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FROM TREATY TO ACTION:

SRJC CONVENES GROUNDBREAKING DIALOGUE ON AFRICA'S FIRST VAWG CONVENTION

In the picture above: Participants from different organisations at the AU CEVAWG Convening,



*Left: Connie Mathe SRJC Board Chair & Asijiki National Coordinator
Right: Jess Rucell SRJC Board Secretary*



SRJC Staff Members



Participants during group discussions

In a powerful gathering hosted at SECTION27 in Johannesburg, SRJC—alongside ISLA and SANAC—convened a national information session on the landmark AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG). Adopted in February 2025, this historic instrument is the first continental treaty dedicated solely to ending violence against women and girls.

The dialogue brought together feminist organisations, legal experts, government partners, and community advocates to interrogate what this new convention means for South Africa's fight to end violence—across law, health, SRHR, HIV prevention, disability rights, and broader human rights. Participants engaged deeply with the treaty's strengths, gaps, and implications for national and regional efforts to protect women and girls.

This convening also amplified the #PauseforPurpose campaign—a call to all stakeholders to pause, reflect, and critically analyse the Convention before pursuing ratification. The campaign emphasizes that, instead of rushing toward symbolic ratification, Africa must invest in collective reflection, rigorous analysis, broad consultation, and accountability.

#PauseforPurpose urges civil society organisations, governments, activists, development partners, and human rights defenders to examine whether the Convention is truly fit for purpose and capable of delivering on its core goal: ending all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls. It calls for a Convention informed by the lived experiences of African women and girls—one that provides an enabling, effective, and rights-based normative framework that has the power to transform lives.

RECLAIMING SPACE, REBUILDING POWER:

SRJC COORDINATOR SHAPES FEMINIST AGENDA IN NAIROBI



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Working together for reproductive justice

#AFRICAFORWD2026



Group photo of all participants at the Nairobi convening.

SRJC Coordinator Beau-Lee Petersen represented the coalition at the pivotal African Regional Convening in Nairobi, hosted by Sonke Gender Justice—a landmark gathering ahead of the Women Deliver 2026 global conference. This convening created an essential moment for African feminist leaders, youth advocates, and movement-builders to come together under the shared mission of “Reclaiming Space, Rebuilding Power.”

From youth-led advocacy dialogues to action-planning workshops, the convening brought together bold voices shaping the future of SRHR, gender justice, and bodily autonomy across the continent. Partners and Emerging Leaders Program members led powerful sessions, shared country-specific insights, and co-created regional pathways through the Feminist Playbook consultations, ensuring that African priorities guide the road to #WD2026.

Africa is home to the world’s youngest population—yet too many young people, especially adolescent girls, LGBTQIA+ communities, and those in rural or crisis-affected areas, remain excluded from decision-making spaces. The convening directly confronted the structural barriers impacting the rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, including:

- Increasing threats to SRHR
- Global funding cuts
- Shrinking civic space
- Rising anti-rights movements

This gathering united a powerful cross-section of feminist, grassroots, and youth-led movements to confront these intersecting crises while building a unified African feminist position ahead of Women Deliver 2026. It served as a strategic engine for transforming progressive policies into tangible action, strengthening regional solidarity, and ensuring that African realities and leadership remain central in global gender-justice platforms.



Sara Stalon (Fos Feminista) & Beau-lee Petersen(SRJC)

BEFORE PARLIAMENT:

SRJC CALLS FOR A COMPASSIONATE APPROACH TO ADOLESCENT SRHR



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REFRAMING MANDATORY REPORTING TO PROTECT — NOT PUNISH — ADOLESCENTS

This quarter, SRJC Coordinator Beau-Lee Petersen presented powerful submissions to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, drawing on the critical expertise of SRJC members Professor Catriona Macleod and Sister Judy Ranape. The submissions centred on the harmful unintended consequences of mandatory reporting laws, which can deter adolescents from seeking essential SRHR services like contraception and abortion by forcing providers to report them to police.

While reaffirming our unwavering commitment to ending sexual violence, SRJC's call was clear: South Africa must move from a system of criminalisation to one of compassion. We advocated for a person-centred, trauma-informed approach that protects adolescents and prioritises their health and dignity. Key recommendations included aligning policies across government departments, integrating the Sexual Offences Act into Comprehensive Sexuality Education, and making social workers—not police—the first point of contact to ensure holistic care and support.



IN SOLIDARITY WE FUND:

SRJC BACKS GLOBAL CALL FOR INCLUSIVE HIV FINANCING

SRJC has proudly signed an open letter to the UK Prime Minister, coordinated by Future Advocacy, urging the UK government to provide inclusive and adequate funding for the global HIV/AIDS response ahead of the pivotal Global Fund replenishment. The letter calls on the UK, as a co-host of the replenishment conference alongside South Africa, to demonstrate bold leadership and fill the gaps left by other donors, ensuring lifesaving services reach all communities, including the LGBTQ+ community who continue to face discriminatory barriers to care. This action underscores our commitment to global solidarity and equitable health for all.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Elliot Bongani Mabasa - Programmes Officer SRJC

NEW ERA, NEW ENERGY: MEET OUR NEW PROGRAMMES OFFICER!

