



Ekurhuleni Femicide Factsheet

Introduction

A series of deaths involving women in the Ekurhuleni area in Gauteng has raised significant public concern and intensified attention on gender-based violence, femicide and the safety of women.

Reports indicated that the number of women whose deaths are being investigated has reached nine, with the cases occurring over approximately two months in and around [Ekurhuleni](#), east of Johannesburg. The latest and ninth victim was reportedly discovered in the [Dawn Park area](#) of Boksburg, while previous cases were reported in areas including [Kempton Park](#), Olifantsfontein and Kwa-Thema. Police have indicated that similarities between some of the cases are being examined as part of the investigation.

The developments have generated heightened concern among communities, civil-society organisations and members of the public, particularly because several of the victims were young women and some bodies were reportedly found partially clothed or showing signs of possible sexual assault. The South African Police Service (SAPS) has deployed a multidisciplinary team with national resources to handle the investigation and offered a R400,000 reward for helpful information, though official authorities emphasise that it is still too early to confirm whether the deaths are linked to a single perpetrator.

Naturally, these conversations have migrated online with significant presence on X and TikTok in particular as well as Facebook. This factsheet examines the social media narratives surrounding the Ekurhuleni murders and investigation.

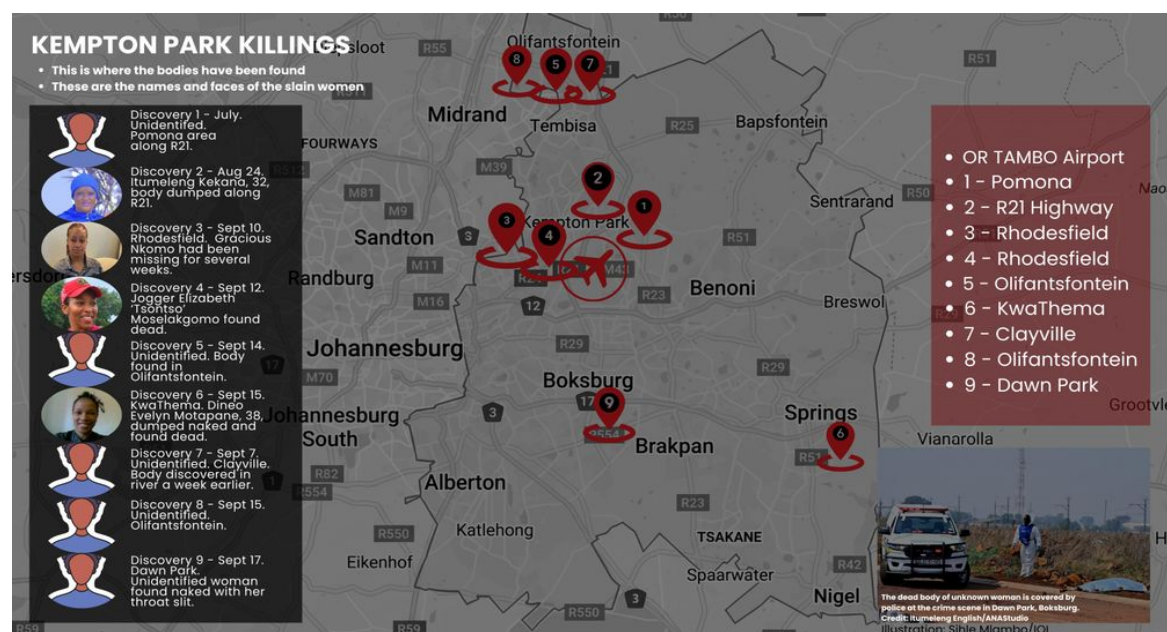


Image: Itumeleng English/ANASStudio. Sihle Mlambo/IOL

Key insights

- The total mentions reached approximately 193 210 between 12 September and 21 September (see Figure 1) with 33 220 unique authors contributing to the conversation. This represents a significant surge reflecting the widespread discussion on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and femicide in South Africa.
- The trending topics under the conversation were (1) [Found in Dawn park](#), (2) [Complete Darkness](#), and (3) [Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi](#). The key narratives under each topic are as follows:

Total mentions	Unique authors	Trending topics	Total estimated reach
193.21 _k ▲1540% Previous period: 11.78k	33.22 _k ▲452% Previous period: 6022	1. found in Dawn Park 2. COMPLETE DARKNESS 3. Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi	501.23 _m ▲1181% Previous period: 39.14m

Figure 1: Key metrics on gender-based violence and social justice

- **Discovery of Ninth Victim:**

On 17 September 2026, reports started circulating that a ninth victim was found semi-naked and wrapped in a sheet in Dawn Park. This resulted in increased speculation that the serial killer is active in the Ekurhuleni area and concerns that the Government is not taking enough action in protecting women and ensuring that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Relatedly, and discussed further below, three suspects were identified and arrested in relation to the murder of the ninth victim.

