



CITY OF CAPE TOWN

SPEECH BY THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE MAYOR, PATRICIA DE LILLE

Women must unite against the violence inflicted on our communities by gangs

Note to Editors: Executive Mayor Patricia de Lille delivered the following speech in Hanover Park at a gathering of women who have lost children and loved ones through gang shootings and who are uniting against gang violence.

Thank you Councillor Antonio van der Rhee for inviting me to spend time with the mothers of Hanover Park.

I wish that I was spending this time with you under different circumstances, but I am here to offer you comfort and encouragement on an issue that is tearing our communities apart.

Gang violence has hurt your families and taken a loved one from you.

Many of you here today have lost family members and children in the gang violence shootings in Hanover Park over the years.

I can never know your heartache but I am here to say that we as mothers, sisters, grandmothers and daughters must stand together to put an end to this scourge.

While mothers lose children, it is also our children who are the gangsters that are terrorising entire communities, killing innocent children and residents.

Sadly, we all know that many mothers are in denial about their children's life of crime. Some parents hide and protect those gangsters who are causing havoc in our communities.

It is time that we all stand together to say enough is enough.

It is impossible to place a policeman on every street.

The issue of gang violence is also not a simple problem that can be fixed only through policing.

We must go to the cause of what leads a child onto that path.

It is a breakdown of the moral fabric of our entire society that leads to children not having the right role-models and looking to gangsters and drug merchants as role models.

Things don't have to be this way because we all know that there are many successful people that have come from Hanover Park, Manenberg, Kewtown and all over the Cape Flats.

We need to go down to the root cause of this scourges because it cannot go on this way, where our communities are like a war zone.

As mothers, you all need to help each other and the community must come together to tackle these social ills.

SPEECH BY THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE MAYOR

We are gathering together today in Women's Month and our country has a history of strong women who stood tall against oppressors to fight for our rights.

The women who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956 to say 'No, we won't carry pass books' were brave and courageous for the sake of our whole country.

I am here to say that women in our communities must find that courage to stand up to these gangsters and claim back our communities.

Women are pivotal in breaking the cycle of violence because these are our children that are being pulled into this vicious cycle.

We must take charge of our homes, whether or not there is a man or a father present.

Even in the fatherless homes, mothers are strong and you must say: 'I am the boss and my rules are here for all of us to live good, decent lives.'

We must stop pampering our sons and raising spoilt brats who think they can literally get away with murder because they got away with all kinds of wrong things in the house.

If we want to raise men, we must make sure that they learn responsibility and help you in the house from a young age.

Soos hulle se: 'Buig die boompie terwyl hy klein is.'

We must go back to the simple principle of respect. It starts with self-respect, respect for your mother and father and for everyone around you.

In closing, I want to commend Councillor van der Rhee and all those involved in starting these weekly support meetings to address these critical issues.

You must be firm in your mission to say that you will be the ones to break this cycle once and for all and turn your words here into actions out there.

Everything that has been done so far hasn't worked and so we need to change what we are doing about the problem.

I want to encourage you all today to please keep the hope alive.

Stand firm and gather here as women, bring more women every week to grow this network to assist and empower the women of Hanover Park in all aspects.

You know best what is best for your community so let us take hands and work together as a force against these gangsters and save our children and our communities.

I wish you all strength and will keep you all in prayer because I, too, am a mother and a grandmother and I know that your pain is something that may never leave you.

But turn that pain into your power and be the ones to save Hanover Park and take it forward.

End