**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES CONTINUES WITH PUBLIC HEARINGS ON GBV BILLS**

**Parliament, Thursday, 22 October 2020** – The Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services continued with virtual public hearings on the three Gender-Based-Violence (GBV) Bills yesterday.

The organisations that made presentations yesterday include Freedom of Religion South Africa, Research ICT Africa, Rape Crisis, South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public Human Rights and International Law (SAIFAC), Lisa Vetten and others, Sonke Gender Justice, International Women’s Forum of South Africa, and THE Commission for Gender Equality.

Organisations shared a common call in their presentations for the tightening of sections on penalty in the Bills to ensure that perpetrators of the acts of GBV get harsher sentences. Furthermore, organisations want to ensure that future legislation ensures the acceleration of prosecution of GBV cases.

On calls for the acceleration of successful prosecution, the committee highlighted the reality of the dependence of that acceleration of prosecution on the stark reality of the availability of concrete evidence. Sometimes there is lack of evidence because of the avoidance by the victim of GBV to answer certain questions that widen the wound of trauma of the victim.

In their presentation, Research ICT Africa highlighted the prevalence of online domestic violence which the future GBV legislation must deter. Members of the committee wanted the organisation to give more explanation on this, including statistical evidence about that kind of violence.
The virtual hearings will start at 18:00 today.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON ON JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR BULELANI MAGWANISHE.**