- **Municipal Government Service Delivery:**

One user posited that they were driving to their hotel located near the airport in Kempton Park after a football match and noted that there was not a single street light nor robot working in the area, and that they encountered complete darkness while driving.

Governance and service delivery has become a major point of discussion and focus in the wake of the murders, with residents of the area noting overgrown grass and non-functioning streetlights rendering these areas hotspots for crime.

- **Provincial Police Commissioner Mkhwanazi Joins Investigation:**

On 20 September, reports started circulating that Lt-Gen Mkhwanazi has been called to assist with the Ekurhuleni murder investigations. General Mkhwanazi has gained significant prominence in recent years due to calling out corruption in law enforcement. His introduction was [well-received](#) but the competence of the Police Commissioner of Gauteng was [questioned](#).

Notwithstanding the Lt-Gen's introduction to the case, concerns about SAPS [competency](#) remains in question with users stating that the police service has been found wanting.

Mention Volume

Figure 2 shows the daily mention volume and the period began with the lowest mention volume on September 13, recording 848 mentions where [news](#) had just started circulating about a potential link between 4 murders. Even at this lower volume, the conversation highlighted the persistent crisis of GBVF in South Africa, with concerns about the sincerity of [public figures](#) addressing the issue, as exemplified by a mention discussing the discovery of nine women's bodies in Kempton Park and the police response.

A notable spike in the conversation (labelled A) occurred on 15 September where #kemptonpark and #GBV started trending. Discussions focused on societal outcry against GBV and Femicide, with calls for male accountability and stronger Government action.

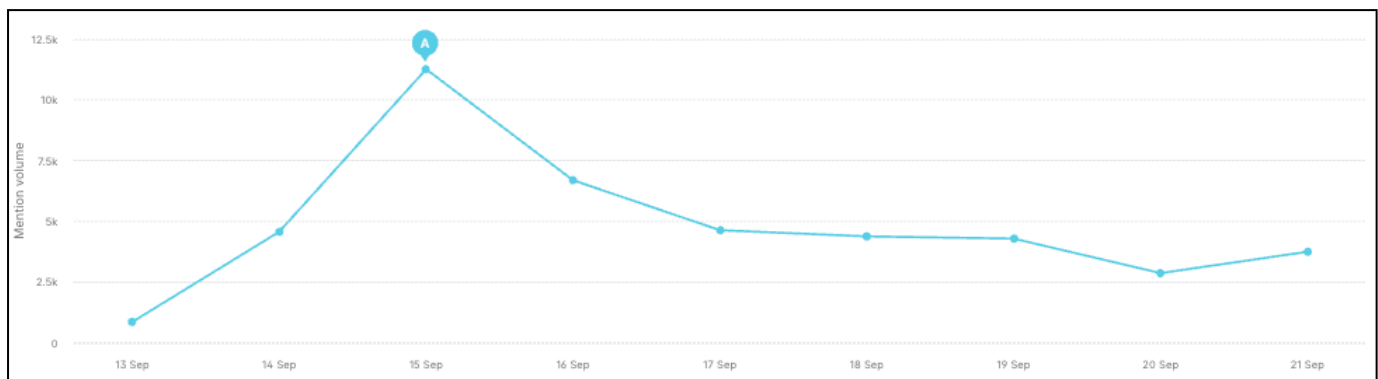


Figure 2: Mention volume for days for the period of 13-21 September 2026

Figure 3: shows the trending keywords and phrases for this time period. “Tsontso” appears to be fading as it was one of the dominant keywords used as a hashtag to raise awareness on social platforms. This keyword gave light to the larger investigation related to the discovery of women’s bodies around Kempton Park, giving rise to the keyword “Kempton” showing a large volume relative to other keywords. The current keywords “murder, murders and man” are trending in relation to the recent arrest that was made over the weekend by police of three suspects, two women and one man. The conversation on social media revolves around the word “man” that was not charged due to lack of evidence and posts are questioning the people who were quick to infer that the perpetrator, a "serial killer", is a [man](#).

