



**MEDIA STATEMENT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
07 NOVEMBER 2025**

**SIU LAUNCHES PIONEERING GBVF FIRST RESPONDER PROGRAMME**

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has launched a groundbreaking GBVF First Responder Programme. This initiative establishes a national network of trained responders to provide immediate support and referral services to survivors of gender-based violence. The launch culminated in a successful national dialogue on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), reinforcing the organisation's commitment to addressing the systemic failures that enable social injustices. The SIU's initiative is particularly critical given that corruption, the core of the Unit's mandate, often coincides with and exacerbates GBV by weakening the very state institutions designed to prevent violence and protect citizens.

The dialogue, held under the theme 'Prevent Today, Protect Tomorrow', served as a platform to strengthen the SIU's role as a convenor of multi-sectoral collaboration, bringing together key partners from government, including the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, men's advocacy groups, youth networks, private sector partners such as Vodacom Brightstar, and international bodies including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

This pioneering programme demonstrates the SIU's innovative approach to leveraging its institutional capabilities beyond its traditional scope. By training a national cadre of first responders, the SIU is actively building foundational support systems to combat GBVF at a community level, positioning itself as an institution that proactively contributes to national safety and justice.

While the SIU stands firmly against GBVF and supports all efforts to eradicate it, the organisation wishes to clarify its specific mandate. The SIU's powers are derived from the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act, which focuses on investigating corruption, maladministration, and malpractice in state institutions. The Unit does not have the authority to receive or directly

investigate allegations of GBV crimes. This dialogue and the 1st Responder Programme form part of the SIU's contribution to prevention, education, and systemic strengthening within the framework of its core functions.

The SIU encourages the public to report GBV incidents through the correct channels. You can report Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in South Africa by contacting the police at 10111 or the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre at 0800 428 428. You can also report to your nearest police station or use the SMS line 31531.

The successful launch of the First Responder Programme and hosting of this dialogue underscore the SIU's evolution as an institution that applies its forensic and investigative expertise to foster a culture of accountability and protection, ultimately contributing to a safer and more just society.

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