can turn the tide on gender-based violence,” says Aadielah Maker from Sonke.

“By ringing the bell, we actively show our individual and collective determination to halt violence against women in our homes, our communities, our places of worship – everywhere,” states Nyanda ka-Khanyile from Sonke.

The following activities will happen in South Africa on 8 March:

-Sonke Gender Justice Board Members-

Sisonke Msimang (Chairperson), Kopano Ratele (Vice Chairperson), Donovan Muller (Treasurer), Vuyiseka Dubula, Rachel Jewkes, Tom Fry, Dean Peacock (Ex-Officio), Steven Robins, Mokgethi Tshabalala,

CAPE TOWN

- 11:00 Interfaith service at Central Methodist Church, city centre
- 11:45 March and public action starting at Central Methodist Church
Hoisting of banner up church bell tower
- 12:00 Sounding of bells and whistles across the city
School bells sound at Rustenberg Girls' High & Wynberg Boys' High
- 12:15 Bo-Kaap mosques: Public announcement via prayer speakers

JOHANNESBURG

- 11:30-12:00 Public action at St Mary's Cathedral, city centre
- 12:00 Sounding of bells and whistles across the city
Sounding of a bell at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in Sandton

At 12 noon on Friday, SABC radio will also sound a bell across all its networks.

On 8 March, South Africans will be joining others in Delhi, Rio de Janeiro and New York to Ring the Bell, a campaign originally launched in India. From 8 March 2013 through to 8 March 2014, the Ring the Bell initiative aims to gather one million concrete actions from men to show their commitment to building a safer world for women and girls.

Actions that can be taken by men include:

- Teaching children who look up to you that good men respect women—and walk the talk.
- Challenging those who disrespect women or girls; friends, family, colleagues -- anybody.
- Interrupting violence by ringing the doorbell when you see/hear domestic violence.
- Insisting on a harassment-free environment at your workplace.
- Respecting the women in your household and in public spaces.
- Speaking out in support of equality for women on social networks.
- Donating money, skills, or other assets to those working for women's equality and safety.
- Educating yourself about the impact of violence against women and girls.
- Lobbying political and business leaders to address violence against women and promote gender equality.
- Standing by women who speak out about their experience of violence

For more on Ring the Bell, see:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47Wjw-DRmzY&list=PLbyiiPziC3QoV04v2Lr6YB5XgzEdhSGLK&index=5>
Bell Bajao - *Ring the Bell* in Hindi - is launched in India. United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, supports the campaign
- Sign on to Ring the Bell at www.genderjustice.org

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