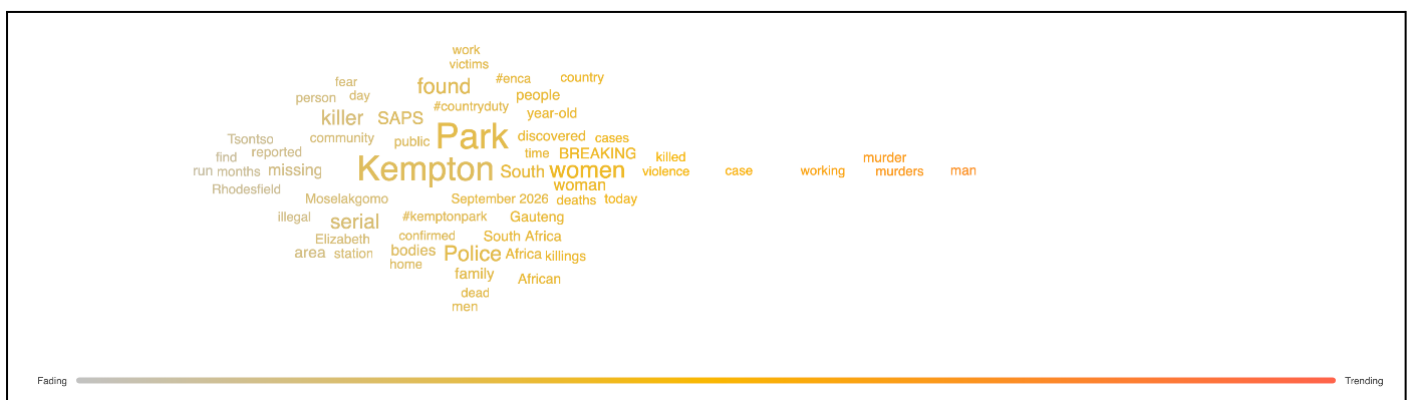


Figure 3: Graph showing trending keyword from 12-21 September 2026

Key Themes

- “Not all men” narrative

The “not all men” response generally appears when discussions about the killings shift toward male responsibility for violence against women. The argument is that it is inaccurate to portray all men as perpetrators simply because the suspected perpetrators in particular cases may be male.

In response to the ongoing concern over gender-based violence and femicide, Not In My Name International has called on men to take a more active role in confronting violence against women. The message emphasises that addressing GBV and femicide requires men to reject abusive behaviour, challenge harmful conduct among other men, support victims and survivors, and promote accountability within their communities.

 SABC News @SABCNews GBV SCOURGE Not In My Name International is calling on men to play a more active role in confronting gender-based violence and femicide, arguing that ending the crisis requires greater accountability and involvement from men.  12:12 PM · Sep 17, 2026 · 4,241 Views	Reactions to post  king nyambose @nyambose_king · Sep 17 Please tell me how can we protect when we aren't being protected, I could add on suicide rates but this is just murder on men in South Africa 🇿🇦, nobody cares about men that is why some break into animals, not all man are murders but all men need help n nobody is listening  Basotho Exit @BasothoExit · Sep 17 The media is now promoting the demonisation of men. I know it was all fabricated; I was aware there was a hidden agenda all along.  SiloSelobration 🇿🇦 @pxnzysese · Sep 18 Very soon, we will not want to be involved.. If it's not a civil war they tryna insite its a gender war
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Figure 4: X sample post of “not in my name international” calling on men to take a stand against GBV

The conversations also highlight victim blaming, observing that romantic partners frequently commit gender-based violence. Some men state they are reluctant to risk their lives for people who might return to those offenders. Others call for equal attention to the murder rate among men, false rape claims, cyberbullying by women, and the fame given to criminals and wealthy men (see figure 6).



Lindani M. 

@LyndaniM

Follow 

Ladies, I need you to lock in and pay attention to how your partner engages in conversations about femicide in South Africa. Don't take it with a grain of salt. LEAVE!!!!

8:24 PM · Sep 14, 2026 · **481.9K** Views

 106
 2.5K
 9.4K
 281

Reactions to post


Sbu @Sbu60716577 · Sep 15

Right now its men like you, yourl are being populist. . These people are saying we should all account for those murders as men. .


Trailblazer @chief4538291 · Sep 15

And nen should pay attention to how their girls purport them as potential rapists, murderers, suspects in everything

Reactions to post


HABILE  @sthedoingtingss · Sep 15

They date them


MsM  @Ms_WinnyM · Sep 15

For real! Coz what do you mean you're dating someone who lacks the emotional intelligence to even show compassion.


