



11/4/1/2/11

Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement
Western Cape Provincial Parliament
IPalamente yePhondo IeNtshona Koloni

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, 30 July 2019, (at 09:00) Chamber

PRESENT

Members:

Democratic Alliance

Bosman, G (Chairperson)

Mackenzie, RD

Philander, WF

African National Congress

BakuBaku-Vos, NG

Apology

Makamba-Botya, N, (EFF)

Additional Members

Bans, AP (ANC)

Windvogel, R (ANC)

Department of Social Development

See attendance register

Persons in attendance

See the attendance register.

1. Opening and welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

2. The Committee proceeded to the following briefings:

2.1 Presentations by Professor Mathews, Director of Children's Institute from the University of Cape Town

The Professor informed the meeting that a total of 1018 children were murdered in the province of which 45% were killed in the context of child abuse and neglect. Almost 74% of children under the age of 5 years died due to fatal child abuse cases. The child homicides are a low priority for the police, cases are closed undetected resulting in the perpetrators walking free. There is a lack of coordination between the Department of Health, Police and Social Services and this compromises the outcome of management of child abuse deaths.

Professor Mathews indicated that a Provincial Child Death Review Team has been established. It consists of relevant stakeholders such as social workers, police officers, prosecutors, forensic pathologists, paediatricians and child health specialists. The review team aims to look at all the child death cases in the province to secure convictions for the cases of child murders and to finalise the cases. A total of 1594 child death cases were reviewed in 2018 by the Child Death Review team in the province.

There is a growing number of infanticide cases, the killing of children under the age of 1 is a concern. This is where the infant is killed deliberately, this includes, abandoned baby where an infant is left or deserted without care and live birth where there is evidence that the child had breathed post-birth. The Death Child Review Team intends to push for these cases to be treated as murder cases.

The Professor said that the incidence of fatal child abuse is highest in the first year of life. One in 10 child murders is associated with rape, namely, perpetrated by a known male. The high levels of sexual violence fuelled the burden of rape and murder among girls needed to be addressed. Large numbers of young men between the ages of 13-17 are killed yearly due to gang violence and interpersonal violence and this is a concern. The alcohol and drug abuse fuel violence and the availability of weapons, particularly guns increase the lethality of altercations.

Ms. Currie-Gamwo, from the NPA, informed the Committee that the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is prioritising the child murder cases since the start of the Child Death Review process. Police investigation on child murders are guided by the NPA and prioritised much earlier than before and the prosecutor's decisions are taken sooner, this fast-track the finalisation of child death matters. The investigations relating to child murder cases are managed and cases are prosecuted in the High Court. This results in high conviction rate.

Professor Mathews concluded her presentation by pointing out that the social and psychological support of pregnant mothers' assessment of vulnerability is essential. Parental drug and alcohol abuse is found to be associated with large numbers of child death. Violence in the home extend its impact on children and increase the risk of exposure to abuse and death. High level of sexual violence fuels the burden of rape. Murder among children in particular girls need to be addressed and building children's conflict management skills early in their lives are imperative to reduce peer on peer violence.

2.2 Presentations by the Department of Social Development

Dr. Macdonald, Head of Department informed the Committee that a total of 89 children had been murdered in the province in the past five years. A total of 198 children is murdered per year, 17 children were murdered every month and 4 children were murdered every week. According to the Department, between 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2018 a total of 781 young men between the ages of 13-17 were killed, 76 children were killed between the ages of 6-12 years of age, as a total of 128 children between the ages of 0-5 years were killed. The Department reported that during the past five years, 81.6% of the child murders were male victims and 18.4% of child murders in the province were female victims. The areas with the highest number of child murders in the province are Nyanga police cluster with 225 cases, Blue Downs with police cluster with 181 cases, Mitchells Plain police cluster with 135 cases, Khayelitsha police cluster with 97 cases and Tygerberg police cluster with 61 cases of child murders. The Department also indicated that the lack of resource is making it difficult to address the scourge of child murders in the province, however, the Department is doing its best to address the increasing challenge of child murders in the province. A Provincial Plan of Action to address the child murders is in place, the proposed plan suggests that training of teachers and those involved in Early Childhood Development (ECD) be provided to identify signs of abuse in children.

2.3 Presentations by the Jelly Beanz

Ms. Kriel, Director of Jelly Beanz said that child murders do not happen in a vacuum, to address this a whole society approach is needed. According to the analysis of stats presented by Jelly Beanz, 1/3 of children experience some form of sexual abuse during childhood. Boys slightly more than girls), 12% of children have experienced neglect, 18% of children have experienced physical abuse, 26% of children have experienced emotional abuse. The significant number of children experienced violence in the home either as direct victims or a witness of domestic violence. NGOs which have the responsibility to prevent and respond to violence against children are seriously underfunded, compared to the magnitude of their challenges.

Jelly Beanz suggested that there is a need to make all forms of violence against children illegal including the use of physical and humiliating punishment. Children need to be afforded the same level of protection afforded to adults. Parents need to be assisted with effective parenting disciplines without violence. Parent programmes should be integrated into life skills programmes at schools, ante-natal and well-baby clinics and inclusive of boys, men, and fathers. Furthermore, Jelly Beanz suggested that life skills programmes from Grade R upwards should teach non-violent ways of dealing with anger, frustration, and bullying. These programmes must be taught by educators who are appropriate role models.

