

# **APDUSA VIEWS**

**Issue: No. 56**                      **December 2001**

# **SAVE THE CHILDREN OF OUR NATION!!**

**APDUSA VIEWS**  
**P.O.BOX 8888**  
**CUMBERWOOD**  
**3235**

**e-mail:**

**Malentro@sai.co.za**

## INTRODUCTION.

The media has been full of lurid stories of rape taking place on an epidemic scale in South Africa. It has been estimated that a female member of our society gets raped every 26 seconds.<sup>1</sup> This is a terrible indictment of our country, more so of the government and the leading organs of our civil society.

### **IS LAWLESSNESS INEVITABLE IN A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD?**

South Africa is not unique in this regard. There are many other countries where there has been a breakdown of the old society and the new society where its training and controlling mechanisms have not yet been established and functioning. The old values have been discarded, but the new ones have not yet come into place nor established and to fill the vacuum. In the transitional period, the sanctions for anti-social behaviour are not as yet properly enforceable. In this period there is an increase in lawlessness – theft, robbery, murder, rape etc. As stated above, the phenomenon of lawlessness is common in most transitional societies.

Lest there be an inclination to justify lawlessness and exonerate the government of the day, **we hasten to add that lawlessness is not inevitable in all transitional societies.**

There are glowing examples of a marked decrease in lawlessness during a transitional period. As a result of successful revolutions in China, Vietnam, Cuba, Eritrea, Ethiopia (under Zenawi Meles), the post revolutionary period saw a significant drop in crime and anti-social behaviour. This was as a

---

<sup>1</sup> The frequency of this ugly crime was made the butt of a tasteless joke by the Minister of Justice when he, on a visit to the centre of Johannesburg, accompanied by his little army of bodyguards, stood for a few seconds and then remarked: "See, I have been here for 26 seconds and I have not seen anybody being raped." N.B. Nobody has claimed that there is a rape every 26 seconds in every square metre of this country.

direct result of high revolutionary quality of the victorious parties leading the struggle. It was the high degree of political consciousness and discipline inculcated into the masses, the imbueing of revolutionary ideals in the leadership of honesty, respectful and courteous behaviour towards the people and an orientation of service.

It also means that where the transitional period is plagued by crime and lawlessness, this reflects poorly on the organisation in power. It means that it has no influence on matters of importance to any significant degree on the population. It also means that it does not constitute itself a role model to the population.

### **FAILURE OF THE A.N.C. TO LEAD THE COUNTRY.**

The African National Congress has failed pathetically to give a proper lead to the oppressed people in this country. In fact, the disgraceful conduct of many of its leading members and the slow dragging of feet in dealing with such conduct has greatly intensified and increased corruption and dishonesty in this country.

We reiterate that lawlessness during a transitional period is not something peculiar to South Africa. But what is unique is the extreme cruelty shown towards the children, especially the very young. We know of no other country at any time where such type of violence was perpetrated against the children. Zapiro, the leading cartoonist in South Africa, depicted the plight of the young by showing a postnatal ward of babies being guarded by a uniformed person against would-be rapists.

The ravishment of children is taking place, not because of any streak of sexual insanity or depravity of a special type in the perpetrators, but because of the failure of the government to deal with and manage in a sane and adequate manner the calamity which is sweeping the country, namely the AIDS PANDEMIC. **Prior to the advent of the AIDS pandemic, there was hardly any, if at all, rape of babies in this country. It only began when Aids began biting hard.** Those infected with HIV/Aids have nowhere to go for help and counselling. It is in times like these, a time of

extreme poverty, ignorance and utter desperation that people begin to clutch at straws. They are vulnerable and prone to accepting any suggestion that offers a way out. It is in this atmosphere that the infected person falls prey to the fake-healers, to rumour and to anybody who claims to have a way out of the death-trap.

The solutions came fast and furious. Certain traditional healers claimed that they had a traditional cure for Aids. People came in droves only to find in the end that the payment made was for a false hope. At the very best, the traditional healers with a conscience were able to make the last days of the dying person comfortable. Quacks and misleaders in the medical (modern and traditional) must be removed from society for lengthy periods of time. It is these people who are also responsible, directly or indirectly, for the violation of the babies of this nation.

