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Letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa

Lee-Anne Germanos <leeanne.germanos@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:35 PM

To: presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za, khusela@presidency.gov.za, malebo@presidency.gov.za

Bcc: Leanne Van <leanne.van89@gmail.com>, Cassandra Guerra <cassandraguerra04@gmail.com>, Michelle Dexter <180069@virtualwindow.co.za>

Dear Madams

By way of introduction, I am the Director and Co-Founder of The Embrace Project, a non-profit organisation combatting gender-based violence. The Embrace Project participated in the 2020 legislative process surrounding, what was colloquially called, the "GBV Bills", we made representations to Parliament, and we were extended an invitation to the President's 2021 State of the Nation Address as an anti-GBV stakeholder.

We attach a letter addressed to President Cyril Ramaphosa relating to the rate of gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa currently. The letter is signed by the women of South Africa. A petition has also been created around the letter, which has over 5000 signatures to date. The signatures to this letter (being the petition) will be hand delivered to the Office of the Presidency at the Union Buildings at the end of August 2021. Kindly inform me to whom, in the Office of the Presidency, the petition should be delivered.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter.

We look forward to receiving a response from the President.

Kind Regards

Lee-Anne Germanos

Director and Co-Founder

Admitted Attorney

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CREATIVELY COMBATting GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

9 August 2021

The Presidency, Republic of South Africa

Attention: President Cyril Ramaphosa

Union Buildings

Government Avenue

Pretoria

Email: presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za

khusela@presidency.gov.za

malebo@presidency.gov.za

Dear *Mr President*

WE, THE WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA

On Women's Day, we, the women of South Africa, have nothing to celebrate. We have nothing to celebrate when our sisters are daily maimed and butchered by South African men. We cannot celebrate when we continue silently to wonder: "am I next?" No *Mr President*, this Women's Day is not a cause for celebration.

Rahima Moosa, Sophia Williams, Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and 20 000 South African women did not march on the Union Buildings for a South Africa that promises equality, freedom and security of the person, and freedom of movement to only half of its population. We, the women of South Africa, are not free, and we are not equal. We cannot be when we are required to make considerations for things of which you cannot conceive; considerations that we make in order simply to step outside of the front door. For, as a woman of South Africa, "I carry my pass every day in my heart. Because as a woman I can't walk freely on the streets." – Fatima Meer.

Even in our beds we are not safe, *Mr President*. Every South African woman knows a woman, and every South African woman has imagined what she would do when that day comes. When her turn comes. That is not a way to live *Mr President*. We, the women of South Africa, are alive but we are not living.

So no *Mr President*, this Women's Day is not a cause for celebration.

You made promises to us. You even learned to speak our language when you told us that it was not our faults that we were being violated and mutilated. You even said our names. But with the

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passing of time, it is obvious that your promises are not our new dawn, *Mr President*. For as long as you lack the political will to end the war being waged against us, the women of South Africa, no Action Plan or law will ever be.

Why is it, *Mr President*, that you cannot find it in you to fight, with the same vigour, what you have termed, the "second pandemic" ravaging this country, as you have done the first? We know, *Mr President*, that the patriarchy serves you well for, after all, you too are a South African man.

So please *Mr President*, no more pretty promises written on fancy paper. The public sector's crocodile tears bemoaning its paucity will no longer cut it either. That will not wash away the rivers of blood of millions of South African women, nor prevent the spilling of millions more.

We have reached judgment day on this pandemic – this war – *Mr President*, as many of our murdered sisters already have. We now ask you to account to us, the women of South Africa. Tell us when it is that we will be able to enjoy the same rights enshrined in our Constitution as you do? When will we walk the streets as freely as you?

What do we tell our daughters? What do you tell yours, *Mr President*? Not on your watch should we expect that to happen?

Yours faithfully

We, the Women of South Africa

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