

Combating hate crime in SA

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>> A local task team has revealed in-depth research on violence and discrimination

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THE Pietermaritzburg Hate Crime Task Team, an initiative of the Gay and Lesbian Network, recently held a hate-crime research presentation at the Natal Museum to brief interested participants on the plans of the Hate Crime Working Group (HCWG) to conduct research on hate crimes in South Africa.

Hate crimes can be defined as a criminal act motivated by prejudice and hostility against an individual, group or organisation because of their identity.

Using New York-based Human Rights Watch and its research report on violence and discrimination on black lesbians and transgender men,

the HCWG from Johannesburg described their plans to implement similar research in South Africa.

The HCWG is a multidisciplinary workgroup, which was established in 2009, and comprises civil society organisations and other interested parties that play a role in lobbying government to develop interventions that will act against hate crimes in South Africa.

HCWG members are tasked to develop mechanisms to record and monitor levels of suspected hate crime to demonstrate the extent and nature of hate crimes in South Africa.

The team have decided to research hate crimes looking at a sample of 450 participants from five provinces in South Africa, in order to gain a reliable demographic sample.

There are no national mechanisms

for reporting or recording hate crimes in a way that distinguishes them from other crimes, therefore the Hate and Bias Monitoring Form will be used to record whether the crimes that victims report are motivated by prejudice.

Phase one of the research plan, which is the piloting stage, has been completed, and the team is currently entering phase two (validation), which includes conducting the questionnaires.

The research process is ongoing (which starts this month), and organisations serving vulnerable sectors in society are encouraged to participate in the research.

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