

**THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DR
BLADE NZIMANDE, MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FUNERAL SERVICE OF UYINENE MRWETYANA AT EASTERN CAPE**

7 September 2019

The Mrwetyana Family and friends
Fellow Mourners
South Africans
Ladies and gentlemen

It is with great sense of sadness and loss that I reach out to you today in absentia, as we bid farewell to one of our own, Uyinene Mrwetyana, who was brutally taken away from us by a barbaric, cruel and coward man, whose act remains condemned at all fronts.

I would have loved to be amongst you today to pay tribute to Uyinene who remain our shining star.

Ladies and gentlemen

It is these kinds of murderous, such as the one who took Uyinene's life that as a society, in unison, we must unequivocally name and shame.

Such individuals must be removed from our society and thrown in jail for decades.

They also must not be given an option of bail but should remain incarcerated until they are convicted by our courts.

It is for this very reason that we call upon our criminal justice system to act decisively and impose a harsher sentence for criminals committing gender-based violence.

As a government of the people, we will always uphold the Bill of Rights in our Constitution, which guarantees individuals rights to equal protection and benefit of the law.

It also states that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected.

These are principles that as government we will always protect.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is exacerbated by societal ills and therefore becomes a societal issue that as South Africans we need to decisively confront in order to prevent abuse and to ensure a safer society for women and children.

Since 1994, government has put in place a raft of interventions and policies to try and address GBV and to ensure a society where all people are and feel safe.

There are also several legislative provisions that specifically address violence and abuse of women and children.

These includes amongst others:

The Domestic Violence Act, the Criminal Law Amendment (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act and the Protection from Harassment Act,

The Children's Amendment Act which replaced the Children's Act of 2005 which was enacted to, among other things, protect a child from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.

All these acts offer notable protection for women and children.

There are also Guidelines for the Implementation of the Domestic Violence Act for the Magistrates, which are intended to assist and guide magistrates in implementing the Domestic Violence Act in a way that ensures both legal consistency and legal uniformity.

For us in the Department of Higher Education and Training, we remain committed to create a safer and caring Post School Education and Training environment, with a concerted focus on safety and protection of all in our campuses, in particular female students and staff.

We are therefore engaging all stakeholders to improve campus security. We are working with the Ministerial Task Team appointed to advise me on issues of sexual harassment and gender-based violence and harm at universities.

Equally important, we have also mandated the Higher Education and Training Health, Wellness and Development Centre (HEAIDS), a programme of the Department, to implement a Gender Based Violence programme in university and TVET college campuses to mitigate the problem on campuses.

Fellow mourners

Government alone cannot eradicate this scourge, and legislation and tough police and court action can only go so far. Ultimately it is up to all sectors in society to partner with government in creating safer communities.

I therefore call upon all of you to join government to create a society where everyone, especially women, feel safe and are safe at all times and in all places.

Indeed, the untimely passing on of Uyinene is an unmeasured loss to the Mrwetyana family, friends, the University of Cape Town and South Africa at large.

I hereby convey my condolences to the Mrwetyana family on behalf of myself, as the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology in the Republic of South Africa, and the Department I am leading, during this time of great loss. Please receive our deepest condolences.

DR BLADE NZIMANDE

Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MP)