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RALLY OF THE IFP WOMEN'S BRIGADE  
IN SUPPORT OF  
16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN  
ADDRESS BY  
PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI MP  
PRESIDENT OF THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY

Durban: 28 November 2010

For generations South Africans have struggled to achieve a free, democratic, non-sexist, non-racist and prosperous country, in which the measure of opportunities and dignity is not based on skin colour, gender or financial means. Many have given their lives to reaching this goal, and our shared history is replete with heroes and heroines who have brought us closer. As we join the world in marking 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, we are standing on the shoulders of these giants. Knowing what they achieved and knowing the difficult path that still lies ahead, we are committing ourselves to take the struggle further.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this rally of the IFP Women's Brigade which supports 16 Days of Activism. From the 25<sup>th</sup> of November to the 10<sup>th</sup> of December events will be taking place across our country, highlighting the call for government and communities to work together to stop the cycle of violence. This year, Government has chosen the catchphrase "Don't Look Away!" which urges our nation to act against abuse, wherever it happens.

This call recognizes that violence and abuse of women and children is pervasive in our society; it is happening across South Africa. But it also expresses the tragic reality that many South Africans still live with the mindset that abuse of women and children is somehow acceptable. Academic surveys have shown that a percentage of men still believe- that under certain circumstances it is their right, or even their obligation, to beat their wives. But violence is not a cultural thing. It is not a right and it is never acceptable. Let us shatter this myth today.

I am proud of the IFP Women's Brigade for the role it has played in protecting and promoting the rights of women and children. We have a legacy of being at the vanguard of human rights protection. During the 16 Days of Activism campaign, I know that the IFP Women's Brigade will take every opportunity to educate the most vulnerable segments of our communities about their rights and recourse. I know this, because the IFP Women's Brigade performs this vital task 365 days a year. I encourage our women to never tire in your pursuit of justice, equality, security and dignity for all our people.

This pursuit has not been fruitless. South Africa has come a long way since the dawn of democracy in terms of changing laws and policies to protect women and children. We still have the arduous task of changing hearts and

minds, but we have laid the foundation for this transformation by changing the legislative framework. Today, there are several pieces of legislation that protect women and children from violence and abuse. | think of the Domestic Violence Act of 1998, the Childrenâ\200\231's Act of 2005, the Maintenance Act of 1998, the Promotion of Equity and Prevention of Linfair Discrimination Act of 2000, and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007.

This list of titles translates into a tangible change in the way we deal with violence and abuse against women and children, For example, earlier this month we were all shocked by a rape case that caught the attention of the media, in which a 15 year old girl claimed she had been raped by two fellow learners at Jules High Schoal in Johannesburg. The boys were 14 and 16 years old. But shortly thereafter, the young girl admitted in court that it had been consensual sex, and all three were charged with statutory rape.

The public response was one of shock and outrage. The Young Communists l.eague called the decision to charge the young girl â\200\234yet another indictment to the women of this countryâ\200\235 who â\200\234still slave away under a patriarchal criminal justice machinery.â\200\235 The ANC Youth League went further, calling on the Public Prosecutor to â\200\234drop criminal chargesâ\200\235 against all three learners, reasoning that the incident â\200\234is not really rapeâ\200\235.

But these responses fail to take into account thal the law relating to sexual offences has changed, in order to ensure gender equality. Sexual intercourse with a minor is against the law, and a minor is anynne under 16 years of age. Until recently, this applied only to girls, as the court â\200\224 and society - has traditionally held the view that men cannot be viciims of rape. But we know that this is not true, and in order to protect young boys from sexual assault and sexual indecency, South Africa changed its law so that provisions on

. statutory rape â\200\224 which simply means sex with a minor â\200\224 apply to both male s and females.

Thus, the youngsters in the Jules High School case are not victims of â\200\234a patriarchal criminal justice machineryâ\200\235, but are rather among the first to be prosecuted under new legislation that ensures gender equality in the protection of our children. What really baffles me is the statement by the ANC Youth League that this was not really rape, and that therefore there should be no repercussions for any of the three. By prosecuting these learners, in accordance with the requirements of our law, the court was able to place them in a diversion programme, which means they will receive guidance, counsehng and instruction to equip them to make hetter and healthier Ilifestyle choices in the years to come.

