



# MYDISTRICTTODAY



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## PRIORITY 3: EDUCATION, SKILLS AND HEALTH.

### Food safety a growing concern in South Africa

By Tshidi Mokoka; GCIS, Gauteng

Food-borne illnesses are a common health problem; however, currently in South Africa, cases have been reported of children falling ill or dying after eating contaminated food items. As a result, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Gauteng Provincial Office embarked on an awareness campaign targeting taxi ranks in Carletonville and Randfontein on Wednesday, 20 November 2024.

The campaign conducted in partnership with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Randfontein Police and patrollers, Randwest City Local Municipality's Public Safety department and officials from the Merafong City Local Municipality, ensured that the community was educated about food-borne illnesses, symptoms to look for and what the government was doing to prevent the sale of contaminated food. The campaign targeted street vendors selling food at taxi ranks and provided them with information on proper storage of their food stuffs and safe hygiene practices. Taxi operators and commuters were also encouraged

to be aware of the food they eat and to look out for expired food items.

Sergeant Portia Mabala from the Randfontein Police Social Crime unit said, "Ordinarily, taxi ranks are surrounded by small businesses that sell food to taxi operators and commuters. We came here today to ensure that the message is spread to owners of these small businesses to be careful of the type of food items they use. We encourage them to store food in a clean environment and to always be on the lookout for and report expired food that is being sold to them." She said that it was important for people to know which symptoms to look for if they suspected food poisoning and report to the nearest health facility for treatment. Symptoms to look out for include nausea, vomiting, fever or chills.

Unsafe food practices can be reported to local municipalities or the Consumer Ombudsman at 0800 029 999.



Mr George Moeketsi and Mr Sibusiso Mkhize from the GCIS's Gauteng Provincial Office engaging with street vendors and shop owners at the Gateway Mall taxi rank in Carletonville.



Mr Toko Lesotho from Merafong City Local Municipality with Ms Innocent Motshoari from CoGTA and Ms Dorothy Molebatsi, CoGTA Community Development Worker, educating vendors who sell cooked food to Carletonville residents.



government  
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#### Ms Zanele Ntjali said:

"As food providers operating at taxi ranks, we are worried about the food poisoning that we hear about in the country. We are trying very hard to make sure that we keep our environment clean and practise good hygiene."



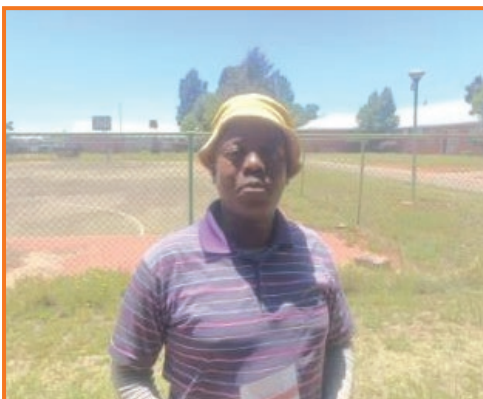
#### Ms Emily Queva said:

"Handling food is very important to us cooks who provide food to the masses. As long as we know that the food we cook is stored safely and that we do not sell expired food items, then we are safe. Those who do not, should be arrested and their permits taken away."



**Mr Bonolo Malaba said:**

"The programme was very fruitful. It is important for us as men to meet regularly and talk about the challenges we face so that we can support each other or give advice."



**Mr Olebogeng Phakedi said:**

"As men we ignore other things, only to find that they are affecting us emotionally, and we end up doing wrong things. Today I learnt that it is okay to cry and to speak up if something is bothering me."

## PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

### International Men's Day commemoration at Tlhokomelo Thusong Service Centre

*By Mpho More and Kgomotso Sentso; GCIS, Northern Cape*

International Men's Day which is observed annually on 19 November, serves as a reminder of men's contributions and the role they play in society.

On 22 November 2024, Family SA (FAMSA) led a community dialogue to commemorate the day under the theme: "Men's health champions", at the Tlhokomelo Thusong Service Centre in Galeshewe. The purpose of the event was to address the challenges facing men such as mental health issues, unemployment, societal expectations and discrimination. One of the main issues that was emphasised was the importance of men's role in the family set-up and positive parenting, especially how children should be treated and raised.

FAMSA Director, Ms Zoleka Bula, proposed a way forward, "Men should meet often and continuously during the year to encourage dialogue. They should also be allowed to express their feelings so that they can be heard." She

encouraged men to identify role models to spearhead future dialogue and ensure that safe spaces are created for men to express themselves freely to heal, grow and contribute positively to society.

A representative from Batho Pele, a non-governmental organisation, Mr Zenzile Sontlaba, encouraged men to test for HIV, prostate cancer, diabetes and other health issues.

