

# LENS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

ANALYSIS OF SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



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# INTRODUCTION



South Africa is dubbed the rape capital of the world with 132.4 incidents reported per 100, 000 people,[1] according to the World Population Review. A study by the South African Medical Research Council found that one in four men in South Africa (25% of the population) admitted to having raped before, some more than one person including raping girls.[2]


Rape, according to the South African Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007, is sexual penetration without consent. South Africa is reported to record 500 000 cases of rape annually and that only one in 25 men accused of rape gets convicted of the crime. [3]

Other than falling prey to rapists, South African women and girls also get murdered, including being raped before or after being murdered. This form of Gender-Based Violence which combines two of the most extreme forms of violence against women and children is reported in one in 10 murders.[4]

South Africa has been battling Gender-Based Violence for a long time but the period 2018 to 2019 saw a huge public outcry, street protests and a media storm including social media movements against rape and murder. These were as a result of reported rapes and murders of women and girls including that of 19-year-old University of Cape Town student, Uyinene Mrwetyana who was raped and murdered at a post office in August, 2019. During this same period of Mrwetyana's rape and murder, champion boxer, Leighandre Jegels, 25 was shot by a former boyfriend and Meghan Cremer, a horse rider was also killed by three men as she left her farm on the outskirts of Cape Town.

According to the South African Police Service (SAPS), a woman is murdered every three hours in South Africa. Statistics from SAPS revealed that in 2019, 2,771 women had been killed.

In 2020, SAPS released findings showed that violence against women and children had increased during the lockdown imposed by government to curb the Covid-19 pandemic. Gender-Based Violence cases amounting to 2,230 were reported in the first week of lockdown alone, an increase of 30% for the same period in 2019.[5] Further data recorded revealed that the government Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Command Centre "alone recorded more than 120,000 victims in the first three weeks of lockdown ..." [and] by mid-April, in Tshwane alone, the call centre was receiving between 500 and 1,000 calls a day. Vodacom's support call centres saw a 65% increase in calls" from women and children confined in their homes seeking urgent help" after lockdown began".



The picture was quite different in 2015, for instance, where only a handful of media reports about Gender-Based Violence could be seen. This is not to say that women and children were not experiencing the scourge, but that media's coverage of it was minimal and was mostly limited to events and periods such as the 16 Days of Activism and Women's Month. The media coverage only started to gain momentum after global and national movements such as the 2016 #EndRapeCulture campaign; the #MeToo movement that went viral in 2017; the 2018 #NotInMyName and the 2019 #AmINext movements etc also took centre stage.

Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) undertook a monitoring exercise to determine trends in media's reporting of Gender-Based Violence. The period of monitoring was from 2015 to 2020 before movements against Gender-Based Violence took prominence in South African media and social media to the period of the Covid-19 pandemic where an increase in cases during lockdown was recorded respectively.

The results of the media monitoring have been analysed into this report that will look at aspects such as quantity of coverage to show how the picture grew, topics covered under Gender-Based Violence and a breakdown of sources in relation to their role in society and occupation (also referred to as affiliation), gender and race.

In addition and most importantly, this report will analyse the portrayal of women and girls who were at the receiving end of Gender-Based Violence. What is sought to be determined is whether these women and girls were portrayed in empowering roles such as survivor or otherwise and will also reveal whether these women and girls were identified in the coverage. Identifying victims and/or witnesses to crime/violence especially if they are children, violates legal and ethical principles around reporting on rights violation and abuse.

These aspects were analysed so as to provide a contextualised picture of how the media report on Gender-Based Violence. This was in an effort to identify gaps in media coverage of the scourge so as to recommend better ways of reporting. MMA believes how the media reports on Gender-Based Violence directly affects how the public views the scourge and consequently, how Gender-Based Violence can be prevented in society. For instance, if the media correctly phrases rape as rape and not non-consensual sex or the avoidance of phrases like sex scandal when a prominent person is accused or convicted of rape, contributes to public awareness about what is rape and the fact that it is a crime. Further, MMA believes the media should ethically report on Gender-Based Violence to protect not only the would-be victims if the reporting results in prevention of the scourge against women and children, but also survivors of Gender-Based Violence. If survivors are protected in media coverage of Gender-Based Violence either by withholding their identities to protect them or by avoiding interviewing them before they have undergone counselling, then more women and children will feel empowered to tell their stories especially about how they overcame the trauma and potentially help others.

# METHODOLOGY



An in-house monitoring tool known as Dexter was used to scrape news content from January, 2015 to December, 2020 from a total of over 100 online media. Dexter collected all news items with the keywords and phrases such as Gender, Gender-Based Violence, GBV, rape, sexual violence, Female Genital Mutilation, FGM, sexual harassment, femicide, domestic violence, #EndRapeCulture, #MeToo, #NotInMyName, #16DaysOfActivism.

After the scraping, the news items were stored in a database for sorting. Sorting included identifying and selecting articles that were published during periods of high coverage (or peak periods) over each quarter in the duration of the five years period. Any periods where there was a surge (or peak) in Gender-Based Violence coverage including special days and months such as Women's Month and 16 Days of Activism were also identified and selected for further analysis. This means that content from a peak period in each quarter, content from peak periods during Women's Month and 16 Days of Activism plus, content from significant peak periods outside of special events was monitored. Some quarters or special events like Women's Month etc had more content monitored as long as they had notable peaks that aroused curiosity for study. The sorting process excluded news items that were not related to Gender-Based Violence. At the end of this automated and keyword filtering process, 800 articles were identified. Further manual sorting shrunk the 800 articles to 473 articles for the final media monitoring. Sorting at this stage excluded stories that were repeated as well as some stories that reported the same event in similar fashion. Examples of repeated stories are stories written by one media outlet and republished in other media outlets. These 473 articles were therefore, a representative sample of Gender-Based Violence stories that were published over different peak periods from 2015 to 2020. This representative sample also made it manageable and possible to compare performance of different media.

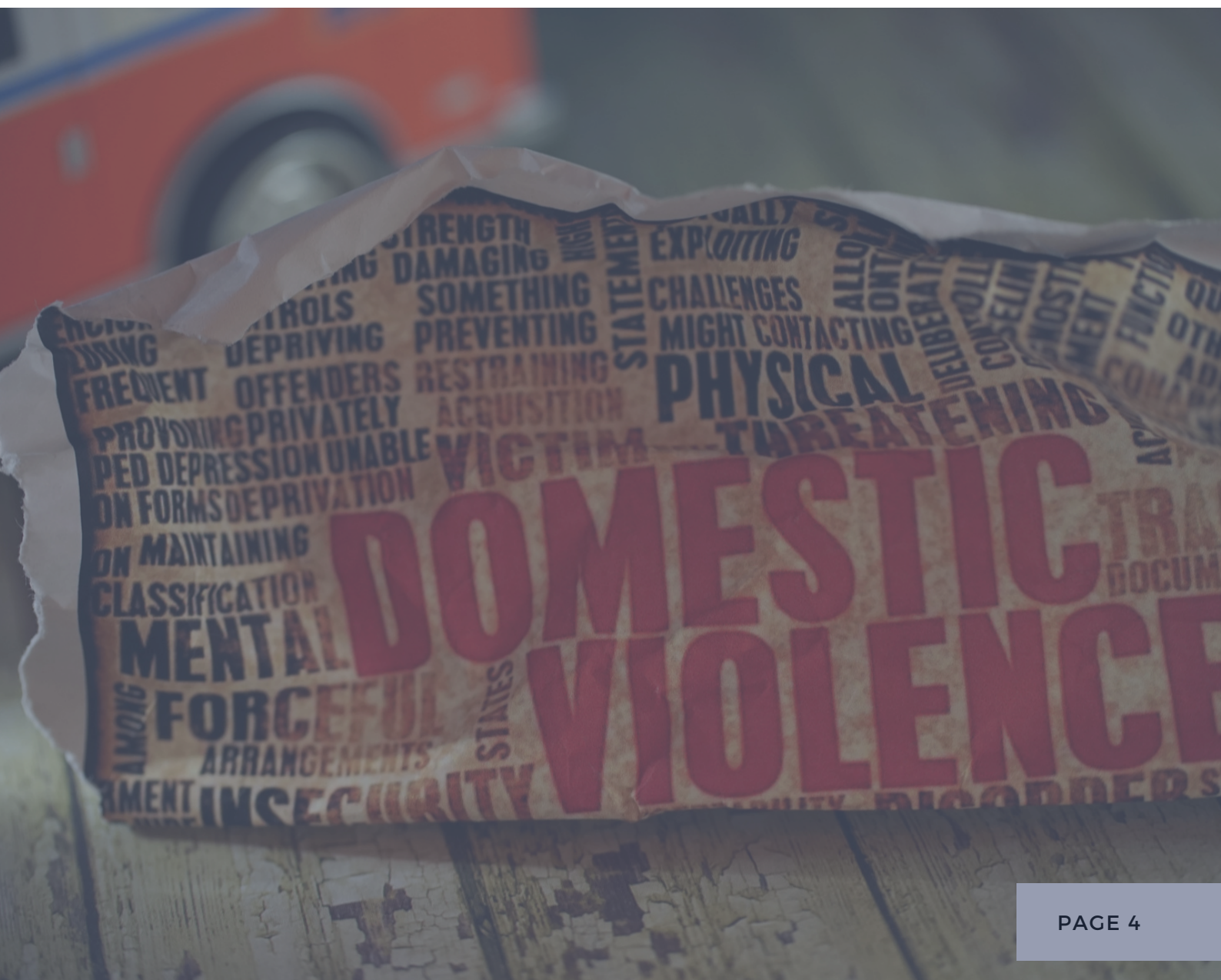
After selecting periods to monitor with high peaks and sorting, a team of trained and experienced personnel manually monitored the collected 473 articles using a set monitoring criteria that looked at aspects such as topic, portrayal of women and children and source affiliation, race and gender, among other things. The results have been analysed below. The articles that were manually monitored were collected from a range of online news media. As is with any other monitoring and analysis exercise, analysing the media's coverage of Gender-Based Violence could potentially be a subjective exercise. However, an effort was made to ensure that the analysis was undertaken in a uniform fashion through the use of a critically developed and standardised user guide, regular communication and rigorous checking and data cleaning. MMA and the media monitors on this project also case-tested the analysis framework before applying it widely.



# LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS



The biggest limitation of the monitoring exercise was that only online media were scraped for articles on Gender-Based Violence. This is because the monitoring tool used, Dexter which is an initiative of MMA, only scrapes from online news platforms. This limited the exercise in that a lot of other stories reported in print media that do not have an online presence as well as stories from radio and television were excluded.



# FINDINGS



## COVERAGE OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

This section will present findings on media’s coverage of Gender-Based Violence from 2015 to 2020. As already mentioned in the methodology, after a vigorous process of sorting and sampling, 473 articles from periods with spikes (or high coverage) were selected. Therefore, the figures shown in the findings below come from the 473 articles selected and will be used in this section to show spikes or troughs on the graph. In this section, stories that could have led to the spikes at different stages will be outlined and a deeper analysis of how some of these stories were reported can be found in the sections preceding this one. It must be noted that the stories outlined below are not the only stories on Gender-Based Violence that formed the 473 articles but that they were among the stories reported during the different peak periods. They have merely been used to show what kinds of stories were reported during some of the peak periods. Please refer to the section on monitoring methodology above for further understanding of what constituted peak periods. In summary, “peak periods” in this monitoring exercise were those periods with high volumes of articles per quarter of the year. The periods were also those with higher than normal coverage of Gender-Based Violence outside of key events like Women’s Month and 16 Days of Activism. It must be noted though that some of these events were monitored especially if they had the only peaks in a quarter.

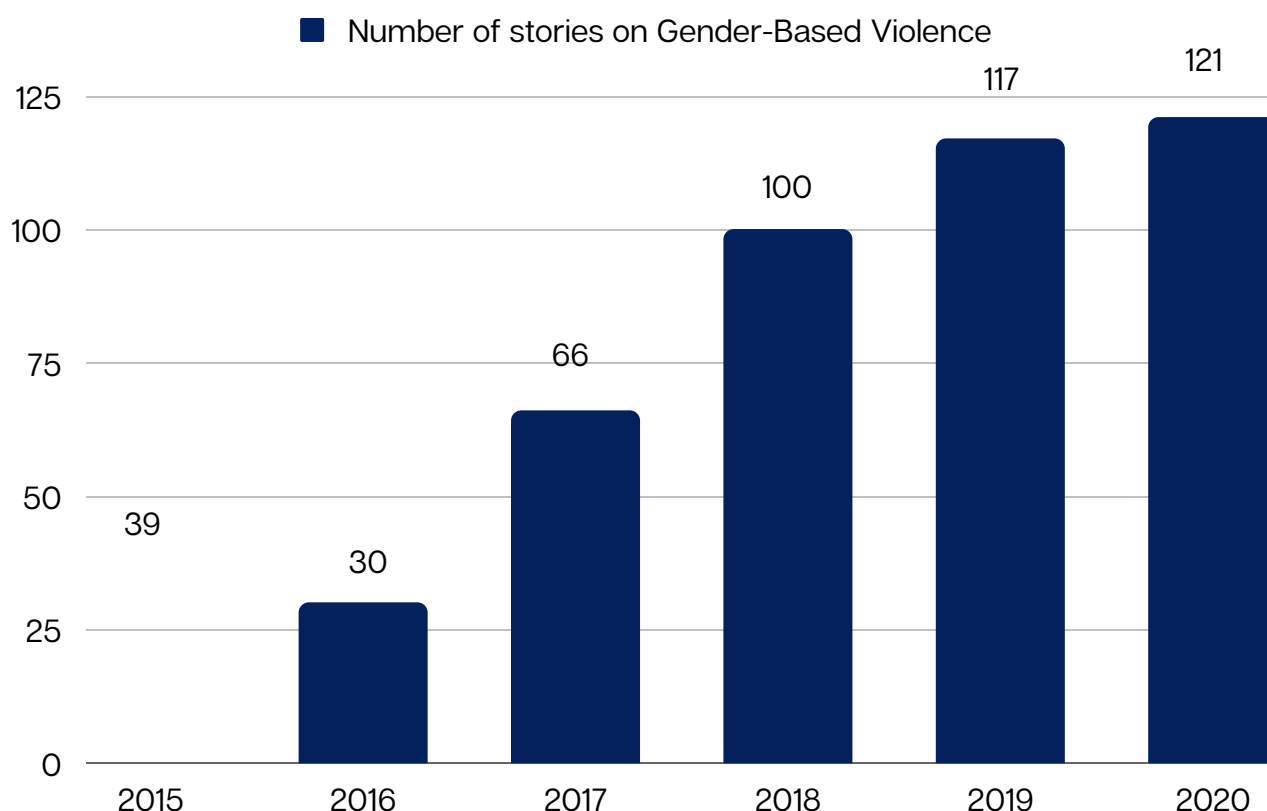


Figure 1: Please note that these are not actual numbers of articles on Gender-Based Violence recorded but are articles that were selected from peak periods for further study. The figures are merely being used to illustrate trends.



