

President Cyril Ramaphosa Introduces Three New Gender-Based Violence Bills



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Abstract

In 2019, South Africans marched against Gender-Based Violence which led to President Cyril Ramaphosa announcing three new GBV bills. The bills address various issues that were raised during the protests. GetInvolved_gbv's Nirvana Govender offered her thoughts on the bill.

Keywords

Gender-Based Violence bills, GetInvolved_gbv

President Cyril Ramaphosa announced three new Gender-Based Violence (GBV) bills that were promised to last year September GBV protestors to expand on the GBV act and introduce a law designed to fill the gaps that allow some perpetrators of these crimes to evade justice.

Last year, this time nation was reeling from the murders of Uyinene Mrwetyana, Leighandre Jegels, Jesse Hess and a number of other women who had lost their lives at the hands of men. Women, men and children marched to Parliament to protest against this.

A year later, as the fight against GBV continues, President Cyril Ramaphosa has delivered to his promise and introduces the three new Gender-Based Violence bills.

"These bills, once finalised, will help restore the confidence of our country's women that the law is indeed there to protect them."

The first Bill is the amendment to Criminal Law, Sexual Offences and Related Matters amendment. It recognises sexual intimidation and invest as sexual offences that are punishable by law. It extends on the National Register of Sexual Offenders for all offenders and not just against children and the mentally ill. The National Register of Sexual Offenders is to be publicly available.

The second Bill is the amendment to Criminal and Related Matters Act. The perpetrators of GBV and femicide will be restricted on the granting of bail with an expansion of the minimum sentence. If perpetrators are granted bail, law officials are obligated to record the reasoning.

The third Bill is the amendment to Domestic Violence Act. The definition of domestic violence will cover "those in engagements, dating, in customary relationships and actual or perceived romantic, intimate or sexual relationships of any duration." It also includes older persons against any abuse by family members. Complaints will be able to apply for protection orders online.

GetInvolved_gbv is an Instagram page that was started by Nirvana Govender and her partner last year during the September protests. The page was started for the purpose of raising awareness and informing original people on how they can get involved in advocacy or volunteer programs for GBV.



"[The introduction of the three new Gender-Based Violence Bills] is a step in the right direction. It shows that the government acknowledges GBV as a massive problem. But amendments to the bill only expand the scope of sexual offences... It doesn't restrict bail completely is incredibly problematic... Rape perpetrators should not be granted bail because they are dangers to society," said GetInvolved_gbv

"Some of our followers are questioning why these amendments are being celebrated when they were promised to citizens a year ago... And the comments of our post, we see that some of our male followers are concerned that making the National Registry for Sex Offences public would affect those who are falsely accused..."

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