



Media Release

Ilitha Labantu Statement on Deputy Minister of Education Mduzuzi Manana

As an organisation that fights against the gross violation of human rights and violence perpetrated towards women and girls for over 28 years, we have been observing with dismay on how the case against the Deputy Minister was going to be handled by the Department of Police and government. We are calling on our government to act decisively. It is disturbing and disappointing the way in which the incident involving the Deputy Minister of Education was handled after he had physically assaulted a woman at a night club. There is nothing to debate about whether he is guilty or not, Violence against women is a violation of human rights. Ilitha Labantu believes that violence is violence whether it's been perpetuated by a minister or deputy it should be treated the same.

We appeal to the President to play a major role in this particular case by excusing Deputy Minister from his position pending the investigation of his case to allow the law to take its course. It is rather unacceptable that a public official behaves in such a manner in a country where violence against women has reached pandemic proportions, therefore rightful action should be taken by government, a non-tolerance stance on violence against women ought to be taken to set the tone for the level of seriousness to such an offense for any citizen let alone a public official whom already should be leading by example.

Since the incident occurred some commentators have come in defence of the deputy minister by suggesting that this incident is being used as a political tool. Regardless of what those in the political arena may say the more pressing issue here is that a woman has been battered and the political implications for Manana's actions play little if any significance, commentators on this issue should all be speaking in one voice to condemn



such actions irrespective of one's political affiliation, violence against women is wrong and should be stomped out.

Furthermore statements such as "it should not have happened during women's month", this rhetoric is very damaging as these statements demonstrate a lack of sensitivity for the plight of women survivors of abuse, as an organization which works daily to address the scourge we say violence against women should be denounced regardless of the time of the year as it is an issue which affects the lives of many women all year round and all cases of violence against women should be treated with the same level of concern and urgency.

As an organization that addresses violence against women on a daily basis we strongly believe that Manana should be immediately removed from his position as deputy minister, as public officials ought to lead by example and failure to adequately address this matter will further highlight that we lack the necessary leadership to lead the fight against the scourge of violence perpetrated on women.

Ms Mandisa Monakali

Founder of Ilitha Labantu