The lion's share of blame for the rash of rapes of children must be laid squarely on the shoulders of the ANC government. There is a direct relationship between the number of rapes of children and the extent and amount of education the people at grass roots receive about HIV/AIDS, its nature, its causes and how to go about preventing the disease, or having contracted the disease how to go about treating it. To that must be added a well managed nation-wide campaign to provide medical treatment for it. The more effective the health education campaign, the less the people will act in desperation. The more available the resources to treat HIV/AIDS to the ordinary people, the less will they be inclined to indulge in the vile practice of raping babies.

Has anybody heard of a rash of rape of babies as a means of cure in Uganda where HIV/AIDS was choking the life out of that country at a certain stage?

## **WHAT MUST THE PEOPLE DO?**

There are many things that the people can do. Creativity in the people is always a cause for inspiration and confidence. Here are a few, by no means original, suggestions:

1. The adults must begin to perform one their most important functions, which is to take care of the young and vulnerable. Many species of the animal kingdom do this. By animals we mean mammals, reptiles, birds etc. If creatures, which are placed in the lower rungs of intelligence can do it, why can't the human species?
2. Those of us who watch the National Geographic Animal Series on television marvel at the sacrifice which the parents of young animals make for the protection and well being of the latter. A mother of leopard cubs will go for many days without food so that she can be near her young in their first few weeks of birth.
3. The adult human population must learn from the other members of the animal kingdom on how to take care of their young in certain respects.
4. Instead of sitting glued watching "soapies" or so-called reality television during the day or having parties during the day, the adults must be out in the streets as SHEPHERDS AND SHEPHERDESSES for the young. In view of the deadly danger lurking out in the streets, no child should be allowed out unattended.
5. The community should also consider setting up a roster of persons to be on duty in the streets so as to make it possible for all adults to share in the responsibility of caring for the children. In this regard we can learn something from wolves that have a strong social culture. Observers have noted how adult wolves relieve a tired and harassed mother wolf from the duty of tending to her over-active cubs. These adults are often not the fathers of the cubs. The community must build a social relationship where all adults, apart from parents or grandparents, are regarded as uncles or aunts. This is how the joint family system works. The traditional tribal system elevated that relationship so that a child considered more than one person as father or mother. This was how the children were reared in the Communes established in China in the 1950s and 1960s.

6. The more shepherds are on duty the less the likelihood of an adult having the opportunity of abusing a child.

7. Parents and concerned persons should mobilise the people by means of mass rallies, demonstrations, marches etc. **The government must be given no respite.** Pressure must be relentless. We will be fully justified in doing this because it is the function of the government to mobilise the country's resources for the benefit of the citizens of this country. And if it does not perform its duty, all legitimate pressure must be applied.

8. Communities must reach across and join hands with organizations like Treatment Action Campaign<sup>2</sup>. Full support must be given to such organizations, provided the support is a conscious and principled one.

9. Since a large number of abuses are committed by members of the victim's family or by persons known to the victim's family, the parents and members of the family, **especially female members**, have to be vigilant at all times. No child should be left unattended for more than a minute or so. Family members have to be vigilant continuously and to constantly look for the tell-tale signs of rape on children who have not as yet learnt to communicate through the spoken word.

10. Street or block committees should be set up. They must take charge of the area under their jurisdiction. The would-be perpetrators must know without mistake that there are members of the community who are on "guard" duty. They must also know that a very unpleasant experience awaits them if they are found doing anything unlawful to the children.

11, **Privacy** is a much sought-after right and people will fight tooth and nail for that right.

---

---

2

The Treatment Action Campaign, also known as TAC, is the most active Non Government Organisation working on HIV/AIDS. On Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2001, TAC won a landmark judgement in the High Court compelling the government to supply to all expectant mothers who are HIV positive with the drug called NEVIRAPINE.

But privacy is two edged. Just as it allows the occupants of a house to conduct their activities away from prying eyes, it also gives the perpetrators protection to commit their vile deed away from public eye. For the sake of the safety of the children, responsible members of the community must be permitted “invade” the privacy of a home by entering it and giving it a quick visual check especially if the mother or a female surrogate is absent.

**For the sake of the safety of our children, a little privacy has to be sacrificed!**

**Conclusion:** People must learn to take active steps to defend themselves and their children. Nothing can be more harmful to children who grow up in an environment of extreme fear and physical abuse. What is the point of organising the International Children’s Day where Cabinet Ministers come and say all the right things and then do practically nothing about the plight of the children? What is the point of attending these celebrations, singing appropriate songs, getting children to perform exquisite dances and then have them return to their terror-filled environments?

16<sup>th</sup> December 2001