Say Hello to Elliot!

We're thrilled to introduce **Elliot Bongani Mabasa**, the newest member of the SRJC team. Elliot brings a powerful blend of lived experience, passion, and commitment to intersectional feminist and social justice work. With a background rooted in community organising, movement-building, and advocacy for queer and trans rights, Elliot joins us with a clear vision for strengthening our programmes and deepening our impact.

We're really looking forward to the work ahead and excited for the influence Elliot will have in shaping our collective feminist future.

RESEARCH IN ACTION: HOSTING THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK FOR A GROUNDBREAKING SRHR STUDY

SRJC was proud to host researchers from the University of York, supporting a vital project on "Youth-Led Co-Research and Gender-Transformative Sport-Based Approaches to Address SRHR, GBV, and Intimate Partner Violence." Focused in Heinz Park on the Cape Flats, the initiative uses sport as a trusted entry point to engage youth and address the root causes of violence. This work will generate crucial community-driven evidence to shape future interventions and lay the foundation for a scalable model that strengthens and empowers young people across the Western Cape.



Elliot Mabasa & Sampras Kaweesi (SRJC) with University of York researchers



Bottom Photos: Local youth and soccer players from Heinz Park engaging with the SRJC and University of York research initiative

YOUTH POWER AT SRJC:

THE FUTURE IS HERE, MEET THE YOUNG VOICES



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This quarter marked an exciting milestone for SRJC as we officially launched the SRJC Youth Cluster – a space created by young people, for young people across our coalition. With over 20 members already, the cluster brings together dynamic youth leaders who are already doing powerful work in their communities, united by a commitment to feminist organising, SRHR advocacy, and movement-building.

The Youth Cluster will serve as a space for connection, shared learning, and collective action, ensuring that young people shape SRJC's work and drive the change they want to see. This is only the beginning, and we are deeply inspired by the energy, leadership, and vision our youth members bring into the movement.

Interested in joining the Youth Cluster? Contact: Elliot Mabasa @ projectofficer@srjc.org.za

YOUTH CLUSTER MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: REABETSWE BUILDING HOPE & OPPORTUNITY IN THE FREE STATE

Now, we shine a light on the powerful work of Reabetswe Catherine Matobako, founder of the Reabetswe Youth Training Centre (RYTC) and one of the Youth Cluster's most inspiring members. Founded in 2001 when Reabetswe was just 14, RYTC has since become a cornerstone of youth development and community support in Thabong, Welkom. The organisation runs feeding schemes, after-school programmes, sports initiatives, counselling for rape survivors, HIV testing and condom distribution, as well as human rights advocacy – all grounded in the real needs of young people and women in the community.



RYTC weekly feeding scheme session in Thabong.



Reabetswe M. (Crouching) with participants of the RYTC Netball Programme

RYTC is equally committed to nurturing young storytellers, having supported the publication of multiple books by emerging authors since 2001, including Reabetswe's own work. Her dedication reflects the very essence of youth-led, community-rooted activism that the Youth Cluster seeks to strengthen. We are honoured to have Reabetswe's leadership and vision in the network and look forward to spotlighting more transformative work from Youth Cluster members in the coming editions.

BUILDING A MOVEMENT:

OJC CONVENING, LED BY EMBRACE



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Attendees of the Obstetric Justice coalition Workshop at Bertha House.

The Obstetric Justice Coalition (OJC), led by the Embrace Movement for Mothers, convened at Bertha House to formalise its shared vision into a united strategy to end obstetric violence and advance respectful maternity care. The gathering deepened collective purpose through a visual timeline of the coalition's journey, collaborative reflection on core values, and focused planning sessions that shaped its advocacy direction for the coming year. Anchored by upcoming milestones such as the national obstetric violence prevalence study, the convening laid essential groundwork for a coordinated, enduring movement for dignity and justice in childbirth.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL SOLIDARITY:

SRJC CONNECTS WITH SAASA LEADERSHIP IN LESOTHO



Beau-Lee and Elliot with Refiloe Harris (Middle)

Recently, SRJC's Coordinator and Programmes Officer, travelled to Lesotho and met with Refiloe Harris, Chairperson of the Safe Abortion Alliance of Southern Africa (SAASA) and a key member of SheHive's GBV prevention work. Their time together offered an enriching moment of connection and shared learning, with Refiloe providing valuable insight into community-based GBV and SRHR advocacy. The visit strengthened cross-border feminist solidarity, and SRJC looks forward to deepening collaboration with SAASA members in Lesotho as we continue building a unified, intersectional movement for reproductive justice in the region.

IN SOLIDARITY WE RESIST:

SRJC AMPLIFIES REGIONAL ABORTION RIGHTS VOICES

In commemoration of International Safe Abortion Day, SRJC joined the Safe Abortion Alliance of Southern Africa (SAASA) and Gender Links for a powerful regional webinar under the theme "In Solidarity We Resist: Our Fight, Our Right." The webinar reinforced the urgent need for coordinated advocacy across SADC member states. Amplifying this call to action, SRJC proudly launched our "Voices for Choice" storytelling podcast, a platform centring the experiences of abortion providers and advocates to dismantle stigma and fight for reproductive autonomy.



