

[PRESS STATEMENT] Launch of Vimba! We the People Campaign: Stop. Organise. Defend. Act

3 September 2026: For immediate release

Vimba! We, the People was formed in response to growing anti-rights and anti-democratic efforts to advance fundamentalist, far-right, and reductive values and legislation in South Africa and beyond. We are a civil society coalition comprising organisations working across the legal, faith, LGBTIQ+ rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), feminist organising, labour rights, education, racial justice, and political justice sectors.

Our coalition is rooted in a shared commitment to protecting hard-won freedoms for all. Together, we seek to sound the alarm of emerging threats to our democracy, strengthen collective action, and mobilise against efforts that seek to undermine our rights and liberties. *Vimba!* is also a call to protect our Africa regional frameworks and commitments such as the Maputo Protocol, ratified by South Africa, that strive for improved sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Our collective has been catalysed by the announcement that the next [Pan African Conference on Family Values \(PACFV\)](#) will be hosted in South Africa in 2027. This will be the third iteration of the PACFV, which has been widely recognised as a vehicle for far-right actors to perpetrate hate and legislative agendas that would prevent millions of women from accessing sexual and reproductive health services, criminalise diverse gender expressions, and deny young people access to life-saving information and support about sex, sexuality, and sexual health.

We are aware that there are [calls](#) to [prohibit](#) this conference from being held in South Africa, and we understand this reaction to defend our country from influences that threaten to more deeply entrench intolerance and injustice. However, we also recognise this as a pivotal moment in which those of us committed to defending and deepening our democracy can come together to confront and challenge far-right politics on our own soil. We will seize this opportunity to grow our collective strength, and to work across the silos that have divided feminist, queer, inclusive faith, racial justice, and disability rights movements for too long.

Vimba! We the People, calls on everyone who is committed to the creation of a non-racist and non-sexist democracy. The rise of political movements and actors claiming that they are defending “traditional African values”, “the family”, and national sovereignty is not coincidental or grassroots. Rather, it has been well-documented that these movements and organisations are funded by [far-right organisations](#) based in the United States and Europe who are seeking to undermine democracy worldwide. We must ask the question of why these groups, which have advanced white ethnonationalist political agendas in their own countries, are so eager to convince us, as African people, that we should embrace their so-called “pro-family” calls to action, or believe them when they tell us they are anti-colonial. The rhetoric they employ weaponises notions of gender, family, and sexuality to undermine our collective understanding of *Ubuntu*, our celebration of diversity in culture, gender, religion, language, race, and our collective pursuit for the dignity and rights of all.

Vimba! is a rallying call, for all sectors of society and our government to pay attention and recognise that our constitution and communities are under threat. New far-right movements, disguised as vanguards of “freedom”, have co-opted our collective language for universal suffrage, and have sought to confuse and separate us. Their anti-rights and anti-gender agenda attempts to convince us that inequality and

intolerance towards difference are ‘common sense’, threatening three decades of work towards building and strengthening our democracy and recovering our humanity from the horrors of apartheid. The sexual and reproductive rights these new far-right groups aim to undermine are inextricably linked to the right to self-determination and bodily autonomy, which have been denied to historically disadvantaged groups including the racially oppressed, the working class, migrants, and landless people in this country.

We must resist this new wave of colonisation that reactivates colonial ideologies of gender and sexuality - notions that are deeply interwoven with constructions of race and racial hierarchy, and disinformation - to manufacture fear about abortion, expansive gender identities, comprehensive sexuality education programs, and African people. It is therefore important that we reclaim our understanding of “family values” as inclusive, diverse, and expansive. That means we must be unapologetically “woke”! In our attempt to “fix our country”, we must never flirt with representations of colonialism, white supremacy and apartheid! Instead, we must test the rigour of our Constitution, and hold those that seek to undermine it accountable.

Vimba! We, the People, invite you to join us as we organise. *Vimba! We the People* call on you to form part of our line of defence for our democracy. *Vimba! We the People*, know that it’s time to act!

Vimba! We, the People: Stop. Organise. Defend. Act

This press statement is endorsed by the following organisations:

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| • Access Chapter 2 | • Nurture Retreat and Wellness Centre |
| • Amandla.mobi | • Pan Africa ILGA |
| • FOCCISA Health and Gender Justice Network | • Parents, Families and Friends of South African Queers |
| • Gender DynamiX | • Queer Feminist Film Festival |
| • Gender Practitioners Community of Practice | • Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC) |
| • Ibis Reproductive Health | • Southern Africa Litigation Centre |
| • Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM) | • SRHR Africa Trust (SAT) |
| • Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa | • The Global Interfaith Network (GIN-SOGGIE) |
| • Intersexions.org | • Triangle Project |
| • Iranti | • Uniqueers Student Solidarity (WSU) |
| • Just Associates | • Uthingo Network |
| • Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (LEGABIBO) | • We are Church |
| | • Women's Legal Centre |

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