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POWA

People Opposing Women Abuse

4 JUNE 1993

ATTENTION: DR. ELOFF, VIOLENCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
WORLD TRADE CENTRE

FAX NO: 397-2211

FROM: LISA VETTEN, POWA

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NO. OF PAGES (INCL. COVER): 2

Violence in South Africa is reaching unprecedented levels with concern being expressed by all groups. Often invisible amongst these statistics, is the steady escalation of violence directed at women.

Rape in South Africa continues to increase. Last year 24 360 rapes were reported - an average of 67 assaults every day. (Law and Order Minister Hernus Kriel). It is being suggested that these figures are amongst the highest (if not the highest) in the world.

No official figures are available to document the extent of wife abuse. The following estimates are however available:

One in every six women is subjected to violence in the home (Rape Crisis, Cape Town 1990).

Eight out of ten cases dealt with by social work organisations reveal wife abuse (Co-ordinated Action for Battered Women, Cape Town 1989).

Furthermore, a record number of family killings occur in South Africa. Even at state level, violence has long been used as a means of control. Such acceptance appears to have contributed to our tolerance of high levels of inter-personal violence. Assaults by family members or friends are tacitly condoned as inevitable.

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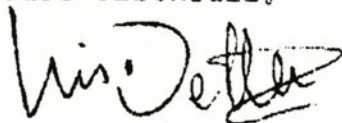
The present government has taken steps to redressing some of these problems by passing a Prevention of Family Violence Bill. This is a welcome move but in many ways does not go far enough in tackling the problems. A far broader societal approach is required that will involve the judiciary, police and health and welfare agencies (both governmental and non-governmental).

We ask that violence against women be considered a priority necessitating urgent attention. Such violence is a violation of human rights that controls and inhibits the development of both women and men. Furthermore, it is not the product of a few deviant individuals. Rather, such violence is a reflection of a greater, underlying social inequality entrenched in law and social mores. Any attempts to prevent racial or political violence will be undermined while violence against women continues to remain tolerated and invisible.

Should you require any further information or assistance with this concern, please do not hesitate to contact POWA. I shall be away at a conference until June 21 but in my absence, please contact Nadia Evans at 642-4346 between 9am - 1pm.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



Lisa Vetten
POWA Co-ordinator

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