

Help for sexual assault survivors

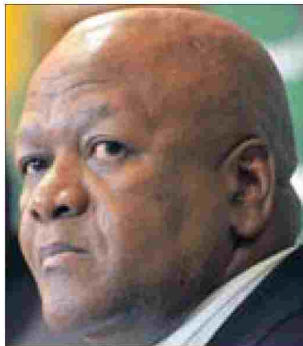
JUSTICE Minister Jeff Radebe launched an increased support services programme for sexual assault survivors in Phoenix, the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) said.

Radebe launched the programme at the Phoenix Thuthuzela Care Centre.

“The programme brings together local and international partners all aimed at addressing the current pandemic of sexual and gender-based violence affecting the country,” said chief executive Gustaaf Wolvaardt said.

Funded by Usaid and the Mac Aids Fund, the programme aims to support the Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit (Soca) of the National Prosecuting Authority.

This was so Soca could achieve its objectives of in-



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creasing public awareness of the Thuthuzela care centres, and improving the centres’ services through education, training, research and infrastructure support.

“The Thuthuzela care centres are one-stop facilities that

are a critical part of South Africa’s anti-rape strategy,” said Wolvaardt.

“They aim to reduce secondary victimisation, improve conviction rates and reduce the cycle time for finalisation of cases.”

He said the care centres operated best in public hospitals close to communities where rape was particularly high.

Usaid and the Mac Aids Fund engaged with the FPD and its civil society partners, the Soul City Institute, Sonke Gender Justice Network and the Medical Research Council.

Radebe said: “In practical terms, the Thuthuzela Care Centre model serves as a powerful tool to convert the constitution into a instrument of law for all victims of sexual and gender-based violence.” – Sapa