



JOKO AND POWA WELCOME SIGNING INTO LAW OF AMENDMENTS TO THREE GBV BILLS

9 February 2022 - President Cyril Ramaphosa approved amendments to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Bill, the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill and the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill on 28 January 2022.

People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) and Unilever tea brand, Joko, commend and applaud the signing into law of this legislation, aimed at strengthening South Africa's response to gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) by further protecting GBV survivors and making it harder for perpetrators to escape justice.

Jeanette Sera, POWA's Acting Executive Director, says: "We welcome these laws and hope they will be followed by proper implementation to ensure they achieve their objective of curbing our GBVF epidemic."

The laws, among a variety of issues, expand the scope of the National Register for Sex Offenders (NRSO) to include the particulars of all sex offenders and not only sex offenders against children and people who are mentally disabled. They also increase the time that a sex offender's particulars must remain on the NRSO before they can be removed from the register.

Furthermore, the laws add additional regulation of sentences for offences committed against vulnerable people. The Domestic Violence Amendment Bill amends the Domestic Violence Act to address practical challenges, gaps and anomalies which have manifested since the Act came into operation in December 1999.

The amended legislation includes new definitions, such as "controlling behaviour" and "coercive behaviour", and expands existing definitions, such as "domestic violence", to include spiritual abuse, elder abuse, coercive behaviour, controlling behaviour, and/or exposing/subjecting children to certain listed behaviours. It also introduces online applications for protection orders against acts of domestic violence and imposes obligations on the Departments of Health and Social Development to provide certain services to domestic violence survivors.

The legislation expands the ambit of the crime of incest and introduces a new offence of sexual intimidation. In addition, it tightens bail and minimum sentencing provisions in the context of GBV and further regulates the right of a complainant in a domestic-related offence to participate in parole proceedings.

In September 2019, Joko and POWA joined forces to launch the #EndDomesticSilence initiative to raise awareness of the danger of silence in the context of domestic violence. As part of the initiative, POWA, in partnership with Joko, ran the Add Your Voice campaign, during the annual 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children in 2020. The campaign urged the government to urgently fast track these three bills, introduced to Parliament in September 2020, to tackle South Africa's extremely high rates of GBVF. According to the South African Police Service, a woman is murdered every three hours in the country and the World Health Organization states that our femicide rate is five times the global average.

Promoted across print, broadcast, online and social media platforms, the Add Your Voice campaign garnered much interest and attention with large numbers of people across the country recording voice notes to get the three GBV Bills passed into law as soon as possible.

On Friday, 11 December 2020, POWA was joined by Joko representative Mr Shamiel Randeree, and Minister Lindiwe Zulu of the Department of Social Development, where they provided a minute of submitted voice notes stitched together in an audio timeline and printed out as a soundwave on a mounted canvas. The campaign needed the Minister to apply pressure and use her influence to compel government and parliament to push through these three bills, keep the spotlight on them and to not let the process get delayed. If she could pass on the message to the President's office, all the better. The goal was to show our support for government to push through these three important bills to address violence against women and children as speedily as possible.

Since the campaign, POWA and Joko have kept close watch on the progress of signing these bills into law, highlighting the National Council of Provinces passing them, right through to their adoption by Parliament and now their signing into law.

These pieces of legislation will enhance the criminal justice system and ensure harsh penalties for those found guilty of violence against women and children. The passing of these bills is a major breakthrough in bolstering South Africa's GBVF response.

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ABOUT POWA

POWA is a feminist, non-profit organisation that was established in 1979. Its vision is a safe and equal society intolerant of all forms of violence against women and girls in all our diversity, where we are treated with respect and dignity and our rights are promoted.

POWA provides advocacy, skills development opportunities, counselling, legal advice, sheltering and court support services to gender-based violence survivors.

Our work is rooted in the belief that change can only be effective when women's lives are directly improved through our interventions. POWA also believes that there is no single route to change, and so constantly seek new and creative approaches in our programming to achieve the change we seek.

ABOUT JOKO AND #ENDDOMESTICSILENCE

With the scourge of domestic violence against women in South Africa, JOKO has decided to play its part in helping women of strength in these abusive relationships by helping create safe spaces for

women to be heard. #EndDomesticSilence is an initiative in partnership with POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) to make a significant impact towards ending the silence surrounding domestic violence because tea and conversations go together.

JOKO's social mission is to leverage the strength of JOKO tea to harness the power of conversations to help reduce domestic violence and the stigma faced by survivors. It aims to do this through the #EndDomesticSilence initiative by harnessing both the strength of South African women and the immense power of humble conversations in which women facing domestic violence are listened to, believed and supported.

- JOKO is using newly branded red and purple packs to drive awareness around the need for women in abusive relationships to end their silence.
- JOKO is donating R1 from every JOKO 100's pack sold to POWA to create more safe spaces in which women can feel secure enough to end their silence.
- A JOKO website dedicated to the purpose gives women essential information around domestic violence and advises them on how to either get or give help. Visit www.joko.co.za.
- JOKO is engaging with prominent SA women to champion #EndDomesticSilence in their own ways.

Together, with the help of all its consumers, JOKO aims to make a real difference to fight domestic violence against women in South Africa.