The impact of violence on children loss of concentration, guilt, fear, sadness, loss, grief, aggressive behaviour, desensitised, act out what they witness and nightmares. Violence results in children seeking out unhealthy coping mechanism and children carry this behaviour into their adult life and beyond.

2.4 Presentations by Molo Songololo

Ms. McLeod, a social worker from Molo Songololo informed the committee that South Africa is a very dangerous place for children. The crime stats revealed that 985 children had been murdered in 2017/2018, which 695 were boys and 264 girls were killed and the Western Cape Province had the highest number of child killings than any other province in South Africa. She reported that children are killed in a form of neglect and starvation, beaten and tortured, assaulted, being held as a shield, burnt, stabbed, shot, raped and strangled, raped and stabbed, poisoned and caught in gang crossfire. She highlighted that not all cases of abuse against children are always reported to the police. Some children are too young to report the crime, some are afraid to speak up because they fear criminals and some do not know where to report crime other than to a police station.

She urged an effective parliamentary oversight by public representatives especially lawmakers. A need to hold key government departments to account, security and safety of children be treated as a priority. Increase community policing, improve investigations and arrests, effective prosecutions and sentencing, provide effective non-violence training and rehabilitation programme and improve infrastructure developments to increase safety and security. Molo Songololo recommended that parent education and training, and the vetting of persons working with children should be a priority.

Ms McLeod also recommended that government and other organisations working with children must have an up-to-date number of children who have been killed, suffered serious violent crime and been victims of abuse and violence. Ensure that government and other organisations plan better for the future to prevent child killings, abuse, and violence against children. She further urged the Western Cape government to guarantee and monitor children's involvement in the work of the Western Cape Commissioner for Children.

2.5. Presentations by Connect Network

Ms. Moko, a Social Worker and Child Protection Officer from the Connect Network informed the Committee that the goals of Connect Network is to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and thriving families through collaboration and capacity building in at least 10 communities in the Western Cape.

She indicated that Connect Network locates and connects by appointing and equipping lead affiliate organisations in various communities, oversee community, mapping to determine which organisations exist according to geographic location and services providers. The organisation connect affiliates identified in communities with other community organisations involved with children. Connect Network then engage and equip the organisation by developing training curriculums, identify service and capacity gaps and deliver training and mentoring. They also collaborate and provide solutions. The organisation aims to build safer communities. They offer training on crisis pregnancy counselling, mothering training on the first 100 days, child curriculum and DSD registration training on ECDs, this includes sexual health training and HIV training for crèche mothers. Furthermore, they provide training on childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and capacity building on child advocates, NGO governance and leadership development and child- friendly churches.

The Disabled Children Action's Action presented on the child murders in the province giving a list of the children that were murdered between 2017 / 2018. According to their report, Western Cape was leading with 279 child murders, 60 girls and 219 boys, KZN with 221 child murders with 91 girls and 130 boys, Eastern Cape with 180 child murders, 43 girls and 143 boys, Gauteng with 108 child murders, 31 girls and 77 boys, Free State with 52 child murders, 21 girls and 31 boys, North West with 49 child murders, 13 girls and 36 boys, Mpumalanga with 46 child murders, 16 girls and 30 boys, Limpopo with 31 child murders, 14 girls and 17 boys and Northern Cape with 19 Child murders, 5 girls and 14 boys.

2.6. Presentations by the Trauma Unit

Ms. Valdi van Reenen-le Roux from Trauma Unit indicated that the safety of children is a collective responsibility not only for government. Institutional structures are lacking in communities to fix the challenge of child murders in the province. She indicated that in 2017 the Trauma Unit called for an inquiry of commissioner on child murders in the Western Cape after 61 children were murdered. The province is faced with challenges that include social workers who are not trained in trauma counselling and police officials that are insensitive, unable to take statements from the victims of crime and the court system. She informed the committee that children are scared to even go and play in the parks because of adults that are coming to the parks for gyms as some cannot be trusted around children.

During the meeting, the NGOs called for the appointment of the Western Cape Children's Commissioner as a matter of urgent.

The Committee deliberated on the above presentations.

3. Concern

The Committee raised a concern about the school children that attended the meeting with NGOs during school hours. The Committee stressed the need for school children need to be at school during school hours. The Western Cape Provincial Parliament needs find suitable time for children to be able to participate in parliamentary activities. It was agreed that for future meetings, the NGOs need to be mindful of taking children away from school and the Committee is willing to arrange Committee meeting on times suitable for children on request and if there is a need. The Committee stressed that the right of children to be at school should be protected at all times.

4. Resolutions


The Committee resolved to reschedule the meeting on the child murders to allow all interested stakeholders to attend and give input during the meeting. The Committee undertook to invite back school children to attend and engage with the Committee. All NGOs who did not get an opportunity to give input during the meeting of 30 July 2019 will be invited back to the next scheduled meeting on the child murders.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Appointment of the Western Cape Children's Commissioner has been referred by the Speaker to the Committee for its consideration. The Committee resolved to schedule a briefing by the Department of the Premier on the appointment of the Children's Commissioner for Tuesday, 6 August 2019.

5. Information requested by the Committee

The Committee requested that the Trauma Centre should share its Peoples Commissioner Report of Enquiry on Child Murders once it is released at the end of August 2019.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00.



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MR G BOSMAN, MPP

CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

DATE: