



For Immediate Release, 12 August 2021

Eradicate Harmful Cultural and Religious Practices that Perpetuate Child Marriage

Murewa – Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT) is deeply alarmed by the alleged reports of a 14 year old, Memory Machaya, who reportedly passed away in Bocha, Mutare, at an apostolic church shrine while giving birth.

We strongly condemn the systemic violence and abuse that children experience daily in our inequitable society due to harmful cultural, religious norms and practices.

As an investigation relating to the death of the teenager is being carried out by the Zimbabwe Republic Police, we note with concern, the need to strengthen child protection measures in Zimbabwe and ensure impartial justice for perpetrators of violence against girls and women. Rozaria Memorial Trust therefore makes the following call to action:

1. Call for the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against girls and women, especially child marriage without exception of culture or religion.
2. Call on the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) to engage traditional and religious leaders in order to end violence perpetrated against girls and women including the practice of Gender Based Violence.
3. Call for the alignment of laws regarding age of consent, including the advancement of the Marriage Bill to be passed into law as it states the age of marriage at 18.
4. Call on Government of Zimbabwe to ensure that access to education and health is compulsory to all regardless of religious or cultural beliefs.
5. Call to Government of Zimbabwe to ensure that all women give birth at health centers and penalties should be given to all those who holds back.

The African Union (AU) Goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriage, Dr. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda said “This child has a name, a family, a community and a government, her death has created outrage. We are angry because it is not a single child, it is thousands of them in the country and millions in Africa who are raped, sexually abused and some die without anyone talking about them”.

Rozaria Memorial Trust is a non-profit organisation, with a mission to create opportunities and unleash the potential of girls and young women living in rural communities through education, health and entrepreneurship.

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