The Government Communication and Information System and the Disabled Children Action Group, spoke about gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), which coincided with the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign, and encouraged them to sign the pledge to end GBVF.



**Men in attendance at the International Men's Day event held in Galeshewe.**



**A representative from Batho Pele, Mr Sontlaba, addressing the audience.**



**Presentations were made on the role of men in society.**



**Ms Sophy Nzula from SAPS said:**

"As SAPS officials, we frequently encounter cases of rape, with a distressing number of victims being children. It feels as though these innocent lives are targeted. Today we declare a stop to these heinous acts."



**Mr Prince Jordaan from Men's Forum said:**

"I am happy that this event is taking place in Zastron, as we often face the challenge of GBVF, with many cases involving rape. As a man, seeing other men participating in this initiative feels right. We are finally taking a stand to show those committing these acts that we have had enough."

## PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

### Zastron community marches against gender-based violence

By Babalwa Solitswayi; GCIS, Free State

On 20 November 2024, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) held a gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) awareness dialogue at the Mohokare Thusong Service Centre in Zastron. The dialogue aimed to address the devastating impact of GBVF by speaking in a unified voice to protect women and children.

The event was led by men, who marched peacefully from the Matlakeng township to the Mohokare Thusong Service Centre. Community members and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including Men's Forum, Kgothlang Victim Empowerment Programme, the South African Youth Council and Rethabile Disability Group participated in the march. After the march, key stakeholders – Free State Office of the Premier, the Department of Health, South African Police Service (SAPS), Men For Change and the Office of the Public Protector – discussed the roles and interventions to combat GBVF.

Mr Thabiso Sebau from Men's Forum shared his transformation journey from being a perpetrator of GBVF to becoming an advocate for change.

"During the time I was in prison, every six months we were asked if we felt rehabilitated and regretted our actions. What I am most grateful for is that I received help to deal with my anger," he said.

Mr Peter Stellenberg from the Office of the Public Protector highlighted the institution's role in investigating government departments and ensuring compliance with the law, particularly in neglected GBVF cases. Mr Frans Sekwati from Men for Change, a structure of the SAPS where male police officers are able to speak openly about GBVF and sexual offences, emphasised the forum's efforts to promote positive masculinity by educating men about the impact of GBVF in the workplace and at home within families, and providing support to survivors.

The event highlighted the importance of united action, bringing together community members, NGOs and government stakeholders to raise awareness on how to prevent and combat GBVF.



The community of Matlakeng marching against GBVF.



A Men's Forum member asking questions after stakeholders' presentations.

## PRIORITY 1: A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

### Democracy Bus makes a stop in the Harry Gwala District

By Lindokuhle Chiliza; GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal

As South Africa marks 30 Years of Freedom and Democracy, the nation reflects on its journey filled with triumphs, challenges and remarkable progress. To commemorate this milestone, the South African Roads Agency in partnership with the South African Government, launched the 30 Years of Democracy Bus campaign, an initiative aimed at bringing the story of our democracy to every corner of the country. From bustling cities to the quietest rural areas, the bus symbolises freedom and progress collectively achieved over the past 30 years.

On 3 October 2024, the Democracy Bus made a special stop in Ixopo, Harry Gwala District, which falls under the Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality, aligning with the national launch of Transport Month. This stop provided a unique and memorable experience for learners from Sinevuso Secondary School, who were transported to the Ubuhlebezwe Traffic Department where they had the opportunity to engage with traffic officials to learn about road safety, rules of the road and how government policies have transformed our transport sector. The visit not only highlighted the importance of road safety, but also reminded the learners of the life-saving infrastructure and services established during the 30 years of democracy.

To further enhance their experience, the bus took the learners to visit the Ubuhlebezwe Fire and Disaster Centre, where they witnessed a live demonstration of accident-recovery procedures. This hands-on engagement helped them understand the critical role of emergency services in preserving lives, especially in a country where government works tirelessly to improve access to essential services. From new roads to better-equipped fire and disaster departments, these strides are part of ongoing efforts to improve the lives of South Africans, particularly in communities that previously lacked such resources.

The bus' journey across various locations nationwide is a testament of how far South Africa has come as a country, with millions of its citizens now having access to water, healthcare, education and infrastructure. The bus also serves as a platform for dialogue, encouraging citizens to share their experiences of living in a free and democratic country.



Mr John Joyce from the Ubuhlebezwe Traffic Department engaging learners on traffic safety.



Learners from Sinevuso Secondary School were happy to see the Democracy Bus.



A demonstration at the Fire and Disaster Centre in Ixopo.



Aerial view of the Democracy Bus at Sinevuso Secondary School.



Excited learners inside the Democracy Bus.