

# Women are core to the daily work of every hotel: We must ensure their safety

By [Guy Stehlik](#)

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The abuse of women has long been a societal issue, and things have recently reached a head in both South Africa and France with protests by thousands of people saying: "We have had enough! We must protect our women. Stop the femicide!"



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

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The news agenda has largely focused on the families affected by the scourge of violence against women. But it is helpful to consider, too, that the lack of safety for women has a significant impact on employers as well. In industries like the hospitality sector, women predominate the employee numbers, and this means that, as an employer, a company should do whatever it can to ensure the safety of its employees.

In a typical hotel situation, employee numbers are skewed by far in favour of women - those who work in cleaning jobs, in the kitchen, and very often at the reception desk. In addition, more women are today taking on leadership roles as hotel General Managers, Marketing Managers, and so on.



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Unfortunately, as we well know, all women are at risk in a society beset by serious problems of violence and unemployment, among the many issues South Africa faces. But those most vulnerable are those coming from poorer areas, such as the thousands of women who work in lower-level positions in hotels. They are the ones who have to use public transport, and often have to wait for taxis in unsafe locations at the roadside after dark. They are also the ones whose work is crucial for the survival of many family members, who are needed to provide financial support to put food on the table, pay school fees, clothe children - as well as being the backbone of the family on an emotional level.

These are people whose importance in society cannot be overstated. They are the mothers and grandmothers - those

whose roles both in their families and their work makes them absolutely crucial for the well-being of so many others. We cannot afford to have them being put at risk; we cannot allow them to have to live in fear; we cannot accept that every day yet another one of these people is harmed by men whose warped sense of their own power makes them commit the most unspeakable acts of violence.

## Ensuring employee safety

As a company, BON Hotels is extremely conscious of the need to help keep our staff safe - to ensure that every mother, every grandmother, every daughter, gets home safely day after day without their family members and their employers having to be concerned about them.

As for guests, the fact that there are some hotels that identify themselves as being differentiators because they call themselves 'women-friendly hotels' or offer certain parts of the hotel specifically for women travellers is not something we should be proud of: it is an indictment of our society that service-providers see the frailty of women as a sales opportunity.

And some of our hotels, such as BON Hotel Empangeni and BON Hotel Waterfront Richards Bay, are actively expressing their feelings about the horrendous situation in our country in their efforts to show solidarity with the local community and to help raise awareness of the issues women face. These hotels, for example, offer support to the Thuthuzela Care Centre at the local Ngwelezane Hospital through the provision of care packs for rape victims.

All South Africans should follow suit, and all employers should make sure that they are aware of the safety concerns that their own female staff may have.

## ABOUT GUY STEHLIK

Guy Stehlik is the CEO and founder of BON Hotels and Director of BON Hotels International West Africa. Having vast experience in all aspects of Hotel Management as well as having owned his own hotels, Guy created BON Hotels as an "owner-staff-community-guest" centric company to herald in and define an exciting new era in hotel management.

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