

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, January 20, 2003

Network of Sex Work Projects responds to city murders

The international Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP — based in Cape Town) has reacted with shock and horror at the execution style murder of young men working in a City massage parlour earlier today. This is a tragic loss of the lives of young folk. The Network is an organisation that advocates around the health and human rights of sex workers at an international level.

Young people working in the sex industry are marginalised from mainstream society. Exclusion and discrimination are the hallmarks of many sex workers' experience and the NSWP supports local projects like SWEAT to ensure a safer working environment, not only in terms of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, but also in terms of occupational health and safety (including violence against sex workers).

We deplore the violence and murder of innocent sex workers in the city of Cape Town and call on the authorities to bring the culprits to justice. We expect that the city authorities would enlist special efforts to ensure that the survivors are supported in terms of counselling and post-trauma care.

The Network of Sex Work Projects calls upon all sex workers in the city sex industry to collaborate with authorities in bringing this crime against humanity to justice. Local projects like the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), the Trauma Centre and the Triangle Project are on hand to support traumatised affected people and we ask that workers in the sex industry report any suspicious information that could lead to the arrest of these criminals to either the police directly, or if you fear reporting directly to the police, to report any information to any staff member at SWEAT (telephone 448 7875) or to the Triangle Project (telephone 448 3812)

We commend the work of SWEAT, the Trauma Centre and Triangle Project in this event for assisting the survivors, friends and affected loved ones.

We urge the city police and local authorities to take special action in this heinous crime.

We, the international Network of Sex Work Projects extend our condolences to family members and affected friends.

— *Shane Petzer*

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