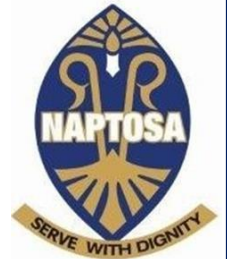


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21 March 2023

Human Rights Day: #LeaveNoOneBehind – Walk for Your Rights

Human Rights Day is a significant day in South Africa. This day marked an affirmation by **ordinary people**, rising in unison to proclaim their rights. This year's theme is #LeaveNoOneBehind – Walk for your rights.

It is however ironic that we 'celebrate' this day every year with the reality of knowing that not all citizens are enjoying their rights to the fullest, as enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Our women and children are losing their lives at an alarming rate. Most of the time at the hands of intimate partners and or people whom they know. What's even more compelling is the fact that March is also International Women's Month. How do we celebrate our women when they are constantly living in fear?

Schools are supposed to be safe havens for all who attend and serve in them. Instead, school violence is on the rise, with regular reports of learner on learner, learner on teacher, teacher on learner as well as teacher on teacher violence. So much so, that it could be declared an epidemic.

As if that's not enough, schools have been negatively affected by loadshedding and water challenges. Learners losing their lives because of infrastructural problems including sanitation, cannot be the order of the day in 2023. Overcrowded classrooms, infringe on the right to an education of many learners daily. This has a negative impact on learning and teaching, perpetuating inequality.

NAPTOSA calls on ordinary citizens to rise again, and fight against the social ills that are plaguing our communities. Human rights are rights that **everyone** must enjoy! Communities need to stand up and protect the schools, which their children attend, in an attempt to protect their futures and restore their dignity. We need to take back ownership of our communities and root out acts of criminality that are tormenting our women and children. Women's rights are also human rights. There is no future without our women and children! Protect them at all costs!

Leave no one behind!

Mr BL Manuel

Executive Director