## OVERVIEW

Media Monitoring Africa reviewed a sample of 39 stories on Gender-Based Violence in 2015. A look at these stories revealed that most were on Former South African President, Nelson Mandela's grandson who was arrested and in court for raping a 15-year-old girl at a restaurant. Other stories that dominated during 2015 were on two joggers who were attacked at knife point and raped in two separate incidences and areas. There were also stories on a group of children and an 18-year-old who were involved in sexual acts inside a Ster-Kinekor cinema in Port Elizabeth. One of the children involved was an 11-year-old girl who was raped by a 16-year-old boy. Notably, coverage of this hesitantly called the sex between the 11-year-old and the 16-year-old rape but phrased the whole ordeal as "sex drama". From the sample of stories monitored, one source in the coverage called it rape and this was introduced towards the end of the article. This phrasing of the rape as "sex drama" is one of the many examples where the media falls short when it comes to using the right terms and phrases when reporting Gender-Based Violence. Correctly phrasing violence against women and children not only helps fight the scourge at societal level but also helps society take Gender-Based Violence seriously unlike trivialising it by using inaccurate and sometimes inappropriate terms.

### 2015 breakdown of stories per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Sample (56)	10	20	21	5

This table reflects the number of stories from peak periods before the manual filtering. These form part of the 800 stories that were automatically filtered by keywords and phrases.



The first quarter of the year 2015 had a few stories mostly reporting about rape associated with armed robbery. The first incidence on this was a robbery and rape of a woman working the night shift in Mabopane in Gauteng. One robbery and rape involved a woman who was attacked at her residence by an unknown man who reportedly walked away with a kilogram of meat after the rape.[6] Other coverage during this period was the huge coverage by different media about a child who was left unable to walk after her rape ordeal. Coverage of this story revealed that according to testimonies in the Boschfontein Regional Court in Mpumalanga, the 11-year-old girl was left, according to the suspect, in his care by her aunt and that he did not rape her. A witness and a prosecutor testified that the man had raped the child leaving her unable to walk properly. [7] A man who was convicted for the murders of his girlfriend's twin children as well as the assault of his girlfriend in the Western Cape High Court was also in the news during the first quarter of 2015. According to coverage of this story, the man had stabbed the children and attacked their mother in a fit of rage after his girlfriend refused to withdraw a rape case charge involving a member of the 28s gang,[8] one of the biggest gangs in Western Cape.

Coverage in the second quarter of 2015 included the widely reported story of a 12-year-old girl who had been raped in her home by a man who was sentenced to life in prison for the crime in Empangeni, Kwa-Zulu Natal.[9] Other coverage during this period was on a man in Veepos, Northern Cape who was sentenced to 18 years in prison for raping a 14-year-old girl over a six-day period in his shanty. According to coverage of this, the man had kidnapped the child at knife-point and kept her in his place without food and raped her everyday until she was released. [10] Another person raped at knife point who was in the news during the first quarter was a 37-year-old jogger who was attacked in the bush “2.5 meters” from a busy road in Howick in Kwa-Zulu Natal.[11] A second jogger was also attacked and raped by two men in Storms River, Eastern Cape. Coverage of this story revealed that the woman was a United States citizen who was touring Eastern Cape but worked as a teacher in Gauteng.[12] Actor and humanitarian, Angelina Jolie who called on men at the 25th African Union (AU) Summit to step up the fight against rape especially in conflict torn countries was also in the news.[13] According to coverage of this story, the actor was addressing a panel on women, peace, and security with the then AU Chairwomen, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

The SAPS was in the news for reportedly failing to adhere to the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act. Coverage of this used the case in which a police Constable shot dead his wife and others at Alexandra police station in Johannesburg. The coverage also revealed statistics such as those about 55 women who had protection orders against their partners or ex-partners being killed by those same partners. Coverage of this issue was about police officers who committed violence against women and the failure by the SAPS to enforce the Domestic Violence Act on their officers.[14]





A couple in Bloemfontein was also in the news for forcing their 11-year-old daughter to be raped by other men, making the child and her nine-year-old brother to take drugs and neglecting the two children, leaving them without food and water as well as taking them out of school.[15]

The third quarter of the year 2015 started off with coverage of the trial of Nelson Mandela's grandson who was in court after being arrested for raping a teenage girl at a restaurant in Greenside, Johannesburg. The coverage of this story was focussed on the lawyer to the accused stating that the trial was being delayed because they could not find a witness to "bolster" claims by the accused that the sex was consensual.[16] A report about the state of police and health services which are available for victims of sexual offences was also in the news during this period. The report titled, "Health and Police Services to Sexual Offences Victims" revealed findings about what hampers the effective carrying out of justice relating to sexual offences. Coverage of this issue revealed that between 2014 and 2015, "of the 62, 649 sexual-offences cases reported to the police in 2013-2014, only 5, 484 resulted in convictions". Among the reasons given by the report was that the police were "mistrustful and unsympathetic" towards victims, "inefficient and negligent" in collecting evidence and were "unable to cope with the demands placed on them" as they worked with limited resources. The research also revealed that where DNA evidence should take 30 days to reach the courts, it took between four to nine months as "rape kits "sit in closets" unused or "get lost".[17]

Other stories on Gender-Based Violence making the headlines during this period were on a 60-year-old man who sexually abused children between the ages of nine and 13 in Blikkiesdorp in Cape Town over a three-year period;[18] a 22-year-old farm worker who raped a 12-year old girl in Lichtenburg, North West province and injected her with cattle medicine to reportedly prevent her from getting pregnant;[19] and, an incident at a Ster-Kinekor cinema in Port Elizabeth involving children and an 18-year-old in sexual acts.[20] Coverage of this article revealed that an 18-year-old boy was performing sexual acts with a 16-year-old girl and, a 16-year-old boy raped an 11-year-old girl. The girls were reportedly escorted by cinema officials to the police station to report the incident.

The peak in the last quarter of the year 2015 despite being recorded a few days after the 16 Days of Activism period, had fewer stories on Gender-Based compared to other quarters of that year. The normal trend observed is that the month of December, especially a few days after the 16 Days of Activism will still have a lot of coverage of Gender-Based Violence compared to other periods. However, this was not so during the last quarter of 2015. Much of the coverage during this period was on Nelson Mandela's grandson's trial being postponed to the following year[21] as well as the beating to death of an "alleged" rapist by Phillipi residents in Cape Town.[22] Other coverage was on a 60-year-old woman who was raped and murdered in Ndlambele Location in Easter Cape.



The notable dip in coverage of Gender-Based Violence at 30 in 2016 is concerning because that was the year of the #EndRapeCulture and the previous year, 2015, had no such movement but recorded 36 stories on Gender-Based Violence. The #EndRapeCulture campaign of 2016 came about because university students were angry and reportedly wanted “to protest against the pervasive normalisation of sexual violence on university campuses”.[23]

2016 breakdown of stories per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Sample (54)	9	13	19	16

This table reflects the number of stories from peak periods before the manual filtering. These form part of the 800 stories that were automatically filtered by keywords and phrases.





The first quarter of 2016 was slow in terms of media coverage of Gender-Based Violence. The second quarter, however, became busier with stories such as those on a woman who was allegedly raped for turning down a marriage proposal,[24] a study that claimed video games were “turning men into bodice rippers”[25] and the apology issued by the accused in the rape and murder of Franziska Blochlinger.[26] Franziska was a teenager who was raped and murdered in Tokai Forest in Cape Town.

Women’s Month in 2016 had coverage of sexual abuse of boys and other coverage of murder of a boy child. The child that was murdered in Kimberly had been killed while protecting his mother from an attacker who wanted to rape her.[27]

There was also coverage of a school counsellor from a Pietermaritzburg school who had allegedly sexually abused several pupils.[28] During events like Women’s Month, what will usually feature in South African media is coverage on abuse against women and sometimes children especially girls. It is very rare that the media will report on sexual abuse against boy children and while this is rarely viewed as not being a form of Gender-Based Violence, it is indeed and in fact Gender-Based Violence.[29]

The last peak period of 2016 was seen in December during the 16 Days of Activism. During this period, stories of women being murdered and raped again dominated coverage. One such story was that of the murder of Noluvo Swelindawo in Khayelitsha. Noluvo was reportedly taken from her home and shot by unknown people. Some friends reportedly believed she was killed because of her sexual orientation. Noluvo was an LGBTQ activist and belonged to a group that raised awareness on the issue in schools.[30]

The other story that was widely reported during this peak period is that of the murder of Annelene Pillay who was shot dead five times by her ex-boyfriend who pleaded guilty to the charge.[31] Another story that contributed to this peak in December was that of a policeman who was arrested for raping a woman in custody in Laingsburg.[32]

Another story reported was that of the Rhodes Park rape and murder accused. This is a story about two women who were raped and their husbands murdered by a group of 12 men in Rhodes Park. Much of this coverage was on one of the accused on trial claiming the police had faked his DNA[33] and also being kicked out of court for disrupting the judge as he made his judgment.[34]

#MenAreTrash first started trending on social media in South Africa in 2016 but it was not until 2017 after the murder of Karabo Mokoena and the rape and murder of Courtney Pieters including many other women and children that the hashtag and the movement became prominent. Following the murders of Karabo and three-year-old Courtney, the public took to social media to share theirs and other people's past experiences with men and rape and murder. The hashtag became so prominent that it found itself in mainstream media with the general public debating it. This could have been the reason for the coverage of Gender-Based Violence increasing significantly from 30 in 2016 to 66 in 2017, as can be seen in the graph in Figure 1. As a result of these debates, the #NotAllMen was born to mean that it was not all men who raped and murdered women and therefore it was not all men that were trash. Karabo Mokoena was murdered in April of 2017.

### 2017 breakdown of stories per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Sample (112)	14	45	24	26

This table reflects the number of stories from peak periods before the manual filtering. These form part of the 800 stories that were automatically filtered by keywords and phrases.





There was not so much coverage of Gender-Based Violence in the first quarter of 2017. Stories that dominated the media in the first quarter were those on a 15-year-old girl who had reportedly been abducted and raped over four days in Limpopo. The coverage of this story was focussed on the doubts from the police that the child had been abducted and raped because of reported inconsistencies in her story.[35] Another story reported during this period was that of the arrest of a man who had allegedly assaulted and raped a woman in Eastern Cape in 2016 after she reportedly turned down his romantic advances.[36]

The second quarter became busy in terms of coverage of Gender-Based Violence. Among the stories reported in this period was the rape and murder of three-year old Courtney Pieters in May in Cape Town.[37] Her rape and murder raised public outcry about the safety of women and children in South Africa and received a lot of media coverage. Coverage of this story revealed that Courtney's killer, who had been part of her search, had performed a sexual act on the child's corpse. Another murder that was reported during this period was that of Lerato Moloi in Soweto who was suspected to have been a victim of corrective rape.[38]

The trial of the two men accused in the rape and murder of Sinxolo Mafevuka in Cape Town also received a lot of coverage during this period. Sinxolo was raped and murdered near her home in Khayelitsha in 2016.[39] Another story reporting on the multiple rapes of a woman was that of a woman in Johannesburg who was raped by 11 men.[40] Coverage of this story revealed that the woman had been coming from work with her co-worker when the 11 men pointed a firearm at the co-worker and dragged the woman to a nearby building where they took turns raping her. Police responded swiftly to a call from the co-worker and arrested the 11 suspects.

These attacks on women and more sparked public rage on social media and eventually offline. Many women took to social media to narrate their experiences under the hashtag Men Are Trash. Calls for the fight to be taken offline in form of physical protests were made and indeed protests took place all over the country. In East London, a group of about 50 women marched to Fleet police station to present a list of demands to police officials. On their list was the call for the restoration of the death penalty of perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence.[41] Another protest was held in Pretoria and drew a lot of participation from men who marched under the hashtag Not In My Name. This protest was calling on men to stand up and fight against violence against women and children.[42]

Seemingly, the call for men to stand up against Gender-Based Violence and protect women got the attention of some men as shortly after the protest, the media carried stories of men, unfortunately, being killed as they tried to protect women from being robbed[43] and raped.[44]

Coverage of other stories on Gender Based Violence during this period was on the trials of Bill Cosby[45] and Sidney Frankels[46] both accused of sexually abusing multiple women in the United States of America and South Africa respectively years back.

The second quarter of 2017 had two spikes in the month of May. Most of the coverage on Gender-Based Violence during the second spike was on the rape and murder of Hannah Cornelius, a student at Stellenbosch University. Hannah was attacked in May together with her friend who survived the assault and testified in court against the four men accused of the crime. [47]

Stories that dominated media coverage of Gender-Based Violence in the third quarter of 2017 mostly reported on the sentencing of a man in Randfontein who had raped his two stepdaughters over a seven-year period. According to the coverage, the man was “remorseless” and had been sentenced to multiple life sentences in the Johannesburg High Court.[48] During this period there was news coverage of the rape and murder of 14-year-old Cameron Britz in Ocean View, Cape Town. The coverage of reported sexual assault cases and rapes in Sweden at the Swedish Musical Festival and its subsequent cancellation over the same allegations also made headlines in South African media during the third quarter.[49] This coverage reported that the sexual abuse had been going on and had been reported to authorities for a few years before the decision to cancel the 2018 festival in 2017.

