

Hate Crimes Working Group urges Minister of Justice to submit Hate Crimes Bill to Cabinet

Cape Town, 21 February 2018: Despite ongoing racist assaults, crimes against the LGBTQ community, waves of xenophobic attacks, and anti-religious violence, the Department of Justice is still to submit the Hate Crimes Bill to cabinet so it can begin the law-making process. It has been over a year since the public last saw the Bill, which was sent out for public comment in November 2016.

The Hates Crimes Working Group (HCWG) teamed up with AllOut, and have today delivered a petition of 21 519 signatures to the Department, calling for the Bill to be moved forward.

In its recently-launched research report, the HCWG documented 945 cases highlighting the serious nature of hate crime and the significant impact it has on victims, families, and the broader community. The report provides recommendations for monitoring, preventing and responding to hate crime in our country, including legislation. At the time the study was being conducted, investigations on only 62 cases had been completed and there had been only 16 convictions which included hate motives.

Sanja Bornman, attorney at Lawyers for Human Rights and chairperson of the HCWG steering committee, said, "Based on the severity of the psychological and emotional impact of hate crime, far beyond the individual victim, we simply cannot wait any longer. The HCWG, and the thousands of people who signed this petition, urge Minister Masutha to submit the Hate Crimes Bill to cabinet, so the law-making process can start."

Matt Beard, Executive Director of AllOut, said, "There is a still a long way to go before it becomes law, but the fact that it will be submitted to Parliament is an important step in the fight against hate crimes against LGBTQ people and other vulnerable groups in South Africa."

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