



via email: [PresidentRSA@presidency.gov.za](mailto:PresidentRSA@presidency.gov.za)  
cc: [mike@presidency.gov.za](mailto:mike@presidency.gov.za); [charmaine@presidency.gov.za](mailto:charmaine@presidency.gov.za); [olive@presidency.gov.za](mailto:olive@presidency.gov.za);

9 April 2020

His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa  
President of the Republic of South Africa  
The Union Building  
Government Avenue  
Pretoria  
0001

Dear Honorable President,

**Re: URGENT Request for Adequate Leadership in the Ministry of Police**

On behalf of The Wise Collective (dba Wise 4 Afrika) we are writing to raise serious concerns about the tone of leadership that embraces toxic masculinity which we have subjected the public to through utterances of the current police minister, Mr. Bheki Cele, especially during these 21 days of National Lockdown.

While we appreciate the importance of a firm government response to contain and deter the spread of the Covid19 pandemic, it is important that this be anchored by **principles of constitutionality, human rights and dignity for all citizens**. The current State of National Disaster occurs within the context of a Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) national crisis as declared by the President. This GBVF crisis, kills over 3,000 women annually and has continued throughout the Covid19 crisis as evidenced by reports of increased incident reports during the national lockdown. One of the key underlying drivers of GBVF is patriarchy and toxic masculinity; by accepting and committing to addressing the 24 demands delivered to the President on 01 August 2018, one of the key commitments (demand number one) speaks to the character of leadership in the prioritization of elimination of violence against women.

Since the beginning of the briefings on the Covid19 crisis, South Africans have tuned in daily to broadcast statements from Minister Bheki Cele that are delivered in a careless manner centering the very **toxic masculinity** inherent in the norms and values we seek to change for a violence free society. Utterances such as sanctioning people to only drink in **“their fathers’ homes” to terms like “skop and donner”** only serve to celebrate male dominance and the very violence we seek to stem away.

In addition, his failure to pay close attention when delivering messages about the parallel and deadly crisis of GBVF suggests that he does not take this issue seriously. For instance, on Day 7

Johannesburg Gauteng, South Africa  
Twitter: @Wise4Afrika      Facebook: The Wise Collective  
admin@wise4afrika.org

of the 21-days lockdown, Mr. Cele reported that **87,000 GBV calls had been received** when in fact that figure was for the entire period of the year 2019. While the GBV calls have in fact doubled during the lockdown period, this careless reporting set off much panic and hopelessness especially for victims currently in confined spaces with abusers. More recently Mr. Cele argued against the reporting of a police who raped his wife in a manner that not only revealed his lack of understanding of **rape culture and the extraordinary role called upon the police in fighting GBVF**, but also exposed a lack of the kind of morale character and leadership required for South Africa to win the battle against the violence inflicted by mostly men on women. Indeed many have publicly even lamented about how they wished Mr. Cele “hated violence against women as much as he seems to hate alcohol.” We are not in a race to the bottom and therefore this should not be our best hope available to fight against this scourge.

Furthermore, the historic inadequate response of SAPS to GBV calls managed by the GBV Command Center persists even throughout the lockdown thus continuing to put women at a greater risk. Referral of abuse cases to the SAPS have proved to be inadequate and at best non-responsive.

Mr. President, we trust and hope that you will give these issues serious consideration and take the necessary steps to bring dedicated leaders especially at the level of national police to ensure that women and children are protected from the violence and that victims of GBVF have access to effective justice.

Sincerely,



Brenda Madumise-Pajibo, Director  
brenda@wise4afrika.org



Onica Nonhlanhla Makwakwa, Director  
onica@wise4afrika.org