



**MEDIA STATEMENT / 19 MAY 2017**

## **Save South Africa says: Stop the war against women!**

The Save South Africa campaign is stepping up its involvement in activity and protests against what is effectively a war against women, and calls on all South Africans to do the same.

### **We need a national effort to stop the war!**

It is clear that the state seems unable to act – or, in the case of the Ministry of Women in the Presidency, is simply missing in action – to protect and empower women, and to mobilise women and men against gender violence, femicide and abuse.

Civil society must now drive more campaigns to protect women and ensure they are safe at home, at work, and in all public places. We must coordinate our activities to ensure a concentrated push-back against all forms of gender violence.

**As a first step, we are calling on all our supporters and other South Africans to participate in the “Not in our Name” march taking place in Pretoria tomorrow (Saturday).**

We are symbolically blacking out our website and social media pages today, as Karabo Mokoena is laid to rest, and call on others to do the same on this dark day for women.

Small as these gestures are, we believe they are an important first step in raising awareness and mobilising solidarity and support.

We will also be interacting with other civil society groups involved in fighting the war against women, to make sure civil society has the maximum impact on the attitudes and behaviours of South African men. This will include a specific focus on the murder and so-called “corrective rape” of lesbians and trans-gender persons.

### **The killing must stop! The attacks, abuse, harassment and violence must stop!**

Save South Africa calls for discussion and maximum unity in organising a National Day of Action against femicide, patriarchy, rape and other forms of violence against women, and will do all in its power to support mobilisation towards this.

We believe it will be important to focus on schoolgoers, in particular, to discuss patriarchy, gender violence, toxic masculinities and respect for others.

We will also begin discussions with the SACC around an “unburdening” process – similar to the churches’ state capture process – around patriarchy and violence. There is no doubt that South Africa needs more platforms to discuss the scourge of violence against women, and this needs to include a process of men “coming clean” around their actions, and what drives them.

We also demand a greater sense of urgency in the corridors of power, where government, business and other sectors must use their resources to build awareness of the war against women and to contribute to building a society where women are respected, protected and safe.

This should not, however, be based on the sort of opportunistic conduct we have seen this week – such as political groups delivering food to the family of Karabo Mokoena, the Police Minister’s insensitive remarks about “yellowbones” or the distasteful and hypocritical visit by President Jacob Zuma to the home of Courtney Pieters. Zuma has absolutely no moral authority to speak on sexual violence given his past behaviour, and he would do best to steer well away from the subject lest it further weakens government’s already-questionable response to the war against women.