

# Childline lambastes muti killings

**The KwaZulu-Natal branch of Childline has responded angrily to the brutal killing of a 1-year old toddler in Verulam last month. In an article published in the Northern Star, it was alleged that the boy was mutilated in bushes in the Cottonlands area for muti. Police have opened an inquest docket and it is believed the suspects are still at large.**

Childline director, Linda Naidoo, said that the "muti killing and trafficking of human organs is a concerning and widespread issue and is becoming more prevalent. "Muti is considered stronger if extracted from organs. The penis is the most commonly removed genital organ. It affects the safety of children. Many believe that the private parts have a significance, if removed while the child is alive," Naidoo explained.

Moving on to the human trafficking issue, Naidoo said that it is critical as there is no legislation to address the problem. However, this barbaric act has

created mixed reactions in the community of Verulam, with many believing that the killing is part of human trafficking.

Redcliffe resident. Muzi Xolo, said, "I'm a bit nervous and I think there is a possibility that a killing of this nature is linked to trafficking of human organs. In the past two years or so, a woman was caught with body organs in Durban, this is part of organised crime."

Meanwhile, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) revealed that human trafficking is a serious problem in South Africa. The study revealed that human trafficking is mostly motivated by muti killing, pornography, domestic violence and drug trafficking, with muti killings cited as the major problem in southern Africa. The HSRC said that South Africa is a destination country where people, mainly women are trafficked from other countries. Researchers claimed that the largest movement of



trafficked people is from the informal settlements to cities. Women, boys and girls are the major targets of human trafficking.

The researchers emphasised that they experienced serious difficulties in conducting the study. They explained that South Africa is not collecting even basic national-level data, which will allow sound estimates about the scale of the problem. They also had difficulty accessing key informants in government departments, because government databases of contacts were not made available. Still, as an exploratory study confirmed, human trafficking in South Africa requires serious action by government and civil society to track and address the problem.

