



GAUTENG
LEGISLATURE

Your View — Our Vision



CELEBRATING
30
YEARS OF
DEMOCRACY

**MEDIA
STATEMENT**


TO: ALL MEDIA
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 6 NOVEMBER 2024

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE PREMIER'S OFFICE AND
THE LEGISLATURE, NTOMBI MEKGWE, CALLS FOR STRICTER LEGISLATION TO
COMBAT THE PREVALENCE OF FOOD POISONING AND PROTECT CHILDREN'S LIVES**

On Saturday, 2 November 2024, South Africa commemorated International Children's Day with a special event hosted by the Gauteng Department for Social Development in Reiger Park. This celebration aimed to highlight the importance of children's rights, education, and welfare. Yet, while we sought to honor the joy and innocence of our children, we were reminded of a stark reality—many were still mourning the recent tragic loss of 6-year-old Amantle Samane, whose life was brutally cut short after enduring unspeakable harm.

Tragically, another young life was lost on 3 November 2024, as we learned of the passing of 10-year-old Lesedi Maaboi from Alexandra due to suspected food poisoning. Her mother and 4-year-old brother were also hospitalized in critical condition due to the same incident. This latest loss adds to a growing list of children across the country who have suffered from food poisoning, often linked to unsafe goods sold by unregulated spaza shops, some of which are operated by individuals who do not comply with legal regulations.

As Chairperson of the Oversight Committee on the Premier's Office and the Legislature (OCPOL), in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature, I, Ntombi Mekgwe, stand resolutely in calling for stricter legislation and more rigorous enforcement to address this urgent



issue. We cannot continue to witness our children suffer and die from preventable causes such as food poisoning. Stronger legal measures must be enacted to regulate food sales, especially by vendors operating unlawfully, and to hold accountable those endangering the lives of our youth.

In the words of our late President Nelson Mandela, “Children are our greatest treasure.” We are compelled by the spirit of the UN Declaration of Children’s Rights and South Africa’s Children’s Act 38 of 2005 to protect children from harm and neglect. These principles must guide us in pursuing tougher legislation to safeguard our children’s health and safety.

We recognize the efforts currently in place to support children’s welfare, including the National Child Protection Register, Child Support Grant, Isibindi Program, School Nutrition Program, and the vital work of Childline South Africa. But we must do more to protect our treasures. Our law enforcement agencies must take decisive action to enforce regulations and protect future generations from preventable tragedies.

We commend the swift response of the police in apprehending the suspect in Amantle Samane’s case and applaud the community for their cooperation with authorities in bringing about justice. As we strive to protect our children, it is this spirit of unity and collaboration that will help create safer communities.

We urge all leaders, community members, and stakeholders to work together to end the heartbreaking pattern of children’s deaths due to preventable causes. Let us renew our commitment to safeguard the joy, innocence, and lives of our youngest citizens.

**ISSUED BY GPL’S COMMUNICATION UNIT ON BEHALF OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE
COMMITTEE, HONOURABLE LENTHENG MEKGWE**

For interview requests with the Chairperson of the Committee please contact: Mr Sechaba Simelane on 0634068872 email: SSimelane@gpl.gov.za



GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
