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## **[STATEMENT] How can Womxn be celebrated while we are still being murdered?**

10 August 2020 - Womxn's Month in 2020 is still not a cause for celebration given the high rates of violence, murder and abuse of womxn - especially that of Black, trans, lesbian and gender diverse persons.

But it is a month to pay tribute to the courage of the many South African womxn who continue to build this country in the face of overwhelming odds.

Iranti, a Johannesburg based human rights organisation that focuses on Lesbian, Trans and Intersex persons, has been working with the South African government to help improve the lives of the LGBTQIA+ persons.

For many, however, little has changed. In January the community was shocked by the murder of trans human's right's defender [Nare Mphela's murder](#). In April, trans sex worker, [Elma Robyn Montsumi was found hanging in her cell](#) while in police custody after she was arrested by police in Cape Town.

The Covid-19 lockdown also saw an increase in domestic abuse and intimate partner violence. Many womxn face discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) and have not been able to stay in lockdown with abusive families - leaving some homeless.

It is not only physical wounds that womxn bear. The socio-economic cost of this pandemic has meant that many people have lost their ability to earn money, some even losing homes.

Iranti believes an holistic approach is needed to ensure that all arms of government contribute to making the country safe for womxn.

Iranti calls on the government to take seriously the increasing need for trans specific guidelines based on enthusiastic informed consent and to depathologise all forms of care regarding womxn in the healthcare sector.

Iranti appeals to the government to enforce already existing laws and polices around employment to ensure that queer womxn are given an equal opportunity to join the work force.

We call on the police to take crimes against all womxn seriously so that no crime committed against a womxn should be normalised.

We do not believe that Womxn's Month can be celebrated when we face a plurality of violence every day. We will continue to work until a violence-free society is a lived reality for all South Africans.

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