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Diocese of Grahamstown
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CONFIDENTIAL

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STATEMENT ON STUDENT DEATHS AT FORT HARE UNIVERSITY

We, the Bishop in Chapter of the Diocese of Grahamstown met and issued the following statement:

The whole family of the people of God under our charge in this Diocese have received with greatest consternation and shock the unbelievable and sad news of the gruesome killing of a Female Final Year Law Student allegedly by her live – in partner at the university of Fort Hare - as it came to the fore on Friday last week - in East London.

The world -wide Anglican Church Communion community of which the Anglican Church in Southern Africa[ACSA] - and consequently our diocese is an integral part – has long taken a stand and made our position public through serial resolutions culminating in the establishment of the Safe and Inclusive Church Commission as regards its abhorrence of the scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide [GBVF].

We therefore condemn in the strongest possible terms all acts of violence and including the taking of human life; particularly cowardly acts perpetrated against women. Such conduct flies in the face even of our cultural norms which dictate that men be protectors of women and girl children.

This incident was closely followed on its heels by yet another of also a Final Year Law Male Student this time - who is reported to have mysteriously plunged to his death from a fall from the 12th floor of a student residence building in the CBD, on Saturday afternoon - again in East London.

DRAFT STATEMENT ON STUDENT DEATHS AT FORT HARE UNIVERSITY

Each one of these incidents is a case of a loss of life one too many. Just as the entire community of Buffalo City Metro and the rest of the Province of the Eastern Cape is reeling under the numbing shock of such a callous and inhuman act, we are left speechless at the unprecedented senselessness and insensitivity of this murderous act.

The extent of emotional harm and hurt occasioned the family of this young woman whose life has been snuffed out at its prime is just beyond imagination. Our most profound condolences to the family of Nosicelo Mtebeni, who we learn hailed from Matatiele in the Alfred Nzo District. The manner of her death can never be deserving of any child of God.

We commiserate with her family in their bereavement and frustration at this trying time. And we commend the soul of the faithful departed to the mercy of God to be granted eternal peaceful rest, with light perpetual shining upon her; and may she rise in glory. We pray also for comfort and strength for her family and circle of friends in their distraught. This whole thing is a double tragedy and a twist of the worst irony.

We say so, because this horrendously tragic occurrence happens during the month of August – a month during which in our country we celebrate God’s creation and gift to humankind - our women and girl children, with an emphasis being on restoring their intrinsic value and innate dignity of which they have been stripped off by a demonic force that has attained to pandemic proportions in our land; namely, GBVF – against which we also fervently pray for its total eradication from the midst of our society!

Yet, year after year it is during the same month that not only do acts of GBVF escalate; but also, simultaneously, the most drastic and horrendous incidents of this demonic manifestation seem to surface.

Also, during the same month, we the community of believers dedicate as a Month of Compassion – with compassion understood *‘as being close to the one who suffers’*, preferring to say; *“you are my sister, I will not leave you alone and I will hold on to you for as long and as well as I can. In spite of there being so much grief in our lives, but what a blessing it is when we do not have to live our grief and pain*

alone. That is the gift of compassion! ” - rather reciprocating the favour of that gift we received from God with the gift of compassion.

Where then is compassion when we kill our loved ones?

We join all sane, sober - minded and people of compassion in condemning, roundly and squarely such dastardly acts of cowardice; as well as also real men in saying; **“No to GBVF, Not no in our Name!”** We uphold God’s Law as to the sanctity of life, and the Commandment; **‘Thou shall not kill!’**; as well as the Constitutional imperative of the **Right To Life For All** – with women being no exception! We therefore join the clamour of voices that say; **“No to Violence, Abuse and Killing of women!”** We abhor such acts and decry same with disdain.

For these and many other reasons, as the people of God in the Diocese of Grahamstown we fully support and in solidarity with the aggrieved enjoin our priests, members of guilds and all worshippers to come out and join the prayer meeting and march in protest against this unheard- of calamity; that adds to the stain blighting our democracy.

We uphold to the grace of God the families connected to the perpetrators; regard being had of the sense of shame such acts bring upon them. As well as that, may the transforming power of the Holy Spirit impact perpetrators and including all those with a predisposition to committing such transgressions; for them to desist therefrom!

In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who heals all diseases and has power and authority over demons and forces of darkness; we command such influences out from the midst of God’s people! We commend to the Almighty all who at this time are in mourning, that they may be comforted.

Our trust is in the Lord , and we have a confident hope that by the power of our God of Infinite Goodness, Him that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, even this shall pass.!

To God then be the Glory, the Power, the Splendour and Majesty forever and ever! **AMEN!**

Grace and Peace