

MEDIA STATEMENT

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EMBARGO: NONE

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL ABUSE

On the 25th of November 2025 the SAOU commenced participation in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence against women and children. The first day commemorated a Day of NO Violence against Women.

This initiative is supported by the SAOU under the national theme: Letsema: Men, Women, Boys and Girls working together to end Gender-based Violence. Letsema, a Sesotho word, means people coming together to reach a communal goal.

The SAOU have actively participated in processes to ensure that men and women in the education sector will receive equal pay for equal work. The SAOU is still actively involved in ensuring that there is no discrimination in remuneration in the Public Sector.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a scourge in our communities, even after years of interventions and celebrations of the 16 Days of Activism initiative. In many cases victims remain in abusive and toxic relationships, because they do not have sufficient financial resources to escape these situations.

Stats SA (2022) indicated that 21% of South African women have experienced either physical or sexual abuse in relationships and that 50% of women in abusive relationships have experienced some form of financial abuse.

This financial or economic abuse varies from situations where the partner exerts excessive control of finances, where women are prohibited from improving their position at work, where economic activities are restricted (as in the case where the partner takes over the total control of finances), micro management of expenditure (especially where excessive control of credit card expenditure is monitored), intentionally ruining your credit score (through non-payment of combined expenses or deliberate late payment of debts) as well as hiding assets. One of the most reported forms of financial abuse is the failure to pay the monthly childcare where it is required.

The SAOU issues an appeal to both women and girls to ensure that they are financially literate, that they are equipped to undertake the basic management of finances and that they understand and exercise their financial rights. This is crucial to ensure a level of financial independence and which will enable women to protect themselves sufficiently.

The SAOU supports the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence within the theme of LETSEMA – and only through communities working together will this perpetual cycle of abuse and violence be broken.