During the 16 Days of Activism in 2017, other than usual coverage of marches[50] and opinion pieces[51] as well as government’s commitment to fighting Gender-Based Violence, stories on the rape and murder of women and children also dominated media coverage. The media during this period reported on the sentencing of Randy Tango, a man accused of raping and murdering 11-year-old Stacha Arendse in Cape Town. Tango was sentenced to three life sentences and another 10 years for raping a 14-year-old child years back. Another story that made the news during this period was the rape and sexual assault of a domestic worker in Bronkhorstspuit by a 41-year-old man. The domestic worker had been raped by the man and later forced to perform sexual acts on his dogs. The accused dragged and locked the victim in a room and raped her repeatedly.[52] Other coverage during this peak period of 2017 was on the kidnapping, rape and murder of 18-year-old Traceleen Booys in Cape Town by three men. Coverage of this story revealed that the teenager had been stabbed numerous times.[53] Another story that gripped headlines during this period was the murder of a mother and her two sons in Northwest.



The woman and her children were murdered by the children's father who later hanged himself. Coverage of this story revealed that the man had been in court for the attempted rape of his 13-year-old step-daughter.[54] Other coverage of Gender-Based Violence in December of 2017 was that of the call for murderers of children to be jailed for life especially if the murder was as a result of child abuse over a period of time.[55]



The trial of Pastor Timothy Omotoso dominated much of the coverage of Gender-Based Violence in 2018 and contributed to that year recording 100 stories on Gender-Based Violence, an increase of 34 from the previous year. While there were many other stories reported during the year, coverage of the Omotoso case and eventual start of the trial received a bigger share of coverage. Of note from the media coverage was the portrayal of the first witness at this trial, Cheryl Zondi who was mostly shown as a survivor largely due to how she carried herself on the witness stand despite Omotoso’s lawyer making it difficult for her, according to some media reports. The coverage of this story is one of the few times during the five-year monitoring period where a woman who had been raped was portrayed as a survivor and not a victim.

2018 breakdown of stories per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Sample (181)	19	26	26	110

This table reflects the number of stories from peak periods before the manual filtering. These form part of the 800 stories that were automatically filtered by keywords and phrases.



## SOME STORIES AND EVENTS THAT TRENDED IN 2018



The year 2018 started with the coverage of the continued trial of the man dubbed as the “Springs monster” and his wife in February. The couple were in court for the decade long abuse of their five children which included the showing of pornography to their eldest daughter and her rape.[56] Another story that made the news during this peak period was that of a child who had been raped by a known goalkeeper when she was 13 years old the previous year. According to coverage of this story, the child had attempted suicide before confiding in her friend on the anniversary of the rape.[57] The other story covered was that of a named woman who was sexually assaulted by taxi drivers at Wanderers and Bree taxi ranks in Johannesburg on the same day. Coverage of this story revealed that the victim did not report the matter to the police because she feared nothing would be done about it. She instead posted the incidence on Twitter where some users questioned her dress code sparking a debate about the same on the social media platform.[58] Other coverage during this peak was on the story of a six-month-old baby who had been drowned or suffocated in a bucket of urine by a man in Mamelodi East. Mandla Chauke murdered Tebatso Choche and was found guilty of premeditated murder.[59]

The second quarter of the year 2018 had most coverage on Gender-Based Violence focussed on the other victims who had come forward in the Pastor Timothy Omotoso rape cases. A set of twins, Anele and Nelisiwe Mxakaza narrated their ordeal at a dialogue for abused people which was organised by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL) in Johannesburg.[60] The 22-year-old twins joined Cheryl Zondi in giving details of their abuse at the hands of the pastor. The story of musician, Brickz who had been found guilty of raping his niece also made the news. Coverage on this revealed that Brickz had posted bail pending his appeal against the guilty verdict.[61] More coverage of Gender-Based Violence during the peak of the second quarter was of a City councillor in Gauteng who was in court for raping his friend's 12-year-old daughter. As a result of this trial, this councillor had been expelled from his party. [62]

The third peak of the year 2018 was during Women's Month and most of the coverage on Gender-Based Violence involved students from Fort Hare University and Rhodes University as well as pupils from Parktown Boys High School. Coverage of Fort Hare University was on a female student who had been raped in front of her tied up boyfriend as they were walking back to Campus.[63] Also from Fort Hare was another attack against a woman by a male student who had been filmed hitting the woman several times. Other footage showed the student being beaten by a mob for his actions towards the woman. These videos were circulated on social media sparking an online debate about the incident.[64] At Rhodes University, a female student, Khensani Maseko had committed suicide in what appeared to be as a result of the rape she suffered at the hands of her boyfriend in May.



This incident sparked an outcry from the students of the university who organised a march in her honour.[65] Khensani's death also sparked a lot more attention and coverage of rape policies at Rhodes University. One such opinion piece by the university's rape task force member revealed that mediation in place of prosecution was offered by Rhodes University for both the victim and suspect and that in one instant, a suspect had been offered this process thrice.[66] Coverage of the Parktown Boys High School focused on the start of the trial of the school polo coach who sexually assaulted and raped several learners at the school.[67] More coverage during Women's Month was on the call by the Telecommunications & Postal services Deputy Minister, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams for the integration of "woman beaters" back into society[68] as well the revelation by the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa that nurses were being raped at hospitals.[69]

The last quarter of 2018 had a total of four spikes and three of them were in October. For instance, the 8th of October recorded stories on Gender-Based Violence. Some of the stories that made the news on this day were those reporting about Pastor Timothy Omotoso waiting to see if the charges he was facing on human trafficking for sex trade would be dropped[70] and later about the news that the Port Elizabeth High Court had dismissed the application to have Omotoso's 63 charges dropped.[71] Omotoso was facing charges ranging from rape to human trafficking of young women for sex trade. Another church leader who was in the news on this day was the 49-year-old bishop in Eastern Cape who was in court for raping his 18-year-old relative.[72] Other coverage on this day was on the delay of the Stacy Adams court case because the case needed further investigation. Stacey Adams was raped and murdered by her mother's boyfriend.[73]

Coverage of the story of a woman who had lost her two children in a house fire caused by a petrol bomb also made the news on the 8th of October, 2018. This woman suspected her children's father, who had allegedly refused to accept the breakup, as the suspect. More coverage of this story revealed that the woman had reported to Mahwelereng police station four times in a space of three months about the physical assault she suffered at the hands of the man but that the police "refused" to open a case and did not make any arrests.[74] On this day, there was also coverage of a man in East Rand who had received 11 life sentences and an additional 970 years from kidnapping and raping 41 women in the area.[75] Two international stories on Gender-Based Violence that were reported by South African media on this day reported on a Bulgarian journalist, Viktoria Marinova who had been found raped and murdered in her country[76] and another on a group of girl children who had been physically assaulted and hospitalised because they argued back at a group of boys who made rude sexual comments at them in India.[77]



The second spike in October, 2018 was on the 15th and on this day, the media carried mostly stories about the trial of Pastor Omotoso that had just begun with the first witness, Cheryl Zondi taking the stand. This trial made the headlines mostly for how the defence attorney, Peter Dauberman interrogated the witness. Among his questions deemed unnecessary by the public and the presiding judge in the case was the question on how many centimetres Cheryl believed Omotoso penetrated her vagina.[78] Members of the public took to social media to register their anger at Dauberman and pledge support to Cheryl whom they called “undefeatable” and “strong”. [79] Another story that made the news on this day was that of a man in Gauteng who had been convicted of 13 counts of rape, nine of kidnapping, nine of robbery with aggravating circumstances, nine of pointing an object that resembles a firearm, two of aiding and abetting someone to commit an offence and one of sexual assault in Gauteng. Coverage of this story revealed that the man and an accomplice attacked women over a period of 13 months.[80] The trial of the suspects accused of the rape and murder of Hannah Cornelius also made the news this day. At the trial, a policeman gave details of the chase that led to the arrest of one of the suspects.[81] A story on a 16-year-old who had been kidnapped and raped by six men in KZN was also in the news on the 15th of October. According to coverage, this child had been held hostage for a week and that one of the attackers was known to her.[82] More coverage on this day involved the postponed trial for the man accused of shooting dead his girlfriend, Zolile Khumalo at a student residence at the Mangosuthu University of Technology.[83]

Much of the coverage on the 22nd of October, 2018, the day of the third spike in the last quarter of the year was on the Omotoso trial with more people and entities coming out to pledge support to Cheryl Zondi. Among these were the University of Johannesburg[84] where Zondi was a student and the Minister for Women in the Presidency, Honourable Bathabile Dhlamini who attended Omotoso’s trial to support Zondi.[85] In addition, the public outcry about the way Omotoso’s lawyer questioned Zondi on the witness stand also continued to receive a lot of coverage.[86] However, what could have led to the spike on this day was the coverage of the accusation and application by the defence attorney, Peter Daubermann that the judge was showing favour towards Zondi and must therefore recuse himself.[87] The judge, Honourable Mandela Makaula however turned down the application citing that the application had no merit. [88] Other news items regarding the Omotoso trial that could have led to the spike were coverage about the claim for lack of and concern for safety of his clients by the defence lawyer. [89] Others charged with Pastor Timothy Omotoso were Lusanda Sulani and Zukiswa Sitho. This case received a lot of coverage and the public outcry became worse and resulted in some members of the public calling for the shut-down of the pastor’s church[90] and the auditing of churches.[91]



Another trial that received coverage on the 22nd of October, 2018 was the Hannah Cornelius trial where four men were accused of raping and murdering her and attacking her friend who survived the incident. Coverage of this trial was about the new DNA evidence that linked two of the accused to the crime[92] as well as news about one of the accused writing a letter of apology to Hannah's parents for the crime.[93] Other coverage on this day was on the sentencing of two men found guilty of raping children. The first man was sentenced to 15 years for raping his daughter[94] and another was sentenced to two life sentences for raping a child.[95] A South African Police Service (SAPS) officer was also in the news on this day for raping a 14-year-old child after promising her and her friends food and alcohol. The officer was released on bail resulting in the community threatening to revolt against the police in North West.[96]





Coverage of Gender-Based Violence in South African media continued to increase from the 100 recorded in 2018 to the 117 recorded in 2019. The Omotoso trial received a lot of coverage in 2018 and this could have spilled over to 2019 in terms of media pursuing Gender-Based Violence stories due to public interest and discourse. While this is not certain as the reason behind the growing interest as well as concerns around Gender-Based Violence, it can be deduced that after the Omotoso trial dominated media coverage, a lot more stories of women and children who had suffered Gender-Based Violence were found in the media. A lot more people were interested in speaking out and about the scourge and all this could have contributed to the steady increase year after year from the 66 in 2017 through to the 117 in 2019.

### 2019 breakdown of stories per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Sample (198)	20	29	58	91

This table reflects the number of stories from peak periods before the manual filtering. These form part of the 800 stories that were automatically filtered by keywords and phrases.



The first spike in 2019 was observed on the 11th of March and coverage on this day included the story of the trial of a man in court for raping a child left in the care of his mother in Northern Cape[97] and another trial of a businessman accused of murdering a sex worker and raping another woman in Durban.[98] Other coverage on this day was on a 27-year-old woman given the alias, Siyasanga Madlala who revealed that she was brutally raped by her ex-boyfriend, physically assaulted, stalked and threatened by him and how she felt let down by the judicial system.[99] The release of the draft policies on sexual harassment and bullying for African National Congress (ANC) employees by the ANC so that the public could comment on it also made the news. The political party was calling for sex offenders to be brought before the law. [100] Other news was on the manhunt for two men called serial rapists by the police. Coverage revealed that these two men had raped countless women, among other crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, attempted murder etc.[101]

Coverage of Gender-Based Violence in 2019 spiked for the second time during the second quarter in June. What was interesting about stories that contributed to this spike was that a couple of them had women as suspects. One was in court in Cape Town facing a murder charge after she stabbed her boyfriend to death, an action that reportedly followed him stabbing her in the hand before she retaliated.[102] The second woman was arrested in Johannesburg after stabbing her boyfriend with a pair of scissors in full view of their child.[103] Other coverage during this period was on the famous South African actor, Kenneth Nkosi who was facing a charge of common assault for physically abusing his girlfriend in Johannesburg. News of this first broke on social media with other users coming forward with stories of how they had witnessed Nkosi being abusive towards women.[104] The story about the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) dropping the case against murder and rape co-accused, Fita Khupe and Ernest Mabaso also made the news. The pair had been charged together with the murders of seven members of one family who included children. Their bodies were found in shallow graves inside the house of the accused.[105] Coverage of this story revealed that the NPA dropped the charges after realising that the prosecution would not be successful as accused number one, Mabaso had died in prison and that their case against Khupe was dependent on Mabaso's confession which they now could not use since he had passed on. Other news that could have contributed to the spike was the coverage about the suspension of training of medical students at the University of Free State after two medical students (one of them an intern) were almost raped and robbed at gun point. The University suspended the training to evaluate the safety of their students.[106]



On the 24th of August, 2019, a rape and murder was committed at a post office in Claremont, Cape Town. The victim was a university student, Uyinene Mrwetyana, 19, who had gone to the post office to collect a parcel after being called by her murderer. He attacked her inside the post office and when she fought back against the rape, her attacker, Lusanda Botha who was an employee of the post office hit her with an object on the head, locked up her body in the post office safe<sup>[107]</sup> till the next day when he dumped and burnt her body. Botha was arrested after four days and confessed to the crime. News of this horrendous crime ignited uproar from students, universities, civil society organisations and members of the public. Uyinene's rape and murder birthed a movement called #AmINext? which saw many people take to social media to post about their experiences and register their dismay about the rate at which women and children were raped and murdered in South Africa. Marches and protests against Gender-Based Violence were held countrywide by mainly students and civil society organisations fighting the scourge.<sup>[108][109][110][111][112]</sup> These protests and marches attracted the attention of men and media who joined in.<sup>[113]</sup> Independent Media created an initiative called, #MyPromise which called on men to loudly say out their promise towards keeping women and children safe.<sup>[114]</sup> Reportedly feeling pressure from protestors who protested outside the World Economic Forum where world leaders were meeting, the President, Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the protestors and vowed to fight violence against women and children.<sup>[115]</sup> The ANC also came out stating that they would work with other stakeholders to ensure they amended laws to fast track cases of violence against women and children and ensure harsher punishments for the culprits.<sup>[116]</sup> The coverage of Uyinene's murder and all the activities that ensued and were reported in the media contributed to the spike in the third quarter of 2019 having one of the biggest, if not the biggest collection of articles on Gender-Based Violence.

