



# The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

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## Message on 16 Days 2020

The 16 Days of Activism against violence against women and children is an annual international campaign that started in 1991. The campaign has been an organising strategy by organisations and individuals, across the globe calling for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children.<sup>1</sup> It is this international call that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) once more joins in solidarity.

The theme this year is “Orange the world (as the colour that highlights the scourge of SGBV): Fund, Respond, Prevent and Collect” and from the 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020, activists and organisations will embark on activities aimed at raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence and the impact thereof.

The Connexional Executive theme for 2020, “Guided by God’s Mission: Reimagining Healing and Transformation” presents the MCSA with an opportune time to call for the Re-imagining of Healing and Transformation pertaining to SGBV and its impact on women and children. The Freedom from Fear campaign, held in July-August 2020, was not only an impromptu response to the crisis of the COVID-19 lockdown regulations and restrictions, but was also an active attempt at reimagining our efforts and a passionate plea to address SGBV both within the Church and society.

<sup>2</sup>The Southern African context, plagued by chronic structural economic inequalities and gender disparities, meant that the brunt of COVID-19 is much more severe on African women and children. The data from the countries of the connexion attest to the negative impact on the efforts that have been implemented to eliminate SGBV.

Statistics indicate that the most basic unit of social organization, the home, is not only the place where SGBV takes place, but that the perpetrators of SGBV are often known and have some familial relations with a significant number of the victims. SGBV has turned homes into war zones and efforts of addressing it must, be intentional at highlighting “The War at home.” Efforts to stem the tide of SGBV calls for a Reimagination of healing and transformation and working towards creating healthy homes and families.

Children are not spared from the wrath of SGBV. Research suggests that children that are victims of sexual violence, in their childhood, tend to experience other forms of sexual victimization in their adulthood.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism> (accessed on the 10 November 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, “Violence against women and girls: the shadow pandemic.” 2020. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic> (Accessed on the 10 November 2020)

*A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations*

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Furthermore, there is a body of knowledge that identifies a relationship between childhood sexual trauma and perpetration of sexual violence in adulthood.

During this period of 16Days I wish to encourage MCSA people to continue the work that they are doing in raising awareness and amplify our voices in speaking out against SGBV.

## **MCSA Conscious Conversations**

the Presiding Bishop's Office has asked the Mission Unit in partnership with the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit to host Conscious Conversations on all Thursdays during the 16Days of Activism, to raise awareness through thematic areas that need to be addressed, if we are to stem the tide against SGBV. These are meant to be honest and open reflections on the lived realities of our people. The themes: "The war at home", "Her Story: Centering Survivors" and "When I was a child." Through these conversations we envisage the creation of a resource tool that local churches can use, in their efforts to addressing SGBV.

I, therefore, encourage Methodist people to utilize these activities and assist society in ending the scourge of Sexual and Gender-based violence and Femicide. The conversations will be live streamed through the MCSA facebook page and more information regarding the time slots will be made available through the MCSA website and social media platforms.

Yours in Mission,

**Rev. Purity Malinga**  
**Presiding Bishop**

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