

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SISONKE NATIONAL MOVEMENT**

17 October 2025

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR NO BAIL IN THE CASE OF
THE ARRESTED EASTERN CAPE EDUCATOR**

The Sisonke National Movement shares in the public outrage following the arrest of an Eastern Cape educator on allegations of human trafficking and involvement in prostitution. The Movement stands firm in our demand for justice for the women allegedly held by this woman.

We reiterate to the communities and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development that these horrific acts are not caused by sex work, but by the continued criminalization of sex work in South Africa.

“For decades Sisonke has been warning that the criminalisation of sex work drives the trade underground, leaving sex workers and young vulnerable people exposed to manipulation, violence, and exploitation. Under criminalisation, genuine victims of trafficking are silenced by fear of arrest and shame, while traffickers and corrupt individuals exploit the system’s blind spots. Every delay in decriminalizing sex work creates more space for vultures to prey on the poor, on women, and on young people,” Kholi Buthelezi, Sisonke National Movement Director.

The Sisonke National Movement calls on the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to prioritise the decriminalisation of sex work. The department has for years acknowledged the need for reform, yet the process remains stalled. This inaction directly endangers lives.

Decriminalisation is not about promoting sex work. It is about protecting human rights, ensuring safety and allowing the law to clearly distinguish between consensual adult sex work and heinous crimes such as trafficking and child exploitation.

We remind the Department that justice delayed is justice denied. South Africa cannot continue to speak of protecting women and youth while maintaining laws that actively endanger them.

The Sisonke National Movement calls for:

- 1) The immediate prioritisation and passage of legislation to decriminalise sex work.
- 2) The protection and support of victims and witnesses involved in this and similar cases.
- 3) A national rights-based reform, not moral panic or repression.

Until sex work is decriminalised, South Africa will continue to see cases such as this one, where criminal elements exploit a broken system, and vulnerable young people are left without protection.”

Issued by:

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For media inquiries: Yonela Siqu | communication@sonke.org.za | +27660666441