AN HONOURED MEMBER: MBOLATIANA RAVELOARIMISA KNIGHTED BY FRANCE

Congratulations Mbolatiana Raveloarimisa!

The SRJC extends our warmest congratulations to our member, **Mboaltiana Ravelorisma**, who was on Friday, 14 November awarded the distinguished title of Chevalier dans l'Ordre national du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit) by the French Republic. This honour recognises her tireless and impactful work in advancing human rights in Madagascar. In her words, this medal "reminds us that the fight is long, but we are making progress and our efforts are having a visible impact." We are inspired by her dedication and proud to stand in solidarity with her.



Mbolatiana Raveloarimisa - SRJC Member Knighted by France

JUSTICE WITHOUT BORDERS: HONOURING CARRIE SHELVER'S ACT OF SOLIDARITY



The six South African activists from the Global Sumud Flotilla upon arrival in Jordan - Welcomed by South African Ambassador Tselane Mokuena

In early October, the world witnessed the illegal detention of our member, **Carrie Shelver**, and five fellow South African activists – including the likes of Mandla Mandela—by Israeli authorities. They were aboard a humanitarian flotilla to Gaza, challenging the unlawful siege, when intercepted in international waters. SRJC condemns this act, which violates international law and the principles of humanitarian aid. We reflect on this event with a clear stance: solidarity is not a crime. We honour Carrie and her comrades for their immense bravery. Their action, in the pursuit of justice, is a powerful reminder that the fight for bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom is inextricably linked to the global struggle for political liberation and human dignity.

A CRITICAL VOICE:

SRJC REFLECTS ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE



The National Dialogue



Tshegofatso Malatse - SRJC Programmes Support

Our Programmes Support, on behalf of SRJC attended the convention for the National Dialogue on 15-16 August, an initiative to introduce a framework for national conversation. Our representative, Tshego, provided a sharp analysis: "Although the initiative has positive implications for participatory democracy, without delivery on substantive matters it is simply an insulting imposition." The meta-architecture was heavily criticised for excluding key groups like sex workers and intersex people. This further amplifies the crucial role of civil society in relentlessly advocating for the protection of rights and dignity for all.

INSIDE SRJC: FINDING HOME AND HUB AT BERTHA HOUSE

This quarter, our office at Bertha House was filled with renewed energy as we had the pleasure of hosting our Board of Directors for a pivotal in-person meeting. The boardroom buzzed with thoughtful discussion and strategic alignment – a powerful reminder of the leadership that guides our coalition's work.

Moments like these, where staff and board come together, strengthen the core of our movement. And being housed at Bertha House makes this work even more meaningful. More than an office, it is a home for activists and organisers, a space that nurtures collaboration, imagination, and feminist resistance. We are grateful to be rooted in a place that so deeply aligns with our mission.



Left - Right: Connie (Chair), Rosie (Board Member), Anjuli (Board Member), Lynette (Board Member)

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

SWEAT Secures National Moratorium— A Landmark Victory Ahead of Amicus Hearings



Sweat, Partner Orgs, Sex workers and allies demonstrating solidarity outside the Western Cape High Court in support of the case

Throughout this busy quarter, our partner SWEAT secured a historic victory in the relentless fight for decriminalisation: a national moratorium on the prosecution of sex workers, announced by the National Director of Public Prosecutions on 26 August. This monumental step, achieved just days before critical Amicus Curiae hearings, signals a crucial shift in recognising the harm of criminalisation and the dignity of sex workers.

The SRJC stood in solidarity during the 1-2 September hearings, where the court considered who could join the main constitutional case as friends of the court. This moratorium is a direct result of decades of advocacy and strengthens the foundation for the main event: the full Constitutional Court case challenging the laws criminalising sex work, which is set for 10-20 May 2026. While we celebrate this progress, our collective resolve is stronger than ever. The fight is not over, but this quarter proved that justice is within reach.

WHAT'S COMING UP?:

FEMINIST FRIDAYS RETURNS WITH A NEW FEEL



Feminist Fridays – our monthly space that brings activists together to reflect on feminist politics and sexual and reproductive justice strategies; is getting a fresh new shape. We're shifting from individual spotlights to theme-based panel conversations, creating room for richer dialogue and a wider range of voices whose work connects to each month's focus. As part of strengthening solidarity and widening access to SRHR, we are also looking at building deeper relationships with partners doing powerful work – including creators and organisations supporting people seeking abortion care across South Africa. More details are coming soon as we shape a Feminist Fridays series that reflects the energy, urgency, and creativity of our movement. Stay Tuned!

🎄 A NOTE OF GRATITUDE & SEASON'S GREETINGS

As the year comes to a close, we wish you a restful, joyful, and safe festive season. May your holidays be filled with warmth, care, and community. At SRJC we would like to also extend our deepest heartfelt gratitude to all our members, partners, allies, and friends who continue to strengthen this movement with their brilliance, courage, and commitment. From all of us at SRJC – Merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a powerful start to the new year. We look forward to continuing this work together in 2026.



See You in 2026!

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