Galo Yephuka  @simplitate1 · Sep 15

There's always men like this who hijack these moments to virtue signal 🙄

"Ladies look at me, I'm not like all these bad men. All these men are rapists and murderers. I'm the exception" 😊

Figure 5: X sample post warning women to pay attention to their partners engagement in GBV conversations

vincentkwagenge Men are in jail for being falsely accused of rape	frankeno5 We are nt going to protect pple we cant control
Ralebakeng Jan Chigo So we are no longer DOGS.	Sikelela C Dlamini I saw one woman telling other women to brag about the decline of birth rate, telling the world that they are in control. let them continue controlling and leave men out of this.
PressPlaySA "We don't need men", now they ask "where are the men"? 🙄	Oy'ngcwele indoda uCat Matlala I indoda uBester

Figure 6: Sample reactions to Tiktok [post](#), where users react to the question “where are men when the women are dying”.

- **“Government is only concerned about foreign nationals” narrative**

Comparison was drawn between Government’s response to Xenophobia-related tensions and the response to GBV and femicide in South Africa.

Notably, the Government allocated R600 million towards security operations for the “March and March” protests on 30 June 2026 but has yet to allocate additional budget to curb GBVF despite declaring it a National Disaster.

	Glen Christaz Too @glen_too · Sep 15 Ramaphosa has basically threw a towel! 🍷🍷🍷 Jessica Maswanganyi @jessicdutchess_ · Sep 15 He is in his quiet girl era sana!
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Figure 7: X mention showing a user share views on Government's response to GBV

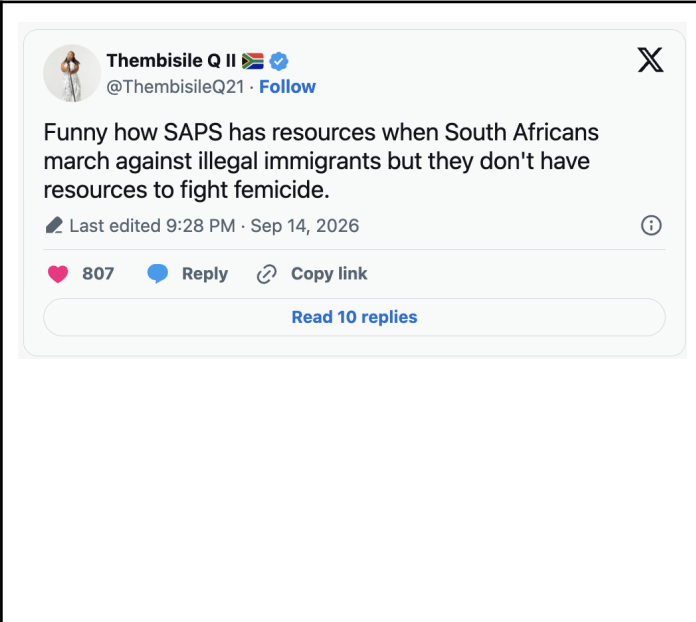
	samaZwide @Siphephelo41273 · Sep 15 GBV in SA is a money tree now comrades would never disturb they're cash cow by handing over resources to the @SAPoliceService to fight against them in Thier money maker thru -'Promo Campaigns, NPO/NGOs marches ,awareness tenders and ads '- now they count the bodies so they eat Glen Christaz Too @glen_too · Sep 15 We live in a country whereby even the police once demanded protection because they're also SCARED! Keep this in mind! 🍷🍷🍷 Evidence Bongwe @Evidence_Shongw · Sep 15 We just have a useless government
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Figure 8: X mention showing a user share views on SAPS resources

Conversation also engaged failures in local governance and municipal service delivery (see figure 9). Some users suggest poor local governance creates conditions that make violence against women and crime difficult to prevent. Poor infrastructure, inadequate streetlights, overgrown grass and lack of visible policing have been highlighted as contributing factors. This reflects a shift from viewing GBV solely as an individual criminal act to a systematic public safety and governance issue.

In response, Government has responded to calls by cutting the grass and debushing in the Ekurhuleni area. This intervention was approved by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on GBVF on September 17, 2026, as part of a Comprehensive Emergency Strategy to eliminate secluded "hunting grounds" used by criminals.

