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**National Children and
Violence Trust**

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Date: 18 April 2023

Media Statement

For immediate release

Attention News Editors

NATIONAL CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE TRUST (NCVT) CONDEMNS CHILD SEX ABUSES

We are in the month of April, which is known as the Freedom Month. This is one of the most important months in the history of our country. In this month as South Africans, we reflect and celebrate the democratic dispensation, which marked the end of colonialism and segregation that was perpetrated by apartheid, a crime to humanity. The commemorations of the Freedom Month reminds us of a painful past where human rights violations and oppression by the system was a norm and only the minority enjoyed freedom during that period.

Thus far, a lot has been done to preserve democracy and to ensure that all South Africans enjoy the fruits of freedom and equality. Several efforts have been made to create a free and just society. However, freedom is not free to many women and children who continue to experience and endure different forms of abuse. Post Covid 19, GBV was declared the

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**Trustees: Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, Londiwe Mkhize, Thabo Nchonyane,
Dr Sinenhlanhla Mkhize, Naledi Mydesha, Nell Bickmore**

second endless pandemic in South Africa. Although we are free, women and children are still living in fear on daily basis.

Over the last couple of months, NCVT has been following a trial case at the Gauteng High Court in Johannesburg relating to Mr. Gerhard Ackermans, who is accused of alleged involvement in child sex abuse, sex grooming and child pornography, including being in possession of hundreds of images and videos of naked young boys.

In this case, there has been allegations of shocking revelations against Mr Ackermans and his associates which are totally unacceptable and that are strongly condemned by many Children's Rights organizations. We can barely imagine the trauma that was experienced by these youngsters during these inhuman incidents.

Undoubtedly, this case is a clear indication that children, irrespective of gender are amongst the most vulnerable people in our country and as such they desperately need maximum protection against all societal ills. Parents, families, relatives, schools, churches, and government should provide the absolute protection needed by every child.

For that reason, Gerhard Ackerman and his associates should know that these allegations are very serious and that our communities do not need men who destroy and victimize young boys. But also, that no child deserves to be sexually abused and exposed to things that are harmful to their being as these violations and abuses have a long-lasting psychological effect on them even beyond their childhood years.

The verdict on Gerhard Ackermans case for alleged child sex abuse is expected to be handed down on Wednesday, 19th April 2023 at the Gauteng High Court, Johannesburg around 09h00.

The NCVT calls upon the justice system to hand down a harsher sentence to all the perpetrators who are found guilty of child sex abuse, rape, gender-based violence, and child pornography. As an organization, we believe that a harsher sentence will set an example to all those who abuse and violate children and women.

On this day, Mrs. Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva in her capacity as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for NCVT will be present in Court to pledge her support for the victims, but also to offer continuous psycho-social support to all other victims and their families who may need counselling in order to alleviate the impact of their traumas.

NCVT will always take the side of the victims and will continue to advocate for justice to be done to ensure that we have a society that respects and defends the rights of women and children.

Furthermore, as we strongly condemn the fact that children continuously become victims of such disgusting conduct at the hands of older men who have no morals but an evil desire that seriously destroys the dignity and future of children, we are driven by the theme: ***Children being free to be Children, in a country fit for its children.*** The theme demonstrates our efforts in protecting and advocating for children to be allowed to be whom they are without fearing for their lives or their safety.

Ends.

Issued by:

NCVT Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Ms Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva

For information, questions or interviews with the Chairperson, kindly contact **Mr Lethu Ndlovu, NCVT Marketing** on **076 902 4699 / 011 705 1960 / marketing@ncvt.co.za**