South Africa is taking slow but meaningful strides towards creating a non-sexist democracy in which children are protected. It is not helpful when the ANC Youth League Jumps up and down over legislation passed by the ANC-

led Governmeant. lt should have been a big red ws;rnlnng flag to all of us whan the President of the ANG Youth Lamgus, Mr Juliug Malerms, recflisaat G0 albicio

When I was Minister of Home Affairs during the first ten years of democracy, my Department was often called upon to assist women from countries outside our borders who had married South African men and found themselves living in situations of abuse. Some endured beatings and humiliation, and even rape -- because rape is any non-consensual sex, even within a marriage or between people who are living together. The women endured abuse because they were financially dependent on their husbands and feared being cast out with no means of support. Often they were also threatened with divorce and deportation, so that psychological abuse compounded physical violence.

living under these stressful circumstances, we must learn to consider the

It is somehow easier for wormmen to remember the plight of their neighbours,

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opponents accuse the IFP of persecuting women. For throughout my own political career, and throughout the 35 year history of the IFP, I have championed women and seen to it that women are valued, empowered and promoted.

I shall not recount the many pioneering steps I have taken to protect the rights of women in law and in practice, for this Women's Brigade knows that history. We speak about it when we celebrate the 9th of August every year. We do this to remind ourselves of our commitment to South Africa's women, and to inform a younger generation of the tangible actions behind our words.

Let me warn that a strategic enemy will always strike at the heart of his opponent. When lies are told about us persecuting women or suggestions are made that women no longer support the IFP's leadership, it is a strategic blow to the very heart of our Party. Because at the heart of the IFP is its women.

I was therefore extremely pleased by the march organized by the Women's Brigade on the 4th of September 2010 which saw thousands of our members and supporters descend on Durban in a show of unity and strength. That march was an indication that women are still at the heart of our Party and are still determined to grow and strengthen the IFP. It is important that we promote this truth, particularly as our Party faces ructions from within, and particularly as we approach the 2011 Local Government elections.

If our opponents can get a younger generation to believe that the IFP is sexist and undemocratic, they will have struck a double blow. For the strength of the IFP is also found in its vibrant Youth Brigade. The IFP is committed to empowering South Africa's youth to liberate themselves from the bonds of poverty, unemployment and a lack of opportunities. From SADESMO, which supports students at institutions of tertiary education, to our MPs, like Mrs Pat Lebenya-Ntanzu, the Acting Chairperson of the IFP Youth Brigade, who sits on the parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth, Children and People with Disabilities the IFP is working for our youth.

The Jules High School rape case highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse, including substance abuse, in our schools. It made

headlines because the case was prosecuted under new legal provisions, not

because sex in our schools is uncommon. I wish that were the case. South Africa's Chapter 9 institutions, which are the organizations under our Constitution that safeguard democracy, tasked this Commission for Gender Equality with monitoring the Jules High School case, together with the Public Protector, because it was evident that these kinds of incidents are on the rise,

It is therefore deeply disappointing that the National Youth Development Agency, which has been dogged by financial scandals since its original inception, now faces another setback. The IFP has asked the President to disband the Provincial Advisory Boards of the NYDA, because the appointment process was corrupt. The Boards have been filled with ANC cadres, over whom excellent non-ANC candidates were recommended. As yet, the Boards still stand. But if the NYDA becomes another gravy-train for

budding politicians, it will have failed its mandate to serve the needs and interests of South Africa's youth.

Our youth need support. Our children need protection. Where national structures are failing, people of goodwill need to step in., Indeed, wherever there is need, abuse or violence, the people of goodwill need to speak out and take action.

Every year, during 16 Days of Activism, the leaders of our country speak out against violence and all forms of abuse, and communities condemn the perpetrators. As a society, we tend to divide ourselves between us and them; those who are morally upright, good citizens, and those who are criminals, or racists, or addicts. But this year I wish to speak to the ordinary men and women who are struggling under the pressures of life and find themselves easily angered. [f you are worried about your temper; worried that you may be harming your children or harming each other, I urge you to seek assistance. This is not a battle you need to fight alone.

There is an anonymous, confidential hotline called STOP GENDER VIOLENCE, which offers information, counseling and referrals in all official languages. I encourage you to call them before things come to a bad pass, as they can assist you with ways to minimize the stress you are facing and cope with it better. Today, we will distribute the contact numbers of several organizations that can assist both victims and those who want to stop the cycle of violence. )

Abuse can only continue when it is hidden. Our communities need to break the silence that tacitly consents to violence in our homes and on our streets. If you are suffering some form of abuse, or suspect or know that someone else is a victim of violence, speak out. Speak to an elder in your church, your guidance counselor or a teacher, speak to a family member or friend, or call one of the dedicated hotlines. But never try to hide what is happening.

For generations we have struggled for a fast, non-sexist, non-racist, democratic South Africa. Let us continue that struggle as we seek to change the hearts and minds of our people. Let us keep Taking giant stride=s forward in the protection of our women and children. Let us create a future in which all our country's children can reach their full potential, without fear and pain. May our women of the future live in safety.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, as 18 Days of Activism ends, South Africa will celebrate International Human Rights Day. At this time, we will join hands with the world in seeking a better tomorrow, and the IFRY Women's Brigade will be at the forefront of this cause. I am proud of our Women, sir

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