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Johannesburg,  
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25 November 2025

Union Buildings  
Private Bag X1000  
Pretoria  
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**OPEN LETTER TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
– CYRIL MATAMELA RAMAPHOSA**

**Subject: "Justice Delayed is Justice Denied: Request for a meeting"**

Dear President Ramaphosa,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Women's Voice and Leadership<sup>1</sup> South Africa fund (WVL-SA), partners, and allies in the fight to end Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) to request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience regarding our justice system that is failing women and girls.

We would like to acknowledge your critical leadership in declaring Gender Based Violence & Femicide a national crisis following the historic #TotalShutdown March in 2018, declaring GBVF a pandemic during COVID and COVID associated lockdowns and most recently at the G20 Social Summit. Whilst this declaration is a monumental one, there still exists a critical gap that needs urgent intervention.

The National Presidential Summits on Gender Based Violence & Femicide, resulting in the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSPGBVF) has brought together survivors, activists, academics, the faith-based sector, and businesses in a collective effort to address and eliminate the pervasive issues of Gender Based Violence & Femicide that continue to devastate our communities.

The NSPGBVF lays a strong foundation for a coordinated, multi-sectoral response. It emphasizes increased support for Thuthuzela Care Centres, the establishment of specialized sexual offences courts, and enhanced collaboration across departments. While some gains have been made, the pace of implementation of certain NSP commitments remains slow, particularly within the justice system. Survivors continue to face delays and secondary victimisation in spaces meant to provide redress.

Cases such as that of Ms Andy Kawa, gang-raped in 2010 and forced to wait nearly a decade for a proper investigation and trial<sup>2</sup>, and the case of Cheryl Zondi and others<sup>3</sup>, where survivors like Cheryl Zondi have endured prolonged proceedings since 2018, highlight the severe failings of our justice system. Beyond these emblematic cases, countless women and children whose stories never reach the media like that of Relebohile Mofokeng<sup>4</sup> continue to wait for justice.

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<sup>1</sup> WVL is a fund for Women's Rights Organisations around the world supported by Global Affairs Canada and managed in South Africa by Gender Links. Currently WVL supports 48 WRO in all nine provinces of South Africa [www.wvlsa.org.za](http://www.wvlsa.org.za).

<sup>2</sup> *Andy Kawa v Minister of Police & Others*, Constitutional Court of South Africa, Case No. (CCT94/20) [2022]. Available at: <https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judgement/andy-kawa-v-minister-of-police>

<sup>3</sup> *S v Omotoso and Others (CC15/2018)*, Eastern Cape High Court, ongoing proceedings since 2018. Available at: <https://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZAECCHC/>

<sup>4</sup> Case number 1003242024 Vereeniging & Evaton Police Stations  
*Gender Links for equality and justice*

It is on that background that on 28 May 2025, we convened a National Dialogue, themed "*Justice Delayed is Justice Denied*"; which brought together survivors, legal experts, service providers, and civil society to confront systemic delays in the justice system that prolong suffering, silences voices, and re-traumatises survivors.

Your call for a National Dialogue is welcomed. We see it as an opportunity to align efforts and ensure that justice for survivors is not merely aspirational but real, timely, and survivor-centred.

In line with Pillar 3 of the NSPGBVF: Justice, Safety and Protection, which calls for "an effective and responsive criminal justice system that prioritises the safety and rights of survivors," we respectfully request a personal meeting with you to present:

- The outcomes of the Justice Reform Dialogue.
- A portfolio of evidence and proposed reforms.
- Lived experiences and their impact on survivors.

We believe this engagement will strengthen the national response and honour the constitutional rights of survivors.

Annexed to this letter, we include:

- A summary of the Justice Reform Dialogue and stakeholder engagement.
- Data from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)<sup>5</sup> on gender based violence trends and justice system backlogs.
- Key case references and supporting documentation.

We stand ready to work with your office to implement reforms grounded in lived experience and evidence. We ask that you walk this journey with us, not just as a head of state, but as a committed advocate for justice and dignity for all survivors.

We trust in your leadership to ensure that survivors of Gender Based Violence are not further victimised by systemic delays, and that our justice system reflects the values of dignity, equality, and human rights enshrined in our Constitution.

Yours in solidarity,



Nomthandazo Mankazana  
Women's Voice and Leadership SA manager  
On behalf of Women's Voice and Leadership South Africa Grantees

#### Acknowledgement of Contributors

Name	Capacity/ Role
Andy Kawa	Social Justice Advocate
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Marthe Muller	Operations and Partnership Manager- SAWID

<sup>5</sup> Data from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) on GBV trends and justice system backlogs. [Media pack: First South African National Gender-Based Violence Study, 2022 - HSRC](#)

#### *Gender Links for equality and justice*

**Board members:** Emily Brown (Chairperson), Sarah Mistry (Deputy Chairperson), Mathabiso Chamane (Audit Chairperson), Nozipho Mnyandu, Josephine Ncube (Zimbabwe), Mabela Lehloenyana (Lesotho), Sheila Bunwaree (Mauritius), Colleen Lowe Morna (Special Advisor)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Capacity/ Role</b>
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