



**AZAPO**  
AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

**TO : ALL MEDIA HOUSES FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FROM : AZAPO SECRETARY FOR GENDER AND WOMEN'S AFFAIRS**

**DATE : JUNE 25, 2022**

**SUBJECT: AZAPO CONDEMNS HOMOPHOBIC STATEMENTS MADE OVER MONKEYPOX**

AZAPO condemns in the harshest sense the homophobic utterances made by Professor Koleka Mlisana, of the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) during the media briefing on the outcomes of the cabinet meeting held this week.

AZAPO believes that, Professor Mlisana wasted an opportunity to educate the public about Monkeypox, how it is contracted and spread but instead elected to stigmatise same sex relationships and in particular "men who have sex with men". Unfounded statements like these are unfortunate, because they can potentially fuel homophobia and hate crimes directed at the LGBTIAQ+ community.

By attributing a virus, that can affect just about anyone to an already marginalized and vulnerable people, Professor Mlisana's statement threatens to put the LGBTIAQ+ community at risk of being stigmatized and further victimized.

It is statements like these that reinforce the belief that homosexual men are the cause of ailments, which was a common narrative around HIV and AIDS in the 90s. This narrative created a negative stigma that sparked anger and hatred towards gay men and the LGBTIAQ+ community as a whole.

AZAPO calls on Prof. Mlisana to retract her statement and apologize unconditionally to the LGBTIAQ+ community.

**-Ends-**

Issued via AZAPO Department of Gender and Women's Affairs

---

**Enquiries:** Gaontebale Nodoba or Cikizwa Dubula  
**Telephone:** 061 332 4792 / 061 487 2032  
**Office:** Publicity Secretary  
**Email:** [info@azapo.org.za](mailto:info@azapo.org.za)  
**Website:** [www.azapo.org.za](http://www.azapo.org.za)

Office 503 - 5th Floor, Corner House  
77 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg 2001  
P.O. Box 4230, JOHANNESBURG 2000