

TO: All Media
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TCTA and uMsunduzi Lead Community Fight Against Gender-Based Violence

Pietermaritzburg, South Africa – South Africa’s battle against Gender-Based Violence remains a national emergency, with femicide rates nearly five times the global average. This week, Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and the uMsunduzi Local Municipality took that fight directly to the streets of Edendale, joining community members in a two-day programme focused on awareness, accountability and practical empowerment.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) manifests in many ways. These include physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse, among others. Its impact is felt across society, yet women and children bear the greatest burden. Alarming high rates of femicide and domestic violence continue to highlight the need for sustained collective action.

On 08–09 December, TCTA, in partnership with the uMsunduzi Municipality, hosted a community engagement event in Edendale Township as part of the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign, which runs from 25 November to 10 December. The programme brought together more than 100 residents to address the realities of GBV and strengthen local support systems.

Day one of the programme featured a peaceful march to the Plessislaer Police Station, where Colonel Maphumulo welcomed participants. The purpose of the march was to deliver a memorandum of demands calling for improved visibility, responsiveness and data-driven policing in the fight against GBV. The memorandum highlighted the following areas:

- Identification of high-risk areas, patterns and contributing factors driving GBV
- An overview of current GBV trends within the uMsunduzi Municipality
- Sharing of available data to guide municipal programmes and targeted interventions
- Number of GBV cases reported during the latest reporting period
- Cases successfully resolved, including arrests and convictions

The objective of the memorandum was to strengthen intergovernmental collaboration and ensure that municipal programmes align with SAPS-identified needs and emerging hotspots in the area.

After submitting the memorandum, community members participated in a self-defence session to equip them with basic techniques to protect themselves against potential attackers. The class reinforced the importance of practical tools alongside advocacy and awareness.

Day two focused on information-sharing and empowerment. Officials from the Department of Social Development, youth-based organisations and non-profit organisations delivered presentations on a range of topics, including entrepreneurial opportunities, skills development, educational programmes, income-generating initiatives, family planning and domestic violence. These sessions highlighted the interconnected challenges communities face and the broad spectrum of support required to address them.

Programme director, Dudu Moremi, emphasised that the initiative marks the beginning of a sustained partnership with the community and the municipality. She noted that this engagement forms part of TCTA's broader presence in the area through the uMkhomazi Water Project. "TCTA is currently funding and implementing a bulk water infrastructure project within the area, which means we will be part of this community for some time to come. We will keep coming back to check on progress," she said as she closed the programme.

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