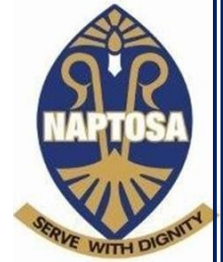


NATIONAL NEWS FLASH

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CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE SHATTERED BY VIOLENCE

According to the latest South African Police Crime Statistics report, between October and December last year, schools, universities, colleges, day care, and aftercare facilities reported 7 murders, 24 attempted murders, 252 cases of assault or GBH, and 61 rapes. These findings underscore the urgent need to address violence not only within educational institutions but also the underlying societal issues that drive it. The impact of violence on children extends beyond immediate physical harm, with lifelong repercussions affecting their emotional well-being and impeding their development. Child sexual abuse can lead to a range of devastating consequences, including teenage pregnancy, diminished self-esteem, and suicidal tendencies. Healing from such trauma is a prolonged and challenging process that requires significant support and intervention.

A recent report from Stats SA sheds light on significant gender disparities in violence against children aged 17 and younger. Females in this age group are more susceptible to abduction, rape, sexual assault, child trafficking, and attempted common robbery. Males in the same age bracket are at higher risk of experiencing murder, assault causing Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), attempted murder, common robbery, and common assault.

The safety of learners and teachers in schools and surrounding communities is a growing concern for NAPTOSA. The grim reality of escalating violence within educational institutions has shaken communities. Tragically, the headlines are filled with reports of rising death tolls and violent attacks, painting a disturbing picture of the challenges faced within our schools. The shooting of a school principal by a 13-year-old learner, along with other incidents of violence within the educational system, underscores the critical need to address underlying causes. Teachers, entrusted with guiding young minds, are increasingly vulnerable to assaults, as seen in a recent video of learners blocking a door to prevent an elderly teacher's entry, leading to her fall when they let go.

NAPTOSA demands that the Department of Education fulfill their obligation to maintain school safety, protect educators, and restore security within educational institutions. We call on communities to unite to safeguard schools from social ills infiltrating our educational spaces. The Police must protect the most vulnerable members of society.

We demand that all stakeholders improve service delivery to ensure our children have safe and nurturing environments to thrive!

Mr BL Manuel

Executive Director