

# It's in our hands to stop crimes against our women

**MAJOR-GENERAL MOROPENG JOHANNA MAMOTHETHI**

AS WE commemorate Women's Month this month, we need to pay particular attention to crimes against women. Recent media reports of brutal attacks on women, of which some even resulted in their death, shocked the nation and again highlighted the serious problem of crimes against women.

Crimes against women manifest in many forms - physical, sexual, economical, psychological and emotional - but they all represent a violation of human rights and dignity with lasting effects for the women, as well as the communities they live in.

Although not all incidents make media headlines, these despicable crimes can destroy the promising future of the women who were



Maj-Gen Mamothethi



are encouraged to report any form of violence against them the first time it happens, so that it can be dealt with efficiently.

The Domestic Violence Act, 1998 (Act No 116 of 1998) provides options if one becomes a victim of domestic violence, which include the right to lay a criminal charge if the conduct of the perpetrator constitutes an offence.

Victims can apply for a protection order at the nearest magistrate's court, or lay a criminal charge and apply for a protection order (a criminal charge is not a requirement to apply for a protection order).

The SAPS remains committed to fighting the scourge of crime against women, but cannot win this battle alone.

Every community member who knows of situations where abuse or violence against any person

has taken place needs to assist the police by reporting these crimes immediately.

Family members, friends, neighbours or any other member of the community can report a crime on behalf of the victim and a statement will be obtained later.

Women who are victims of abuse or violence, are encouraged to come forward, break the silence and report these crimes to the police.

Only when we realise that the power to prevent and stop abuse and violence is in our hands, can a dramatic difference can be made in the life of another and the tide turned to create a safe environment for our precious women.

\* This piece was written by the SAPS's Corporate Communication and Liaison Component in consultation with the Division Visible Policing for the Pretoria News.

affected and their families, and invariably irrevocably change the headlines of their life stories. The scourge of violence against the most vulnerable and defenceless in our society cannot be tolerated.

The policing of these crimes can, however, be a challenge as it often happens behind closed doors and in secluded areas.

It also poses a serious challenge.

For example, when the perpetrators are known to the family and information is withheld so that the family member concerned is not implicated.

Due to the psychological effect of sexual abuse, victims tend to be withdrawn and sometimes prefer not to speak out.

Violence should be dealt with more effectively in the initial stages as it can escalate to a point where lives may be lost. Women

TNA-08/08/17-pg1 - Negative - Provincial

## Cops probe quick-fire heists

ELFAS TORERAI

ARMED robbers made off with an undisclosed amount of money after two quick heists along the R49 linking Mahikeng and Zeerust yesterday morning.

The two incidents happened within minutes of each other near the Ottoshoop area.

Police spokesperson, Lt-Col Pelonomi Makau said investigations into the incidents were under way.

“Following an incident in which two cash-in-transit security vehicles were separately robbed of an undisclosed amount of cash, police in Ottoshoop

are investigating a case of armed robbery,” she said.

Makau said the two security vehicles were travelling on the R49 between Mahikeng and Ottoshoop in the Zeerust direction between 5am and 6am when they were attacked.

“An unknown number of suspects in a Mercedes-Benz fired shots and forced them (the vehicles) off the road and took cash. One security officer sustained a flesh wound. The suspects are still at large,” she said.

Two other vehicles, a BMW and a Toyota Hilux, were also involved in the heists.

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