



**Statement by the SADC Executive Secretary, H.E. Mr Elias M. Magosi,
on the 2025 Commemoration of the
16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign**

25 November to 10 December 2025

Theme: “UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls”

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) joins the international and regional community to speak out against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms as we commemorate this year’s ***16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence*** Campaign which runs annually from 25th November to 10th December. This year’s theme “**Ending Digital Violence Against Women and Girls**”, highlights digital violence as an evolving and emerging form of GBV where women and girls face acts such as cyberbullying, online threats and harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate images and online stalking and many others. To women and girls, digital violence often takes away self-esteem and leads to withdrawal from online spaces, denying thousands of women and girls the opportunities presented by online platforms. The impact of digital violence to women and girls serves as a reminder that digital safety is central to gender equality and women empowerment.

Addressing digital violence requires, among other measures, legal recognition of this violence within our Member States, strengthened regulation of the technology sector, and clear accountability of the technology platforms and social networking sites. Across the globe, there is growing recognition of the adverse impact of the digital violence on women and girls. SADC welcomes the adoption of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution on Violence Against Women in Digital Environments in 2024, urging states to take immediate, effective action to prevent and eliminate digital violence and to strengthen regulation and accountability of online platforms. We also applaud the call made in 2024 by the UN Statistical Commission to develop global methods to measure technology-facilitated GBV, signalling a move towards evidence-based policies on addressing GBV.

At continental level, the adoption of the Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls by the African Union in February this year, marks an important milestone in our efforts to combat all forms of GBV, including the rapidly evolving threat of digital violence.

SADC remains committed to elimination of GBV as one of the key priorities of the SADC regional integration agenda, as reflected in the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan of 2020-2030. The SADC Model Law on GBV also provides a basis to strengthen national legislation to effectively respond to technology facilitated GBV (TFGBV).

The 2024 Mid Term Review of the *SADC Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing GBV (2018-2030)* identified digital violence as emerging issue. While this form of GBV is increasingly recognised, many laws in the SADC region still lack comprehensive provisions. We commend Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe for taking steps to address digital violence with appropriate legislation, employing digital tools, developing national strategies, and support services. With the growing negative impact of the digital violence, negatively affecting women and girls, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive response framework to address this form of violence, strengthen an enabling legislative and policy environment and guide law enforcement and service providers.

On 25-28 November 2025, SADC hosted in South Africa the Regional Consultative Forum on the Engagement of Men and Boys in prevention of GBV and HIV and promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health. During this forum, which coincided with the commencement of the 16 Days of Activism, experts acknowledged that GBV is a human rights emergency, requiring action from all stakeholders. The forum underscored the importance of mobilising men and women, boys and girls to promote gender equality and prevent GBV.

This year's 16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign, should serve as a pivotal moment for Member States to pass and enforce laws criminalising digital violence, protect personal information and strengthen accountability in the technology sector. Companies and stakeholders in the technology industry must join our collective efforts to eliminate digital violence by removing harmful content and ensuring that online platforms are safe for everyone. I also call upon community members to continue speaking out, supporting survivors, and challenging harmful masculinities and online norms. Let us all unite to advance a GBV-free region, where men, women and girls can participate fully and freely and derive maximum benefits from the immense opportunities presented by digital platforms.