



## **EFF STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATING FIGURES OF STATUTORY RAPE**

Thursday, 08 August 2024.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are outraged by the escalating crisis of girl children falling pregnant by adult men across South Africa. More than 2,700 girls aged between 10 and 14 gave birth at public healthcare facilities during the 2023/24 financial year.

The highest numbers are in KwaZulu-Natal with 610 cases, followed by Gauteng with 430, the Eastern Cape with 395, and Limpopo with 375. This is a clear indication of a society plagued by predators who exploit children, many of whom are forced into these dire situations by the crippling effects of poverty.

In the same period, almost 120,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 gave birth in the same public healthcare facilities. Once again, KwaZulu-Natal led other provinces with 30,478 pregnancies, followed by Gauteng with 19,406, Limpopo with 16,262, and the Eastern Cape with 15,827. The statistics are a damning indictment of the ANC government's failure to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

Parents or carers of these children do not lay criminal charges of statutory rape often because of financial compensation from the child rapists. This leaves girl children unprotected by their family and with no agency to protect themselves.

However, what is even more enraging is that it is within the government's power to intervene by investigating and prosecuting for statutory rape. There are four government departments who are first responders to this horror of child pregnancy - Basic Education, Social Development, Health and South African Police Service (SAPS). Legislation empowers government departments to act on these child rapists regardless of whether their victims lay charges or not.

In the glaring absence of caregivers protecting and accessing justice for their children from rapists, it is the government responsibility to step up. However, the government does not, making them responsible for violating children's Bill of Rights.

Not only is this government responsible for violating children rights to justice and protection, it goes as far as proudly reporting this treachery as if it is powerless with no recourse. This display of hatred for children by the government fuels child rapists to continue with impunity.

Statutory rape cases, generally do not require complex investigation and prosecution. The DNA of the baby (born or unborn) scientifically proves who the child rapist is.



Furthermore, the EFF has relentlessly demanded the establishment of specialised courts to handle these cases with urgency and severity. We have additionally called for increased number of social workers in schools and clinics to create sanctuaries for young girls and women, spaces where they can find protection and support.

The EFF will, through its GBV desk lay charges against all government departments that have participated in preparing official statistics reports on child pregnancy, yet failed to lay charges of statutory rape. It will not be on our watch that the Government will report on the number of statutory rape cases without ensuring justice for the child victims.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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