

SAMA calls for more education to deal with GBV crimes

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) says while it supports the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), more must be done throughout the year to combat this scourge in South Africa.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The 16 Days' campaign is an annual international campaign that this year started on 25 November and will end on 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

The theme for 2021 in South Africa is "The Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke – 16 Days of Activism – moving from awareness to accountability". Mannya Maxeke was a South African religious leader, social and political activist.

SAMA says although the campaign forms the key focus of government's "365 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children," more intensive efforts are needed to deal adequately with the problem.

Call for stronger legal framework

"We have a massive problem with GBV in South Africa with some reports saying up to 51% of women are victims of violence. Any efforts to deal with this must be supported and applauded but we must also be honest with ourselves and admit that what we are doing is not enough. There is a great need for more education, and for a stronger legal framework to deal with these crimes," says Dr Angelique Coetzee, chairperson of SAMA.

In addition, says Coetzee, the reporting of GBV crimes must be made easier, and police officers must be better trained to manage these cases. She says too often women face secondary abuse by authorities who don't take their reports seriously, or who don't properly investigate these cases.

"We have heard time and again from women who say police officers treat them with disdain, or who don't want to get involved in these cases. It's not good enough, and something urgent is needed. If we, as a nation, are to turn the tide on GBV, we have to ensure everyone is treated equally when they report these crimes."

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