

House No. 544
Hoohlo Extension
Maseru



Private Bag A445
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Southern Africa
Telephone (+266) 22317205
22325798
Fax (+266) 22310412
E-mail: admin@lcn.org.ls
Website: www.lcn.org.ls

Reg. No. 90/43

STATEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RELATION TO CURRENT SITUATION OF CHILD ABUSE IN LESOTHO

FEBRUARY 2016

As we begin this year, Women and Children Commission held its first meeting in the month of January, this is a normal routine the commission meet every quarter of the year to discuss commission activities'. Women and Children Commission looks forward to achieving the well-being of women and children, in this case, the rights of children. We look back where a child can be protected by an elder against harmful events but now things are different, the same people who are supposed to protect children are the ones hurting them.

We release this statement in line with our commitment to advocate for the rights of women and children and to be the voice of the voiceless. As a platform of about 35 Civil Society Organisations working on the rights of women and children, we are concerned about the recent reports from both the police and the media about the extent of the violations of the rights of women and children in Lesotho.

As CSO's, we have observed a serious increase in child abuse cases, especially among the most vulnerable children such as orphaned children, children living with disabilities, and children from poverty stricken backgrounds etc. Sexual offenses are however still the most prevalent of them all. Through these cases, children's rights are being violated and often perpetrators are scot free either due to unreported cases, cases pending in the courts of law or in the arms of relevant state authorities.

As the Commission, we totally condemn this unacceptable behaviour of denying children their fundamental rights as provided for in the Lesotho Children's Protection Welfare Act (CPWA) 2011 and International law such as Convention of the Rights of the Child, and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

It is against this background, we call upon all stakeholders

- ✓ To take action against perpetrators and ensure implementation of Child Protection Laws.
- ✓ Police should stop harbouring reported cases or entering into out of court negotiations perpetrators,

- ✓ The Minister of Police, Minister of Law and Minister of Gender should put their heads together to scale up their efforts the protection of Children's rights.
- ✓ Civil Society and the general public to take a bold step to ensure that the violation of children's rights are reported and taken to the legal processes.