 Suntosh Pillay @suntoshpillay GBVF is a local government issue, too. National strategic plans are not going to save us or end gender violence and femicide. How safe is your ward? Do street lights work? Are there abandoned buildings? Are there are dodgy spots? Is the grass cut? Are there neighbourhood watches? Is there regulation of public drinking? Safer neighbourhoods start with a ward councillor who is invested in the area they are paid to oversee. Municipalities must account. #StopGBVF #RIPTstontso Last edited 12:01 PM · Sep 15, 2026 · 3,681 Views	 Shareen Singh @ShareenSingh8 · Sep 15 Dr Tlalang Mofokeng EFF Mayoral candidate, gets it . She has worked in this area, which is why her campaign focuses on the dignity of all, human rights for all, and making the City safe. That's aside from all the other things she has highlighted.  Bonita Ngwenya @BonitaWilliamsN · Sep 15 #Nos queremos vivas #We want ourselves alive
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Figure 9: X sample mention stating “GBVF is a local Government issue, too”.

Mis/Dis information

- **Serial Killer Speculation:**

Police are investigating whether the cases are connected. Whether a [serial killer or different perpetrators are responsible](#) is being investigated. While there are links between the cases, the available evidence does not confirm that all murders were committed by the [same perpetrator](#).

- **Foreign National Involvement:**

Unverified narratives emerged on social media that undocumented or “illegal” immigrants are responsible for the killings of women in Ekurhuleni. There is no publicly confirmed evidence from SAPS establishing the nationality or immigration status of a perpetrator(s).

- **10th Body Found:**

On 15 September, SAPS debunked fabricated news that a 10th body had been found. They further cautioned against sharing or disseminating false information.

On 16 September, North West SAPS also debunked a viral claim that the suspect had moved to Potchefstroom, with spokesperson Colonel Adele Myburgh saying the claims "have not been substantiated" and appealing to the public ["not to spread unverified information or create unnecessary panic"](#).

Users' reactions on the Post:

South Africans have had enough. Some of these girls were killed in July. Its September. Find the killers. 🇿🇦🇿🇦🇿🇿🇦

30

Don't fight with the public just do what's right u the one who doesn't put more effort into this

29

This is also a time that all the other sickos out there come out of the woodwork..

33

Figure 10: A sample X post showing a misinformation around the number of victims in the Kempton Park murders

Yaya Libram @Sello_Libram

Julius Malema and his EFF told illegal foreigners to find creative ways of entering South Africa 🇿🇦.

Now innocent South African women are getting killed and foreign undocumented fingerprints cant be traced

#RIPTsontso
#Ekurhuleni
#KemptonPark
#KemptonParkMurders
#GBV

5:55 AM · Sep 16, 2026 · 3,682 Views

Reaction to post

Tebatso malatji @TebatsoMalatji4 · Sep 16

Those very women will still go and vote for the EFF 😞

1 69

Brian Amani @AmaniBrian70922 · 21h

The thinking capacity of these men is shameful. You are killing each other and now you want to pin it on foreigners. It won't work.

36

Norma-Lee @MaDue · Sep 16

Spreading hate and trying to protect your team members who are killers and haters too

47

Mo @Mo1965067625036 · Sep 16

We all Know which south African race group is responsible for 99 percent of violence against women. Omggg trying to hide the facts

59

Figure 11: Sample X post suggesting illegal immigrations are responsible for the South African femicide

Latest Developments

Three people were arrested in connection with the murder of Jabulile Ntimba, whose body was found in Dawn Park, Boksburg, on 17 September. Two women, Fortunate Masilela and Tsakane Nester Msithini, appeared in [court](#) on 21 September and were charged with premeditated murder and defeating or obstructing the course of justice. Their bail application was postponed to 1 October, and they remain in custody. The third suspect, reportedly the brother of one of the women, was arrested but has not been charged due to insufficient evidence. His possible involvement remains under investigation. Police have not established whether the suspects are linked to the other eight murders in the Ekurhuleni area. Authorities are also investigating a possible [relationship-related](#) motive. The investigation is ongoing.

Conclusion

The recent surge of violence against women in Gauteng highlights an urgent need for comprehensive action and justice. While recent breakthroughs and arrests in cases like the Dawn Park and Ekurhuleni murders show progress, they also underscore the systemic nature of this disaster. Addressing this issue requires not only swift law enforcement but also a broader societal commitment to the safety and dignity of women as well as a commitment to continuous service delivery by Government.

During periods of heightened fear, there will always be a risk of unsubstantiated claims and mis/disinformation spreading on social media. The public must be advised to refrain from spreading any claims that may lead to vigilante action as well as swift debunking must be done by law enforcement to prevent unsubstantiated claims from reaching a mainstream audience.

