



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**LAW SOCIETY CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN;  
DISCUSSES INITIATIVES TO ASSIST SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

At its Council meeting on 15 February 2013 the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) added its voice to the shock and condemnation of the increasing violence against women and children which appears to have become endemic in our society.

'The LSSA discussed various steps that it will consider taking to contribute to assisting survivors of sexual and domestic violence and their families,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Krish Govender and Jan Stemmett.

The initiatives include:

- Engaging with the South African Police Service (SAPS) at the highest level to discuss ways in which the attorneys' profession can assist the SAPS to ensure that cases of sexual and domestic violence are prosecuted successfully.
- The LSSA's specialist committees on gender, family law and criminal procedure will be requested to engage with committees at provincial law societies and attorneys at grass-roots level to devise and roll out support and awareness programmes. These could include attorneys offering legal advice on a pro bono basis to support victims in reporting rape and acts of domestic violence correctly and to promote the idea of providing multidisciplinary professional teams to assist survivors of violence and their families. This is already being done by some attorneys' firms. A list of attorneys prepared to assist in this regard will be publicised once available.
- Defence attorneys who act for those accused of rape and violence against women and children – more particularly male attorneys – are urged to be sensitive to the trauma and intense scrutiny that victims of sexual and domestic abuse are put through in the criminal justice process which still reflects deeply entrenched gender inequalities.

All the LSSA's specialist committees will be tasked with mainstreaming gender issues into their objectives so that sensitivity and awareness becomes paramount in all areas of law, not just committees and organisations dealing with gender issues.

***ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, KRISH GOVENDER AND JAN STEMMETT***

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 21 400 attorneys and 5 800 candidate attorneys.