

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS

MONDAY, 31 MARCH 2025

NYDA CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR CWEWE AND URGENT ACTION AGAINST CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is deeply outraged and saddened by reports of the sexual assault of a 7-year-old girl, affectionately known as Cwecwe, that allegedly took place at Bergview College in Matatiele, Eastern Cape. This heinous crime is a grave violation of the rights of a child and highlights the urgent need to strengthen protections for young learners within educational institutions.

Schools must be safe spaces that nurture learning and development, not institutions where children fall victim to those entrusted with their well-being. The NYDA strongly condemns any form of violence and abuse against children. We stand in solidarity with Cwecwe, her family, and all victims of gender-based violence who are seeking justice.

We welcome the swift action taken by the Eastern Cape Department of Education to deregister Bergview College in response to its non-cooperation with authorities. However, deregistration alone is not enough. The NYDA calls upon law enforcement agencies to expedite investigations and ensure that all those responsible for this horrific crime face the full might of the law. Furthermore, we urge the Department of Basic Education to implement stricter vetting processes for school personnel to prevent such incidents from recurring.

This case serves as a tragic reminder that child protection cannot be delayed. The NYDA will engage with relevant stakeholders, including government and civil society organisations, to advocate for stronger child protection mechanisms within the education sector. Additionally, we call on young people across the country to speak out against gender-based violence and support efforts to create safe environments for all children.

NYDA Executive Chairperson, Ms. Asanda Luwaca, emphasised the agency's commitment to child protection, stating:

"The violation of a child's dignity and rights is unacceptable. As the NYDA, we stand firm in demanding justice for Cwecwe and all victims of child abuse. The safety and well-being of young people, especially children, must be prioritised by all sectors of society. We call for swift action to ensure perpetrators are held accountable and that policies safeguarding children in schools are enforced without compromise."

As an agency mandated to address youth development and empowerment, the NYDA believes that justice and protection for the country's young people must be at the forefront of national priorities. The NYDA calls on the public to support the demand for justice and hold those in positions of authority accountable. No child should ever suffer such a traumatic experience, and as a nation, we must do more to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

-ENDS-

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