While the case of Uyinene Mrwetyana dominated media coverage during the third quarter spike of 2019, other stories on Gender-Based Violence also managed to grab headlines, with some commanding a larger share of the coverage than others. Such stories included the rape of a seven-year-old child in the bathroom of a restaurant by a Nicholas Ninow who came to be known as the Dros rapist.<sup>[117]</sup> Another story that commanded a large share of coverage during this period was the murder of four children from the same family by their father and stepfather. This story revealed that the man, S'bu Mpungose hanged his three children and one stepdaughter in Wyebank, KZN.<sup>[118]</sup>



Other stories during this peak period were on a 14-year-old girl who had been raped and murdered in her bedroom with some media reporting that she had been murdered then raped[119] in North West. Her name was Lizzy Mokoena.[120] There was also the murder was of a then yet to be identified woman who was found dead in Gugulethu, Cape Town.[121] The rape of two minors in Malukazi in separate incidents also made the news.[122] Also in the news during this peak was the story of female miners speaking out against years of sexual harassment at Rustenburg Chrome mine[123] and a KZN male teacher who had been suspended to allow for investigations after being found to be sexting[124] with pupils.[125]

The fourth quarter of 2019 had two spikes with the first one happening around mid-October. Stories recorded during this time included coverage on the march by SAPS officers against murders and sexual crimes committed against women and children.[126] More news about this protest was on the speech made by the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele who called on police officers to stop turning away women who came to report crimes against them[127] and to also stop telling the women that came to report crimes to go and “negotiate” with their abusers.[128] This protest of over 1, 500 police officials that received wide coverage in the media was organised because the police officers stated that they were concerned about the increasing murders and rapes against women and children and were not happy with having to pick up bodies of murdered women. Other coverage during this spike was on the statutory rape committed against a pupil by a teacher-in-training at a school in Orania, Northern Cape.[129] One female teacher from Cape Town was in the news during this period after being accused of having sexual relations with an 18-year-old male pupil.[130] A named 39-year-old woman was also in the news with details about her abuse at the hands of her estranged husband. Media reports revealed that this woman had for years suffered abuse including being strangled and shot four times, sometimes in front of their children. According to media reports, the woman feared for her life and was pleading that her husband not be granted bail or else she would leave the country.[131] Famous actor, Sello Maake Ka-Ncube was also in the news during this period with an admission that he had abused his ex-girlfriend for a long time before seeking help about his violent nature.[132] More coverage of Gender-Based Violence during this spike was on a prophet in Tshwane who raped a named woman and “cursed” her vagina, on top of threatening her against reporting.[133]

The bulk of coverage during the last spike of the fourth quarter of 2019 was on the task force set up by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula to investigate the reporting, investigation and conclusion of sexual exploitation and abuse in the South African National Defence Force since 2014.[134] According to news reports, the minister was worried that there were many incidents and cases that were not reported because of the nature of the military command structure. More coverage on this was on the concerns from various people that they did not have confidence in the task force that was setup to deal with the matter.



Other coverage during this second spike of the last quarter of 2019 was on Precious Ramabulana, a 21-year-old Limpopo student who was stabbed 52 times by a 28-year-old man. She was found alive by the police who had been called by neighbours but later succumbed to her injuries. Precious was killed in her student flat and the man arrested four days after.[135] Coverage of this story revealed that the suspect had been arrested before on a rape incident. President Cyril Ramaphosa visited her family and made a statement about how people who have been found guilty before should have a close eye kept on them and when they are jailed, they should be “subjected” to hard labour.[136] This statement was met with frowns from the Democratic Alliance party which stated that the President’s call for hard labour for sex offenders was in contrast to the provisions of the Constitution.[137]

Another story that received a substantial amount of coverage during this period was that of a family in Sebokeng who were stabbed by a 22-year-old man leaving his mother and minor sister dead and his brother and other sister, both minors, hospitalised.[138] Other stories reported were on a woman, Kgaugelo Tshawane who was found in her car burnt by her boyfriend after years of abuse from the same man.[139] Another woman who was in the news after being killed by her boyfriend was a 22-year-old who was stabbed in her neck after an argument with her boyfriend at a party.[140] AfriForum was also in the news for withdrawing their private prosecution case against a businessman who was accused of raping his three-year-old granddaughter. This after the NPA had withdrawn their case against the same man because they concluded the prosecution would not be successful.[141] A top police officer at Benoni police vehicle clearance centre was also in the news after a woman accused him of having had raped her since 2017.[142] The woman was reportedly threatened by other police officers with perjury when she first went to report the case. Other coverage was on a man who pleaded guilty and was convicted of raping a child and sentenced to life imprisonment. He reportedly appealed the sentence because of an error on the charge sheet and was then sentenced to 15 years in prison. The NPA took the case to the Supreme Court of Appeal and the man was sentenced to life as initially sentenced.[143] Another man in the news for being sentenced to prison was one in Pietermaritzburg who was convicted of rape after he broke into a home and raped a woman. [144]



The deaths of Tsegofatso Pule and Amahle Quku dominated media coverage of Gender-Based Violence in 2020. Pule was pregnant when she was stabbed and hanged from a tree in Kwa-Zulu Natal while Quku was believed to be raped and murdered in Western Cape. The deaths of these two and the manner in which they died sparked a public outcry with protests held around the country. Even men held marches against Gender-Based Violence. While much of the coverage was on these two, the release of crime statistics which showed an increase in Gender-Based Violence and child abuse during the 2020 national lockdown was also in the news. International stories were on Bill Cosby and Harvey Weinstein who were both convicted of sexual abuse in the United States of America. Coverage of these two thrust the #MeToo movement back in the limelight.

2020 breakdown of stories per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Sample (199)	68	37	15	79

This table reflects the number of stories from peak periods before the manual filtering. These form part of the 800 stories that were automatically filtered by keywords and phrases.



The #MeToo movement was back in the media in the first quarter of 2020 when Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein was found guilty of sexual assault and rape.[145] This story that was widely reported by South African media revealed that Weinstein had been cleared of charges on predatory sexual assault. The Timothy Omotoso case was also in the news during this period. The coverage was on the re-trial of Omotoso that saw the first witness, Andisiwe Dike take the stand to detail how she was recruited to the pastor's inner circle.[146] More coverage of this was on the appointment of a new state prosecutor for the case.[147] Other coverage during this peak was on the attack on a female farmer, Mimie Jacobs in Bloemfontein. The farmer who had been crowned Farmer of the Year in 2016 was stabbed in the head by three attackers who forced her to send an e-wallet to them during the attack.[148] Another attacked woman in the news during this period was one in Ulundi who was raped in 2018. News of this story was on her attackers being sentenced to time in prison for the crime.[149]

Coverage of Gender-Based Violence involving children during this peak was on stories such as the one about a man who had raped a 10 and a 12-year-old in Eastern Cape on Valentines Day[150] and another about a 14-year-old pupil at Drakensburg Boys' Choir School facing the law after being accused of raping a 13-year-old boy of the same school.[151] Other coverage in this period was on a freshly paroled man who was sentenced to life imprisonment for raping a 14-year-old girl in Piketberg, Western Cape. The man had reportedly only been out on parole for two weeks when he raped the child. He had served time in prison for raping a 10-year-old child.[152] Another paroled man back in prison for life was a man in KZN who was rearrested at the orders of two high court judges who were looking into cases that the magistrate court judge who earlier sentenced him had handled. Controversy had risen about the judge after it was discovered that she could have mishandled some cases. The man in the coverage had been sentenced to five years in prison for raping a child but only served three and a half. After being rearrested and resentenced, he was handed a life term. The judge is being investigated and her cases are being evaluated.[153] Questions and concerns about the parole processes and whether the victims' families were consulted before an inmate was paroled were also in the media. These questions arose during the trial of Moehydien Pangaker who was accused of kidnapping and murdering eight-year-old Tazne van Wyk.[154]

A report revealing how many sex workers had been killed during the 2018/2019 year was also in the news during the first quarter of 2020. The report released by the Sex Workers Education & Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) revealed that 101 sex workers had died during the period and that half of them were murdered. Also included in that number were trans-women.[155] Other news was on the Gender-Based Violence Response Plan that was launched in Gauteng.[156]



The second 2020 spike in coverage of Gender-Based Violence was in June with a massive coverage of the death of Tsegofatso Pule who had been stabbed and hanged from a tree in KZN.[157] Tsegofatso was eight-months pregnant at the time of her death and later coverage of the case revealed that she had been murdered by a man hired by her boyfriend. Her death sparked massive outcry from all over South Africa, again putting Gender-Based Violence in the spotlight. Another death that received a lot of media coverage during the period was that of a 17-year-old child from Western Cape whose brutalised body had been found at Browns Farm. Amahle Quku was believed to have been raped before being murdered and according to news reports, her family first learnt of her death through social media where pictures of her body were circulating.[158]

A senior City of Cape Town official was also in the news during this period for raping a 13-year-old child.[159] He was not the only senior official in the limelight (for all the wrong reasons) as the DA Western Cape politician was in the news because his 17-year-old son was in court for the rape of a child while also being accused of multiple rapes and sexual abuse against other victims including his schoolmates.[160] Other coverage was on two men who respectively murdered or were suspected to have murdered a woman in Northern Cape and another in Cape Town with her seven-year-old daughter.[161] More coverage of Gender-Based Violence was on a man who raped a woman in Welkom after arranging for a meeting with her through Facebook. According to news reports, this man later sent a text to the woman asking for another meeting so he could apologise. The text was sent while the woman was at the police station reporting the incident. The police reportedly asked the woman to agree to the meeting and it was there that the man was arrested.[162]

Various marches[163] were held by men to protest Gender-Based Violence which had been in the spotlight again in the month of June especially with the deaths of Tsegofatso Pule and Amahle Quku.

August which is Women's Month saw another spike in coverage of Gender-Based Violence in the media during the third quarter of 2020. Much of this coverage was on the crime statistics released by the SAPS that revealed that there was a significant increase in Gender-Based Violence cases in the 2019/2020 year. According to the statistics, women were more likely to be raped in private spaces like homes with 18, 231 cases having been reported from such settings. The data also showed that intimate partner violence had also increased with 22,864 cases having been reported during the 2019/2020 period. According to reports on crime statistics, sexual offences increased by 1.7% and incidents of rape increased by the same percentage. Rape and sexual assault made up 93.9% of the total number of cases reported.



A few experts were accessed in this coverage and they revealed that the spike in reported cases of Gender-Based Violence was seen during the national lockdown imposed by the government to curb the spread of Covid-19.[164] Other coverage during this period was on the released policy framework to fight Gender-Based Violence at universities[165] as well as the protest by Langa residents who accused police of taking no action on Gender-Based Violence cases.[166]

During the month of October, 2020, during which the spike in coverage of Gender-Based Violence stories for the fourth quarter was recorded, much of the coverage was on a report released that shined the light on the abuse that domestic workers experience at the hands of their employers and that this abuse included physical and sexual abuse against the domestic workers.[167] Other news was on the investigation into KwaSizabanthu mission in KZN where accusations of rape and murder, among other things emerged. One of the KwaSizaBantu members spoke out against the rape she suffered at the mission.[168] There was also news that four government departments had joined the call for the decriminalisation of sex work. Coverage of this revealed that a lot of sex workers suffered physical abuse and rape by the police when they were arrested.[169] Other coverage was a man who had been jailed in KZN for raping his seven-year-old niece.[170]

Another spike in coverage of Gender-Based Violence cases in the media was recorded in November of 2020. During this time, the story of a man who hacked to death his girlfriend, Nomzamo Sikhundwana and her five children in Eastern Cape received wide coverage. The case sparked protests outside the court in which he was appearing and many of the protesters were calling for the return of the death penalty in cases of Gender-Based Violence.[171] Another murdered woman who was in the news in November 2020 was 27-year-old Sherne Pillay who was found murdered in her flat in Durban.[172]

The re-launching of a Gender-Based Violence command centre in Salvokop by Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu also made the news during this peak period. According to the coverage, the command centre had been re-launched to reduce the stress and strain, but most importantly to be able to get the necessary institutions that have to take action to help women who called in.[173] Also in the coverage was the story of 25 non-governmental organisations protesting outside Parliament against Gender-Based Violence.[174] Botswana was in South African news for setting up gender violence courts to help tackle the backlog of cases.[175] Coverage of this revealed that 25 courts had been set up.

# TOPICS COVERAGE



This section presents findings on the topics in media coverage of Gender-Based Violence. Only the top five topics are included in this analysis and this is because every topic after the fifth had a percent of two or less. Topics are monitored to show which issues the media mostly report on when covering Gender-Based Violence. This helps determine priority and in some cases, at what stage the media pick up the stories. For instance, a high percentage in stories on the justice system as a topic lets us know that the media pick up the stories on Gender-Based Violence when they are either in court or have been reported to the police. The other reason for monitoring topics is to check how diverse the issues being reported on are and whether they each receive an equitable share of the coverage.

