

PRESS STATEMENT

10 September 2020

The brutal murder of a gay man, Simangaliso Dyasi in Soweto calls for speed in prioritising Hate Crimes legislation in South Africa

Access Chapter 2 is in dismay of the recent murder of Simangaliso Dyasi affectionately known as Smanga. On 07 September 2020, he was found shot (several times in) his room in Soweto. Smanga was well known in the community of White City, and close friends to Zodwa wa Bantu in the entertainment industry. The details of the case are yet to be confirmed and arrest has not been made. The case is currently still under investigation and Access Chapter 2 has taken initiative to follow up and provide support where needed to the family. The deceased's brother Vusi Dyasi gave a statement to Access Chapter 2 "The family is still in disbelief and shock to the killing of their son. They hope that justice will prevail and urge members of the community to cooperate"

This is a devastating loss which should incite some reflection on violence against persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. While South Africa sets a benchmark for many countries across Africa, it remains clear that an inclusive Constitution and legal system are not enough and LGBTI lives continue to be in danger. Various forms of hate crime and discrimination threaten the lives of many and affect communities, individuals, and families.

Executive Director of Access Chapter 2 Steve Letsike said "Parliament continues to play dark and dive on the finalization of Hate Crime legislation. The bill has since been discussed for almost 2 decades with different administration while prejudices intolerance and hate persist in communities. This is a total failure to the LGBTI community and reinforces failure of preventing and responding to violence. We will continue to monitor this case through the Provincial Task teamwork. We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Smanga".

Access Chapter 2 will monitor this case. We urge a community response to on this matter to assist SAPS in their investigation.

We urge the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to take immediate steps to ensure justice for Smanga in order to put the family and the LGBTI community at ease and all other individuals who have fallen victim to heinous hate crimes. There is a need for a strong investigative

process that is fair and equal. A public system that does not shun out and takes all criminal matters with gravity and urgency. We have seen that many LGBTI cases go unresolved or unreported. While individuals within the LGBTI community fear secondary victimization at the hands of the public system and certain officials, bias, homophobia and transphobia lead to slow investigation processes and expose institutional systems that seems to neglect the rights of the LGBTI persons while simultaneously employing a heteronormative approach that is against the very values set in our Constitution.

We call on the LGBTI organisations to continue to work in supporting and bridging the gaps that exist and to hold government accountable for its failures. The work is not done. Efforts need to be intensified to ensure the protection of the rights of LGBTI people. Furthermore, there is a need to intensify efforts targeting society with interventions addressing social ills and challenging harmful social norms, imparting information, collecting data to inform research and a system that is quick to act to ensure that we do not lose any more lives.

On the case of Smanga PTT and SAPS is encouraged to act swiftly and leave no stone unturned.

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