Appendix

Methodology

The CABC used the social media listening tool Brandwatch and other social media analytics tools to collate the information presented in this report. A query was built to focus on social media discussions, particularly on X (formerly Twitter), on the Ekurhuleni murders. In addition to the use of social media analytics tools, the CABC's dialogue facilitators drew insights directly from social media platforms and news sources while engaging in order to complement the analytics tool. For this particular report the query focused on the time period with the highest mentions (12–21 September 2026) related to GBV and the discovery of women's bodies around Ekurhuleni.

Timeline Analysis

Discovery of Victim 1

- Police found the first body on 15 July in an open area along the R21 in Kempton Park.park
- The victim had been strangled and her hands were restrained by cable ties.
- The Police arrested a suspect on 17 July and the suspect remains in custody of the police.
- National Police Spokesperson Brigadier Athlenda Mathe officially identified Busisiwe Mahlangu as the first victim.

Discovery of Victim 2

- Police found a body at 10am in the bushes near Great North Road, close to the MaxMAX informal settlement in Pomona, Kempton Park, on 3 August 2026.
- The body was later identified to be Itumeleng Kekana, age 32 , and she had been missing since 17 July.
- Police said Kekana had suffered multiple stab wounds and her body was partially naked. Investigators opened a murder case and appealed for information.

Discovery of Victim 3

- The body of a woman was found in the Kempton Park area on 26 August and was later identified as Nomfesane Mjobo by SAP's official 20 September chronology.

Discovery of Victim 4

- A woman's body was found floating in a river in Clayville, Olifantsfontein.
- Her identity has not been positively identified by the police, and reports said that she was only wearing underwear when found.

Discovery of Victim 5

- Police found Gracious Nkomo, age 28, along the R21 in Kempton Park. Her body was partially clothed when authorities found her on 10 September. She was identified by her family at the Germiston mortuary on 17 September.

- Acting National Police Commissioner Lieutenant-General Puleng Dimpane offered condolences to Nkomo's family and said detectives would continue pursuing every available lead.

Discovery of Victim 6

- Last seen by her daughter Elizabeth "Tsontso" Moselakgomo, age 38 was found by police on 12 September in Rhodesfield, Kempton Park. She disappeared after leaving home for her usual run and her family reported her missing on 9 September.
- She was identified by her family at Germiston Mortuary on 14 September.
- Police reported that the body had bruises and was partially unclothed.
- Her discovery thrust the Ekurhuleni killings into the national spotlight.

Discovery of Victim 7

- The body of a woman was identified by a passer-by who alerted the authorities in Olifantsfontein on 14 September
- The Police have identified her, however have not yet released her name because they must first notify her family

Discovery of Victim 8

- A body was found on 15 September beside a road in Kwa-Thema, Springs and was later identified to be Dineo Evelyn Motapane.
- She was identified by her family at Springs Mortuary on 16 September.
- Police said she had been last seen alive on Sunday and had not yet been reported missing when her body was discovered.
- Preliminary pathology reported by police indicated strangulation.
- Police announced a R400 000 reward for information that could assist in identifying and arresting those responsible.

Discovery of Victim 9

- On 17 September, SAPS and news reports confirmed that a 9th body had been discovered at around 9am in Dawn Park in an open area.
- The body was identified as Jabulile Ntimba.
- Gauteng Premier Lesufi states that authorities will fight back against killing women and notably states "Let's not get emotional, the gloves are off...".
- Users on X shared their [views](#) on the Premier's comment.
- Users increase urgency in calls on the Government to take action against [femicide](#) and mis- and disinformation start surging, claiming that the serial killer is a [foreign national](#).

Arrest & Court Appearance of Suspects linked to Victim 9

- On 20 September Acting Police Minister Firoz Cachalia announced that investigators had taken three persons of interest in for questioning while following several leads. Police stressed that they had not yet concluded whether all nine Ekurhuleni murders were linked.

- Members of the Gauteng Murder and Robbery Unit arrested one man and two women over the weekend in connection with Ntimba's murder. SAPS described the arrests as a breakthrough in the investigation.
- Two female suspects appeared before the Boksburg Magistrate's Court. They were identified as Fortunate Masilela and Tsakane Nester Msithini. They were charged with premeditated murder and defeating or obstructing the course of justice.
- The male suspect arrested alongside the two women did not appear in court. Police stated there was insufficient evidence at that stage to place him before court and he was released without being charged, although investigations involving him continued.
- The case against Masilela and Msithini was postponed to 1 October 2026 for a formal bail application. Both remained in custody.

Sources

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