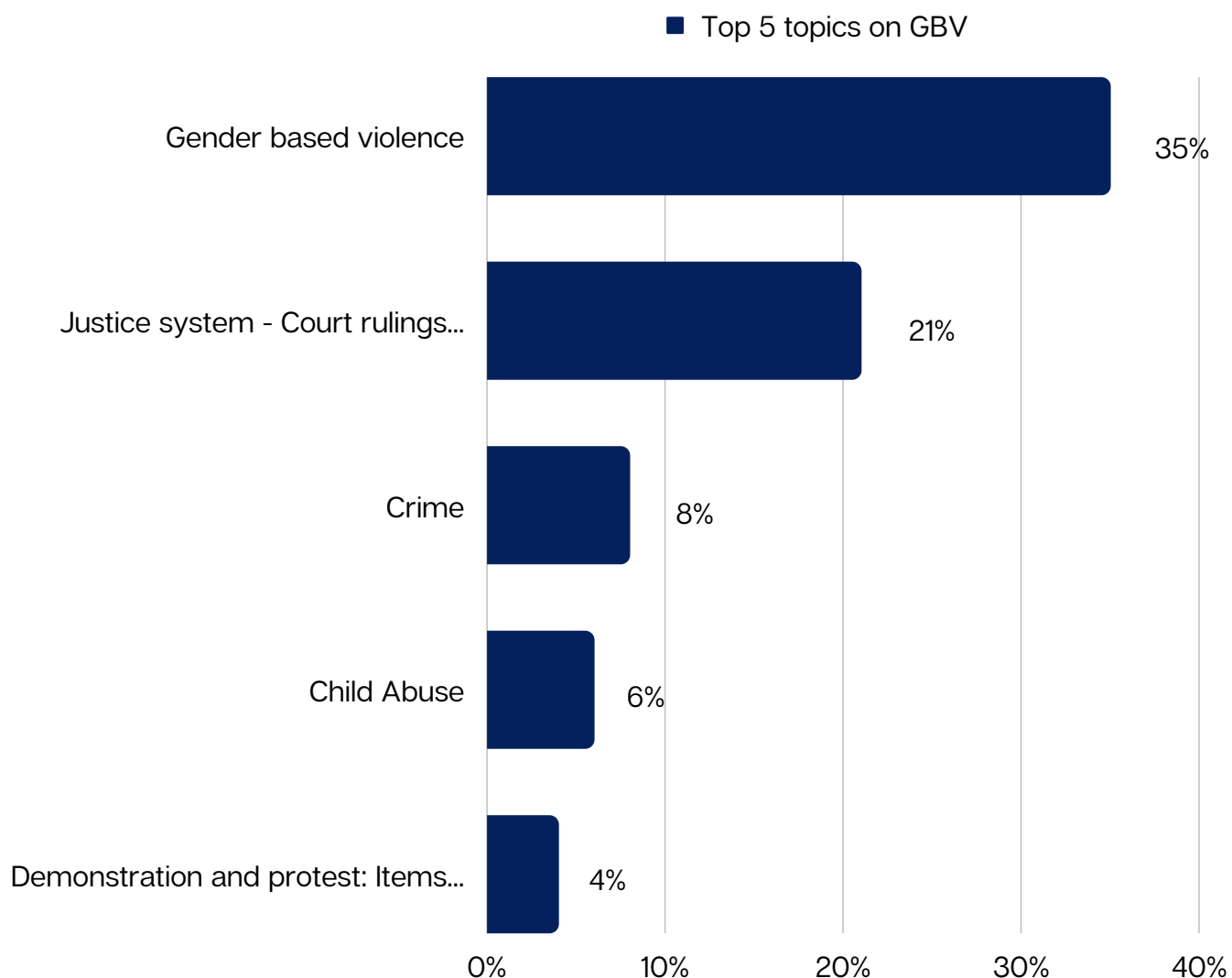


Figure 2: Top five topics on Gender-Based Violence



What can be deduced from looking at the graph above is that the media mostly reported on Gender-Based Violence as an issue at 35%. This means that during the period 2015 to 2020, just over a third of times the media reported Gender-Based Violence as an issue and not just as a by-product of the justice system process or criminal procedure, for instance. An example of this coverage is where the media reported on pronouncements by the government to fight Gender-Based Violence or where the rape and/or murder of a woman had caused a public uproar. The murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana[176] caused such uproar[177] and compelled government to come forward with plans on how they would intensify the fight against the scourge.[178] Other examples of stories that constituted the 35% for Gender-Based Violence as a topic were stories about rape or physical assaults on women. However, as mentioned before, the majority of stories under this topic were mainly stories about attacks on women that caused public outcry and grabbed the attention of the government or other stakeholders to make pronouncements on fighting the scourge.

Justice system as a topic received 21% of coverage. Stories under this topic were mostly about trials of suspects of Gender-Based Violence or their sentencing. For example the story of Pastor Timothy Omotoso received significant media coverage as a result of the court hearings. Much of the coverage of this story was on the on-going trial either with witnesses testifying[179][180] or the change, for instance, in the state prosecutor as the first one could not continue the case.[181] For this monitoring, stories about acts of Gender-Based Violence committed against children were coded as Child Abuse. Forms of child abuse considered as Gender-Based Violence were rape, sexual exploitation, physical abuse, neglect and non-contact abuse such as making a child view pornography and/or child sex abuse material etc. Child abuse as a topic under coverage of Gender-Based Violence received six percent of coverage. It must be noted that this topic was only separate from other topics when it involved children outside of the justice system topic. This means that a story would be coded as a child abuse story when the media, for instance, was reporting about an attack of a child before court proceedings began. One such example is the story of the murder of Courtney Pieters.[182] Another example is the death of Amahle Quku in Phillipi.[183]

As can be seen from the graph above, stories on protests and demonstrations only received a coverage share of four percent. This means that even though a lot of coverage on rapes and murders of women and children caused public outcry, only a small amount of that coverage was on the demonstrations and protests that the public had. Another reason that this percentage is low could be that some of the protests were held online. Protests and demonstrations like the #AMINext, #MeToo, #NotInMyName and #SayHerName etc were taken online on social media platforms, managing to get participation from many women and men in addition to the physical protests held under these hashtags.

An article by Akindare Okunola and Khanyi Mlaba titled, “From #EndSARS to #AmINext: How Young Africans Used Social Media to Drive Change in 2020” (Global Citizen, 23/12/2020)[184] talks about the power of online movements and how young people across Africa gathered themselves to protest online and brought injustices faced by Africa to the world stage. Some of these online protests including physical protests were picked up by traditional media even though it was only at four percent during the period of monitoring.

The findings above show that the media does not afford an equitable amount of coverage to the diverse topics under Gender-Based Violence. This is evident in the fact that the top five topics constituted a coverage share of 74% leaving other topics under Gender-Based Violence like gender discrimination, sexuality, safety and security among others, to share the remaining 26%. What is sad is that when an attack is perpetrated against a women or child, it will rarely be portrayed as a crime in the media and this is why we have that topic at only eight percent.

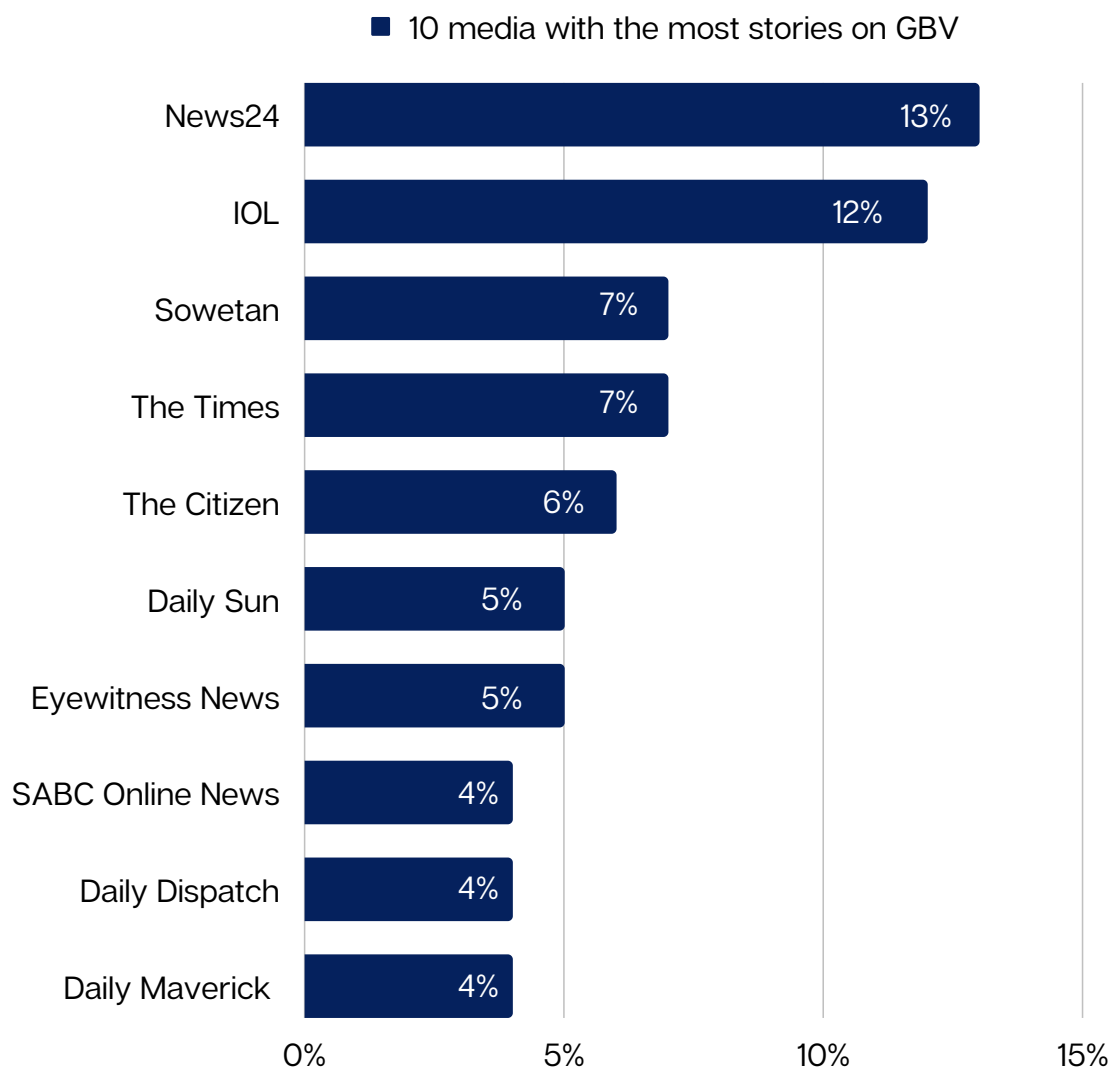
For a country that is battling the scourge of Gender-Based Violence, the media needs to go beyond reporting stories from the courts or when a woman has been raped or murdered but show creativity and urgency and, report the scourge even where no high profile case has been reported at the police stations. Further, the media needs to take it upon themselves to make follow ups on pronouncements made by actors like the government to fight Gender-Based Violence. During the course of this study, various commitments were made by the government[185] and the ruling party, the ANC[186] but there has been little to no attempt by journalists to follow up, either to check whether those commitments had come to fruition or to show the degree to which commitments are being implemented.



# MEDIA PERFORMANCE



Over a hundred media were monitored for this project. In most cases, media outlets publish similar content between their online platforms and print or broadcast outlets. The tool scraped content from all the media in the database. The findings of the top 10 best performing media are in the graph below.



**Figure 3: Top 10 media with most coverage on Gender-Based Violence**



As can be seen, News24 and IOL are the top performing media when it comes to reporting on Gender-Based Violence in South Africa at 13% and 12% respectively. The reason the two are at the top could be because they are the biggest news websites in the country. News24 ranks first on the list followed by BusinessTech and IOL.[187] Both News24 and IOL host coverage from other media outlets that fall under the same umbrella company, Media24 and Independent Media respectively and this could have contributed to the two media ranking first and second in this study.

With a coverage of four percent, SABC Online News was the only online media outlet linked to broadcast in the top 10.

The absence of the biggest business news website, BusinessTech from the list indicates that coverage of Gender-Based Violence is rarely regarded as a business issue despite its negative impact on business productivity and reputation. The Stanford Social Innovation Review found that 56% of their survey respondents refused to use Uber services as a result of allegations of sexual harassment by senior staff and drivers.[188] According to the same study, “in Papua New Guinea, where gender-based violence is widespread, estimated that staff members lose an average of 11 workdays per year as a result of gender-based violence: two to presenteeism, five to absenteeism, and four to assisting other survivors of violence. Reduced staff time alone costs companies between three percent and nine percent of payroll. In the United States, women who have suffered from intimate partner violence work 10 percent fewer workdays per year than women who have not been subject to violence.” All this demonstrates that Gender-Based Violence is indeed a business issue and business news outlets should start reporting on it more often.



# MEDIA AND TOP FIVE TOPICS



Top 5 Topics	Media with most stories	%
Gender based violence	News24	13%
Justice system - Court rulings, constitutional issues, legislation, bills, amendments, judicial system	News24	15%
Crime	IOL	15%
Child Abuse	News24	33%
Demonstration and protest: Items about marches, protests and demonstrations highlighting issues around femicide and/or gender based violence	Daily sun	15%

**Figure 4: Which media reported most on the top five topics**

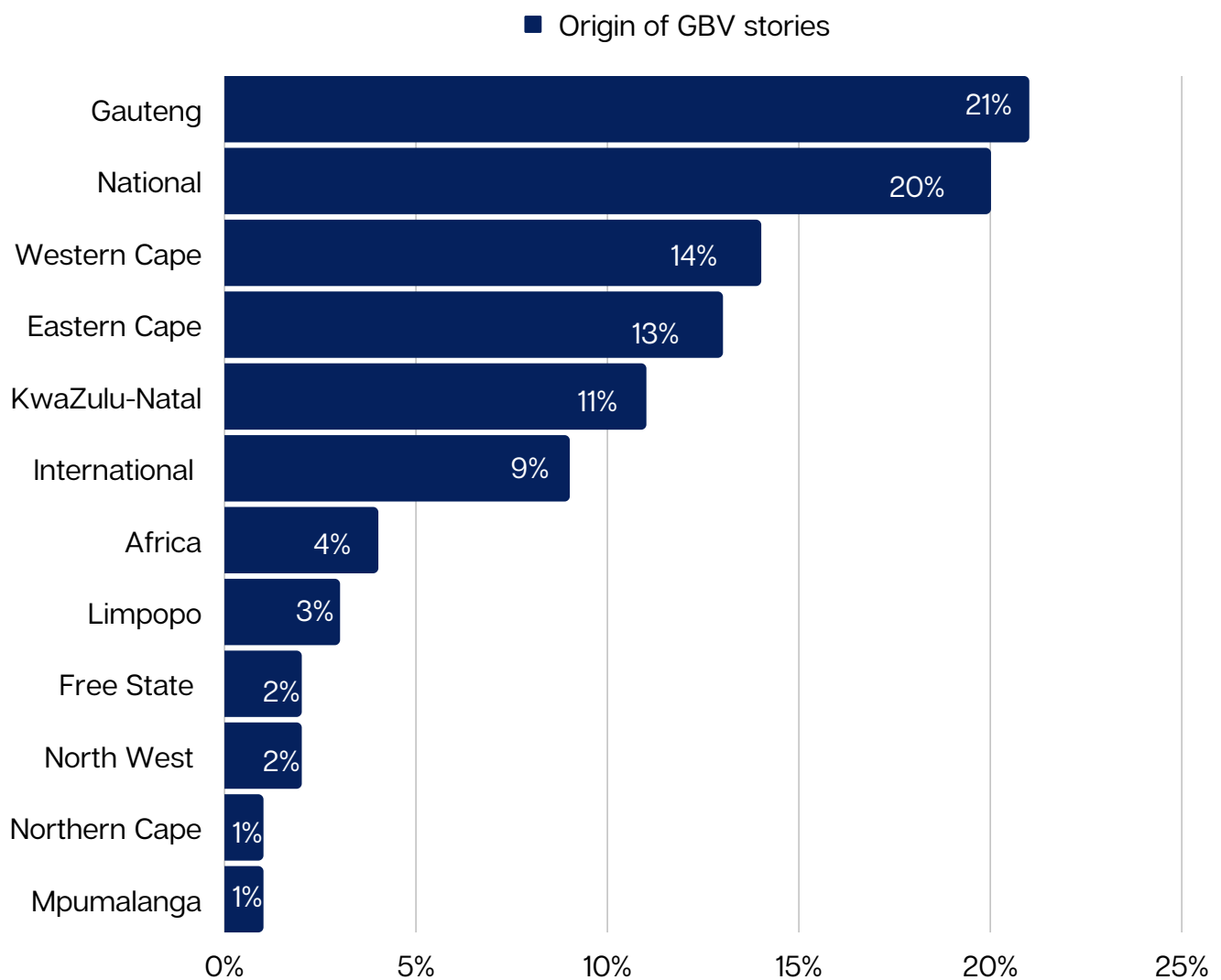
The table above shows which media performed better in terms of coverage of the top five topics. The calculations were arrived at by calculating the percentage of the number of stories reported by that media from the total number of stories (473) that were sampled for this monitoring exercise. As can be seen, News24 was the best performing media not on one topic but on three, Gender-Based Violence, Justice System and Child Abuse at 13%, 15% and 33% respectively. When it came to reporting Crime as a topic under Gender-Based Violence, IOL performed better than all the other media monitored. Daily Sun was the top performing media when it came to reporting Demonstrations and Protests at 15%.



# ORIGIN



The origin of stories on Gender-Based Violence was monitored to determine the areas given priority and otherwise by the media. Factors contributing or that could have contributed to certain provinces receiving the share of coverage they received are analysed below.



**Figure 5: Origin of stories on Gender-Based Violence**



In 2019, the SAPS reported that Gender-Based Violence offences were perpetrated against over 45 000 women and over 8 000 children in Gauteng alone.[189] In the section above discussing findings on topics, it has been shown that the media report stories relating to the justice system and crime related stories when an attack has been perpetrated against a woman or child. Much of this coverage, especially on crime is heightened by the release of crime statistics by the SAPS. The 2019 statistics showed that women and children in Gauteng bore the brunt of Gender-Based Violence, much more than women and children in other provinces. This data above showing that Gauteng received the most coverage should then not come as a surprise as it has already been established that most of the media coverage on Gender-Based Violence is event-based.

The other reason for the large share of coverage enjoyed by Gauteng and Western Cape could be that the biggest media (News24 and IOL) as shown in the section above discussing media performance are based in the metropolitan areas like Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. This could also be the reason why Western Cape received a coverage share of 14%.

Stories placed under the origin code, National, were those stories that reported on national efforts to fight Gender-Based Violence, affected more than two provinces or simply discussed Gender-Based Violence as a national issue.

Interestingly, the above graph shows that international stories constituted nine percent of the media coverage. This is slightly higher coverage share than some South African provinces and potentially shows that during the period of study, South African media were also interested in reporting stories, events and/or debates and discussions from regions beyond Africa. Some of the International stories that were part of this coverage were stories on Harvey Weinstein[190] and Bill Cosby[191] both who had been accused and convicted of sexual crimes.

It is concerning that stories from five South African provinces accounted for 9% of total coverage combined. These included Limpopo (3%), Free State (2%), North West (2%), Northern Cape (1%) and Mpumalanga (1%) which were the least reported on provinces. Statistics show that North West, Mpumalanga and Free State are second, third and fourth on the list of provinces with the highest number of women who have experienced sexual and physical abuse at totals of 29.4%, 26.4% and 21.4% respectively.[192] This then means that Gender-Based Violence in these three provinces was severely underreported. For a country that deems Gender-Based Violence as a pandemic, a national problem, the media sure is failing to reflect this in their coverage. The danger with underreporting Gender-Based Violence in more than half of the country's provinces is that the plight of women and children in those provinces will continue to be ignored as there will be little to no redress for them. Media houses need to ensure that equitable, nuanced and adequate coverage is afforded to all parts of South Africa to address Gender-Based Violence and safety concerns for all women and children as a matter of national priority.

# SOURCES

## WHOSE VOICE DO WE HEAR SPEAKING IN COVERAGE?

Media Monitoring Africa monitored the affiliation of sources which in other words is the category of sources on the basis of which sector of society they are associated with. We needed to understand which sources were speaking in coverage of Gender-Based Violence and what entities they were aligned to. This would ultimately determine which groups of people dominated coverage of the scourge and how each group is represented. A source in this study was any person who was directly quoted, pictured or mentioned in a story about Gender-Based Violence. The total number of sources in the 473 sample collected for this monitoring exercise was 4, 574. The percentages shown below were calculated from those 4, 574 sources and figure six shows the percentage of sources who were quoted while figure seven shows the top 10 sources.

### Sources quoted versus those not quoted

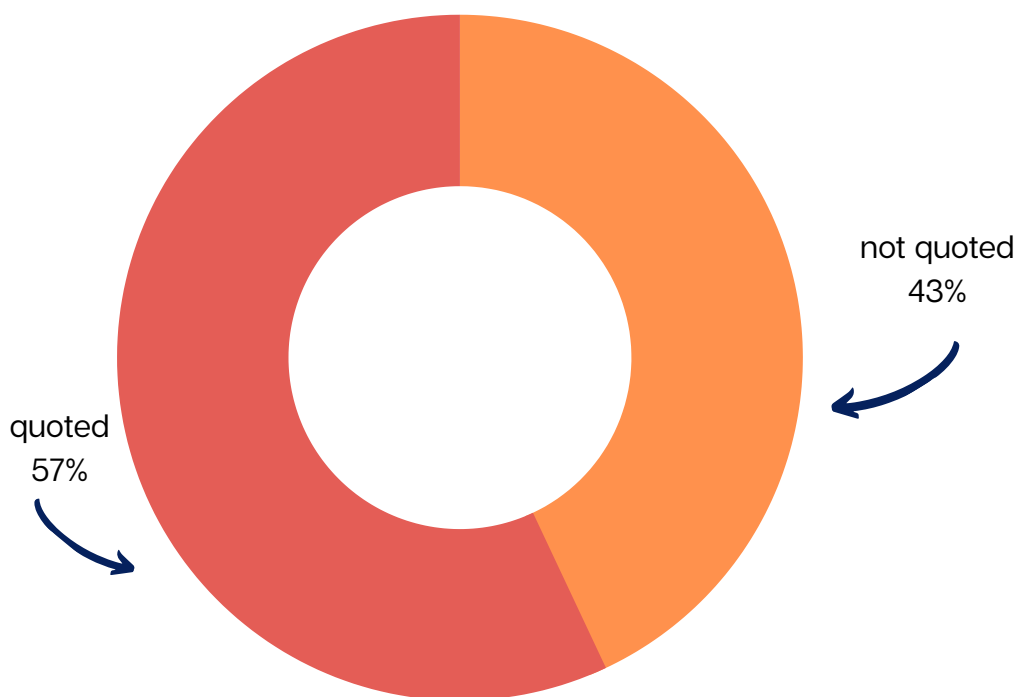
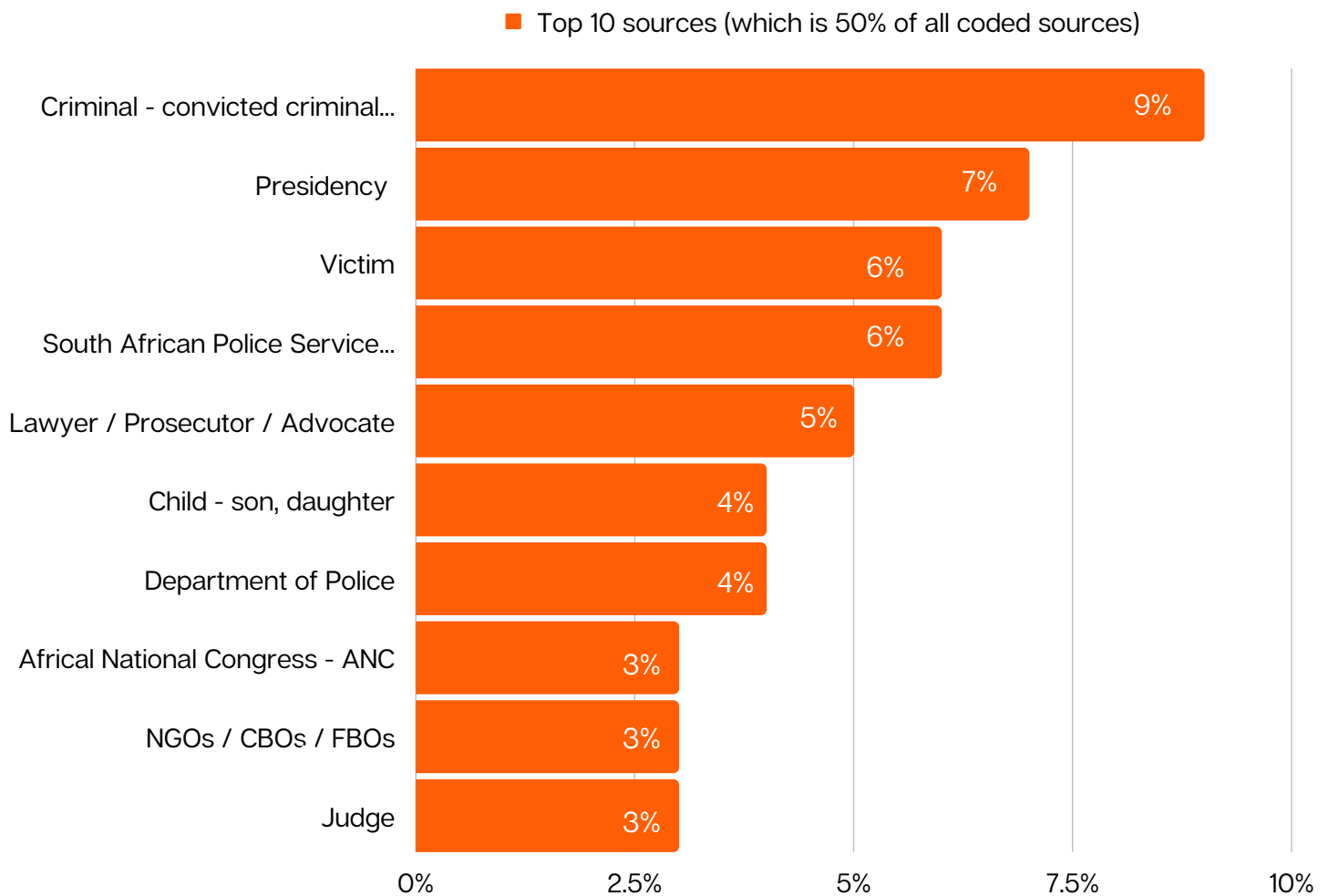


Figure 6: Sources quoted versus those not quoted in coverage of Gender-Based Violence



**Figure 7: Top 10 sources**

According to the data presented above, coverage of Gender-Based Violence had more suspected or convicted criminals as sources at nine percent. This finding speaks to the data presented above in the section discussing topics where the justice system was the second most reported topic. This is the reason why SAPS and Lawyer/Prosecutor/Advocate received significant attention making up six and five percent of sources respectively. This finding can be supported by the percentage for the affiliation, judge which recorded a representation share of three percent. The majority of stories with the affiliation, criminal, rarely quoted the suspected or convicted criminals but merely mentioned them.

The Presidency got a share of seven percent and this was mostly because of either visiting the families of victims of Gender-based Violence, speaking generally about Gender-Based Violence or making commitments and plans to fight the scourge. Both presidents, Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa are represented in this voice share as the period of study also included Jacob Zuma's tenure.



# PORTRAYAL OF SOURCES

In monitoring for portrayal, MMA looked at aspects such as whether the sources were identified and whether the women and children were portrayed as victims or survivors of abuse. This was important to look at as it helped to determine whether the women and children were protected where they should have been in coverage of Gender-Based Violence.

How all sources were portrayed in GBV Stories

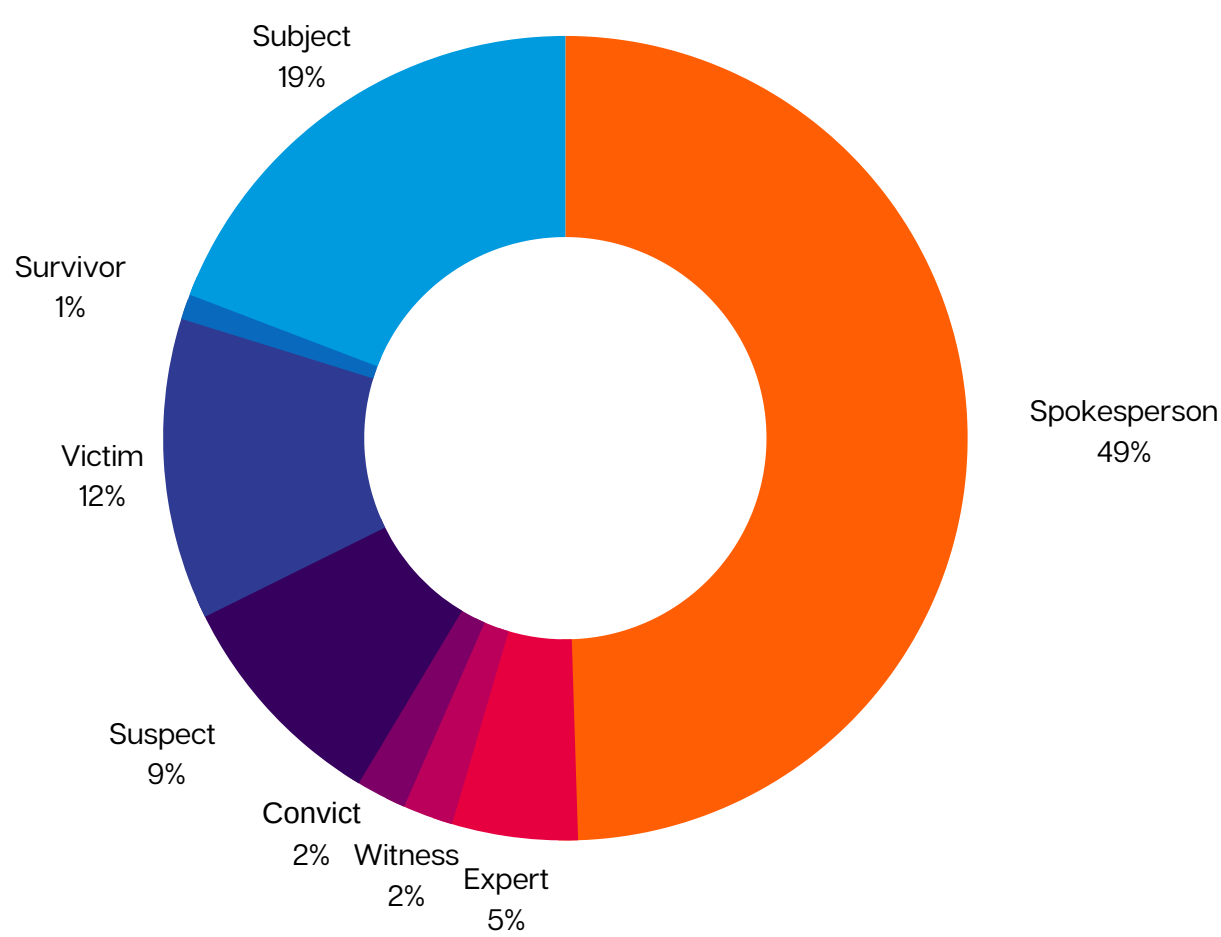


Figure 8: Portrayal of sources in coverage of Gender-Based Violence





The graph above shows that the majority of sources in Gender-Based Violence coverage were spokespeople at 49%. These were mostly sources speaking on behalf of victims/survivors and their families, suspects or government departments. The role, survivor only received a mere one percent share. The fact that the media rarely portrayed the sources in the stories as survivors is concerning especially that this has an impact on how women and children raped or physically assaulted etc view themselves. Examples of stories that portrayed sources as survivors are stories, for instance, where Cheryl Zondi featured. Cheryl, because of how she carried herself as a witness during the trial of Omotoso, was celebrated as a hero and as a “strong”[193] woman and this was reflected in media coverage.


The role of victim received a share of 12%. The media are urged to ensure that the sources in their stories are portrayed more in empowering roles like survivor and less in disempowering roles like victims. Twelve percent as victims means that there was a big group of people who might have potentially felt victimised in coverage.

The role, subject, commanded the second biggest share of portrayal. Stories that had sources coded as subjects were mostly those that focused on sources that were deceased. An example of this story is one that gave significant attention to the rape and murder of Sinxolo Mafevuka in Khayelitsha.[194] Notably, not all stories that had deceased sources were coded with the role, subject. Some of these stories would report on a deceased source, for example, and go on to portray the source as a victim up until her death. One such story that portrayed a deceased source as a victim is the one that reported on Annelene Pillay, a woman who was shot five times by her boyfriend in KZN.[195] The story predominantly focused on details that showed her as a victim such as how she had been involved in an abusive relationship with her boyfriend of 10 years and how she could not leave him and felt threatened by him.

Sources who were portrayed as experts constituted five percent. In most media monitoring activities conducted by MMA, the role of expert hardly ever makes the top 10 list of sources. A recent example is the study on how the media reported on Covid-19 in 2020. In the monitoring period, June to July, no medical experts, scientists, academicians or other experts were part of the top 10 list of sources.[196] MMA urges the media to strive to include expert views to coverage of Gender-Based Violence as they might help the public understand and tackle the scourge.



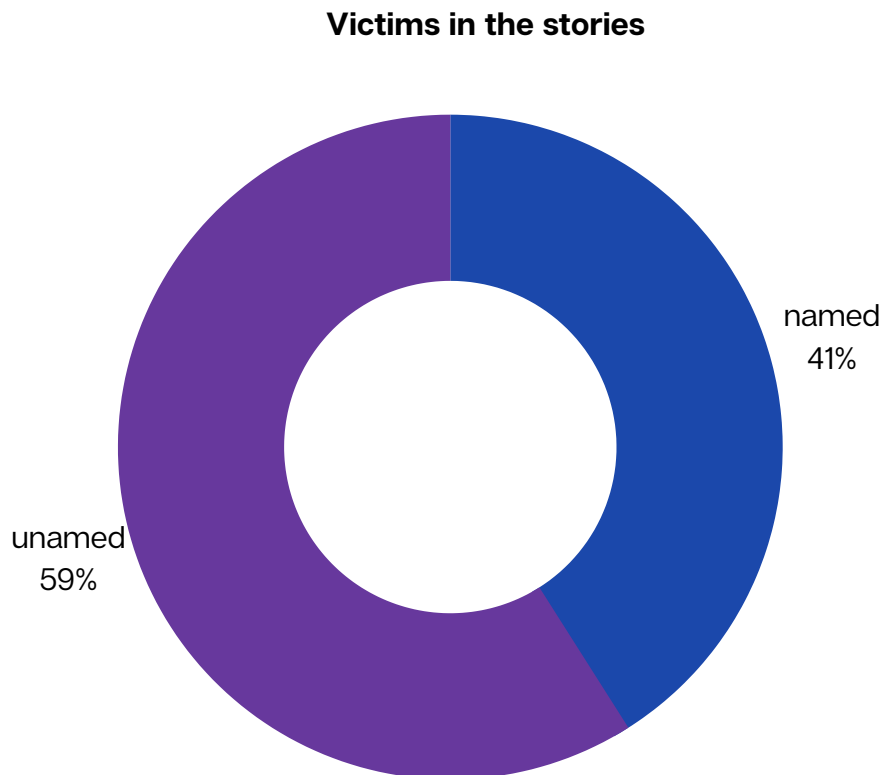
It is interesting to note that there was a nine percentage share allocated to the role, suspect and only two percent for the role, convict. This suggests that there were more stories with suspects than of convicts despite the fact that there were many stories about the justice system with expectation of some sort of balance between suspects and convicts. This means that either media were more interested in suspects than convicts or that there were few cases of convictions. The latter seems plausible as much of the coverage of Gender-Based Violence was, as has already been mentioned, event based. The low conviction rates of sexual crimes in South Africa could have also contributed to the low percentage for the role, convict. A report titled, "Rape Justice In South Africa: A Retrospective Study Of The Investigation, Prosecution And Adjudication Of Reported Rape Cases From 2012, (RAPSSA report)"[197] gives details about attrition in rape cases. The report defines attrition as "the filtering process by which cases drop out of the criminal justice system". The fact that only four to eight percent of reported cases on rape end in convictions[198] could have also contributed to the low figure for the role of convict.



**victims**



## WERE VICTIMS IDENTIFIED?

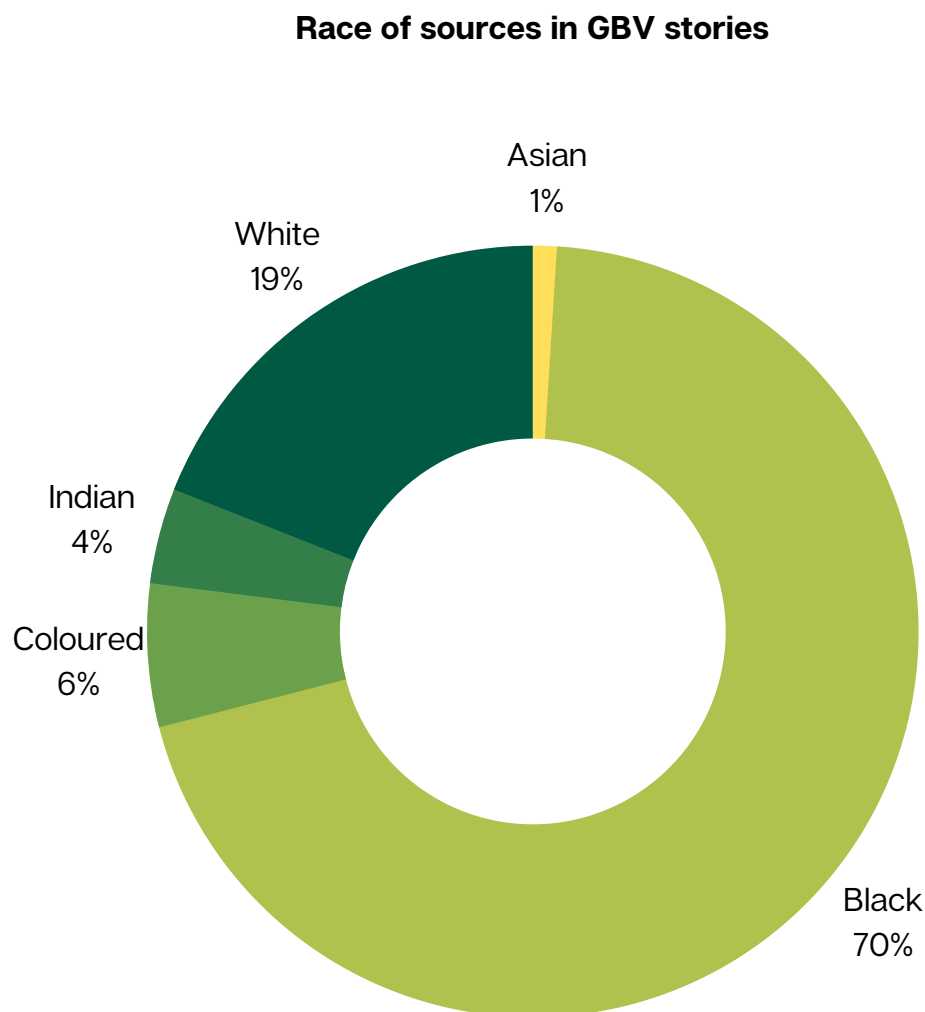


**Figure 9: Percentage of victims identified in coverage of Gender-Based Violence**

The figure above shows that 59% of the sources portrayed as victims in media coverage of Gender-Based Violence were directly identified by their names. While the reason for naming victims could be that some of them were deceased and so were not at risk of further harm, journalists must refrain from identifying victims that are still alive. The Press Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media advises the media to refrain from identifying women who have suffered rape. Section 3.4 asks the media to “not identify rape survivors, survivors of sexual violence which includes sexual intimidation and harassment\* or disclose the HIV / AIDS status of people without their consent and, in the case of children, from their legal guardian or a similarly responsible adult as well as from the child (taking into consideration the evolving capacity of the child), and a public interest is evident, and it is in the best interests of the child.”[199]

Equally, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) ensures this protection in Section 11.7 which states, “The identity of rape victims and other victims of sexual violence must not be divulged in any broadcast, whether as part of news or not, without the prior valid consent of the victim concerned.”[200]

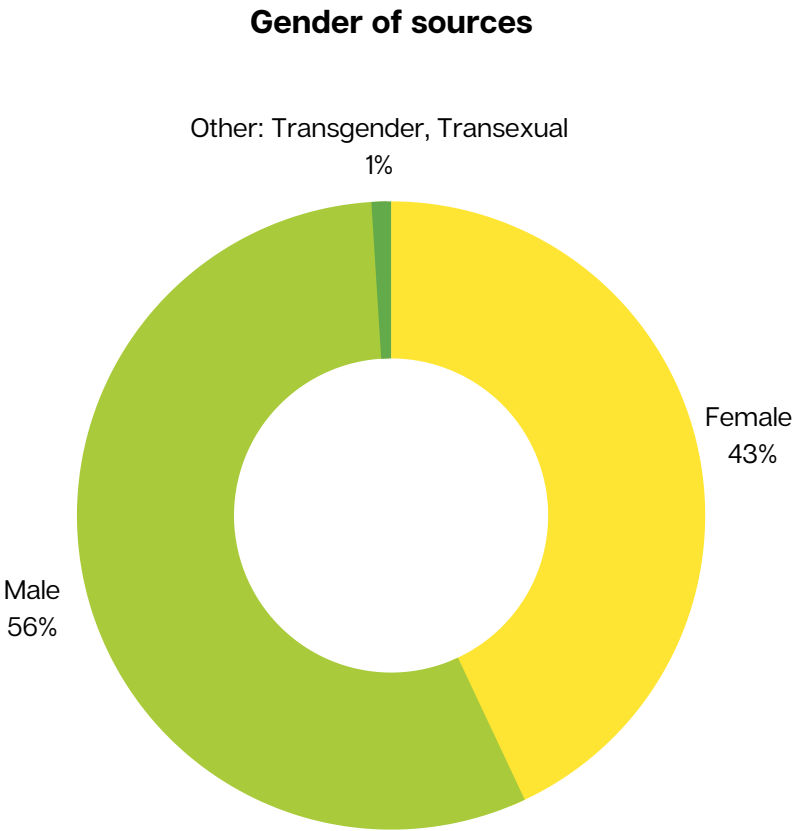
Identifying rape victims or victims of other forms of Gender-Based Violence could potentially lead to their secondary victimisation or secondary trauma by seeing the stories with their names in the media.



**Figure 10: Race of sources in coverage of Gender-Based Violence**

The race of the sources in coverage of Gender-Based Violence was monitored to determine whether there was an equitable share of representation for the different races. The sources monitored were all those speaking, just mentioned or referenced to as well as the subjects of the stories.

The figure above shows that most of the sources in the coverage were black people at 70% leaving the remaining 30% share for white, coloured, Indian and Asian sources. The Statistics South Africa's 2021 mid-year population estimates reveal that black people make up 81% of the South African population with white people and Indians at eight percent and three percent respectively. Coloureds make up nine percent of the population according to the statistics and made up six percent of the share of all sources. While the data above might seem disproportionate, when compared to the population figures for the different race groups, no race was overly overrepresented or underrepresented.



**Figure 10: Race of sources in coverage of Gender-Based Violence**

While one would expect that the majority of sources in coverage of Gender-Based Violence would be women, the data presented in the figure above paints a different picture. The data reveals that there were more men speaking in this coverage at 56% than women at 43%. Notably and concerning is the fact that sources identifying as trans-gender, trans-sexual etc were only represented in coverage of Gender-Based Violence at one percent. For a country that boasts progressive laws not only on the African continent but in the world with relation to LGBTQIA+ community members, the percentage is worrying. Further, for a country that has significant data on the abuse of LGBTQIA+ members, the media are doing little to nothing to highlight this in the coverage especially when reporting about Gender-Based Violence. In June, 2020, the National Task Team on the Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons heard that there were 42 hate crimes perpetrated against the LGBTQIA+ community and that all these were pending. The Task Team also heard that 30 cases were for murder and 12 were for rape and, that 29 of these cases had been reported from 2020 to June, 2021.[201]

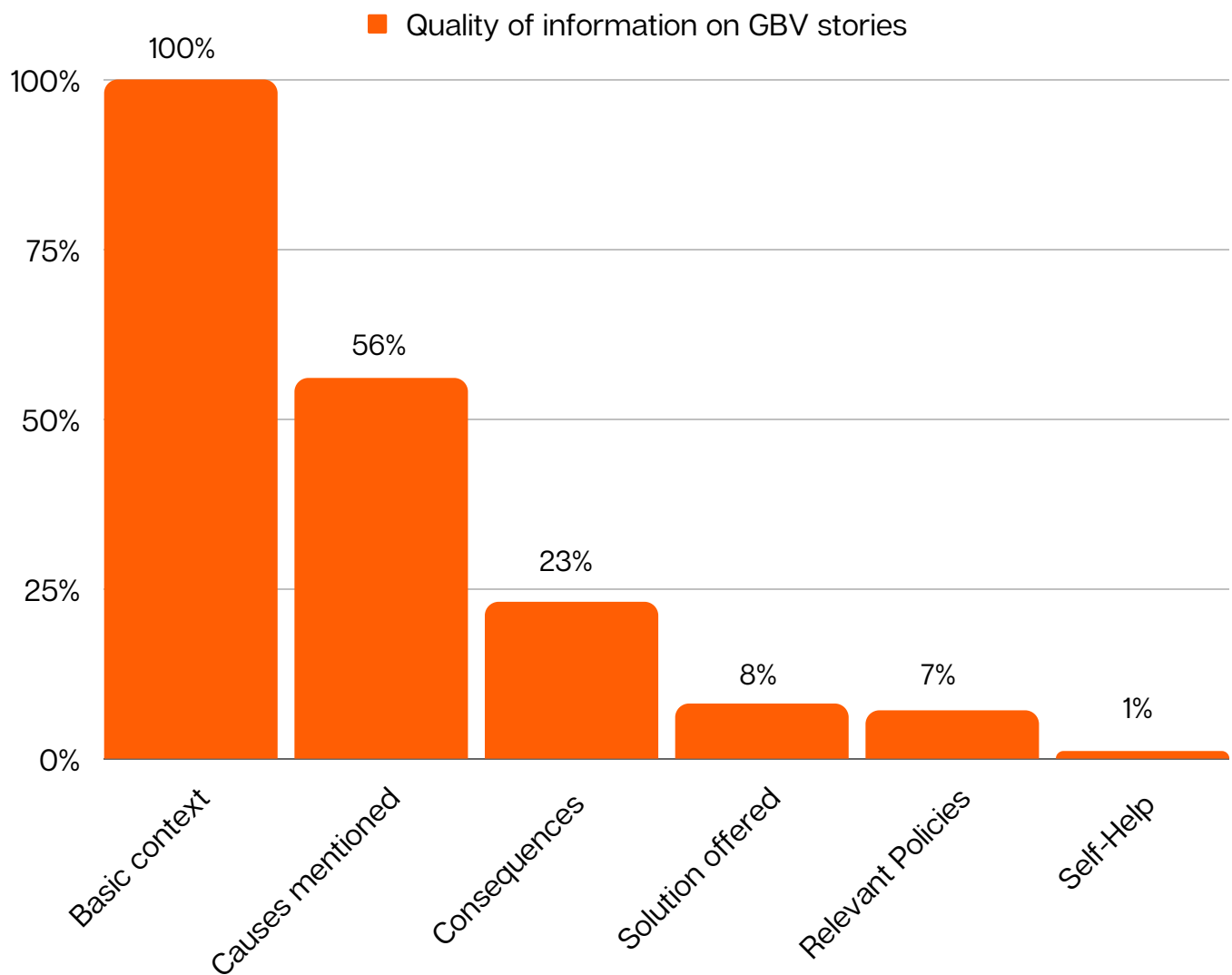
Further, that more men are represented compared to women is worrying as this shows that women are again being treated as citizens with no voice, even for an issue that mostly affects them. The media needs to stop perpetrating the notion that women cannot speak in coverage of issues of national importance. MMA has found this to be case in a lot of media monitoring activities conducted where the percentage of women speaking in coverage is less than that of men speaking.[202][203]



# QUALITY OF INFORMATION



To determine whether the quality of information in monitored news items on Gender-based Violence was sufficient, MMA looked at aspects such as whether coverage explained causes, offered solutions, discussed relevant policies and offered self help etc.



**Figure 12: Quality of information in coverage of Gender-Based Violence**



As expected, all the monitored news items on Gender-Based Violence provided basic context. This means that the information in the news items was enough for audiences to get an idea of what was being reported on. While this is commendable, reporting of an important issue like Gender-Based Violence must go beyond just providing basic context. For an example, reporting must mention the causes, explain consequences and offer solutions. Fifty six percent of stories mentioned causes, 23% explained consequences and only eight percent offered solutions.

Over the years, commitments to fighting Gender-Based Violence have been made by the president and political parties. While a lot has been talked about, only a few of these have actually been realised.[i] The media then has a duty to not only follow up on the creation of such policies but also on the implementation of the few created policies. Maybe when the media does this, the seven percent recorded for relevant policies would go up.

In addition, the fact that South Africa is battling with women and children being raped and killed should make the media include self-help information to articles on Gender-Based Violence. Crime statistics reveal that a woman is killed every three hours in South Africa.[ii] This data, and more, shows that South Africa is in crisis and as such fighting Gender-Based Violence should be a concerted effort from many different stakeholders, the media must do their part and help provide self-help information for their audiences. This could entail adding information about where women and children can go or who they can call for help or, adding information about what women and children can do to keep safe. It is sad and concerning to see that only one percent of the coverage on Gender-Based Violence provided self-help.

An example of good reporting of Gender-Based Violence is one done by Nonsikeleko Ncube who wrote an analysis for Business Day on the way Peter Daubermann, Timothy Omotoso's lawyer questioned the witness, Cheryl Zondi. The journalist discussed how that questioning exposed the "horror of testifying about rape" in South Africa.[iii] The journalist discussed the consequences of Daubermann's action stating that it undermined the great strides made in fighting Gender-Based Violence and especially the discrimination of people who had experienced violence, people who were already suffering "stigma and further traumatising in our judicial system and society at large". The journalist also explained the causes or what could have potentially caused Daubermann to question the witness in that manner, calling it a "microcosm of the larger flaws in the SA judicial system". Issues such as the questions police officers ask the victims when they go to report cases of Gender-Based Violence were presented in the story. Here, the journalist offered possible solutions as well as discussed Gender-Based Violence policies that the government were yet to implement to improve the handling of victims when they report cases to law enforcement officers. The story was well researched and went beyond providing basic context by going in-depth on an issue dubbed South Africa's other pandemic.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



As can be seen, reporting on Gender-Based Violence by South African media remains a challenge especially with getting it right in relation to quantity and indeed, quality of coverage. This report has presented findings on how the coverage of the scourge over a five year monitoring period, despite having increased, is still below par with regards to the quality of information in the coverage and the portrayal of sources. It has been revealed that women are less represented as sources in this coverage despite being the most affected by Gender Based Violence.

This analysis has also revealed that most of the coverage is done during court proceedings or when the police have made arrests. This means that the reporting is event-based and this is seen even where the media reports about a woman or child who has been raped, physically assaulted or murdered.

Another important area where the media is lagging behind is on the portrayal of women and children in the stories on Gender-Based Violence. Having only one percent of stories portraying women and children as survivors has to stop as this is disempowering and has an impact of how the women and children involved in the stories view themselves. The media need to improve the portrayal and show the women and children who have experienced Gender-Based Violence as survivors and less as victims.

The media needs to greatly improve the quality of information in the reporting and here, factors such as causes, consequences, solutions and especially relevant legislation and self help information should be included to news items and regarded as standard practice when reporting Gender-Based Violence.

Lastly, we call on the media to diversify the coverage of topics under Gender-Based Violence and the representation of different provinces. More topics should be reported and these should all receive an equitable share of coverage. This means that the media should find more ways of reporting the scourge and to creatively source for stories instead of waiting for court cases.

Regarding provinces, the media should strive to ensure that all the women and children feel fairly represented in media coverage of an issue affecting all of them, irrespective of which province they come from.



To conclude, we would like to remind the media about some of the commitments they made to gender-sensitive reporting in 2020 in the Step It Up for Gender Equality project which Media Monitoring Africa was a part of.

**I/we commit to consciously using language that is gender aware and sensitive and does not reinforce gender stereotypes.**

**I/we commit to making a conscious effort to elevating the voices of women experts and commentators where they are currently underrepresented on such as politics, economics, religion, traditional affairs and sports.**

**I/we commit to educating the public on their rights and responsibilities with regards to gender discrimination and violence in accordance with the South African Constitution.**

**I/we commit to increasing the number of stories covering the crisis of gender-based violence in South Africa.**

**I/we commit to reporting on gender-based violence holistically, including coverage of the structural drivers and root causes of the problem in South Africa.**

**I/we commit to providing information on where and how to access response services for survivors of gender-based violence, especially after every story covering the topic.**

**I/we commit to ensuring that our stories in no way make survivors vulnerable to secondary victimization and victim blaming.**

**I/we commit to develop new or review existing editorial policies and reporting guidelines to ensure and promote gender sensitive reporting according to the commitments above**

## **RESOURCES WITH GUIDELINES ON MEDIA REPORTING ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:**

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/how-media-should-report-on-gender-violence/>

<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5c3701d27.pdf>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7556255/>

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/01/gender-based-violence-reported-media/>

<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/12401/file/Guidelines%20for%20Media%20Professionals.pdf>

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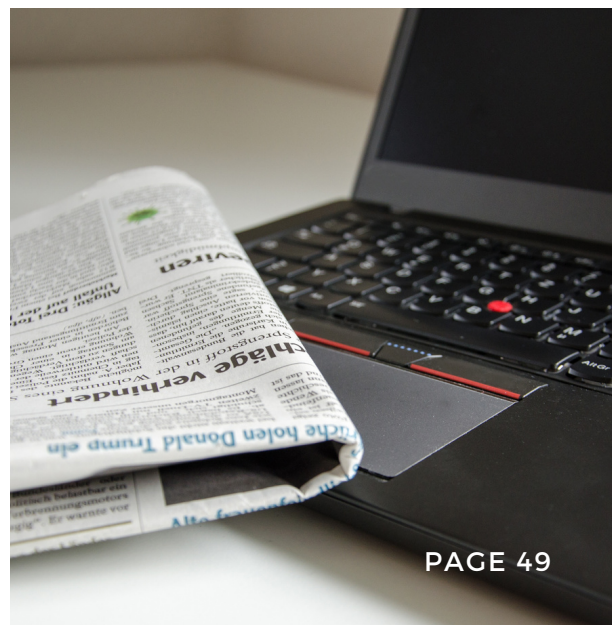
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