

Rights watch urges legal rites

EMMAH NGOMANE

IF the lives of young South African males are to be saved, then the government needs to speed up the implementation of a national cultural legislation to regulate initiation in the country, said the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL) yesterday.

CRL Rights Commission chief executive officer, Advocate Pheagane Solomon Moreroa, yesterday called on the government to "rush" the legislation process.

He said more lives will be lost during botched circumcision rituals

if a legislation is not established soon.

This comes after a 22-year-old man died after being circumcised in an initiation ceremony in the Eastern Cape.

According to police, this is the third initiation-related death to be reported this month. Police spokesman, Mduduzi Godlwana said the young man had complained of pain and seemed confused. He died before a doctor could examine him.

In a separate incident over the

INITIATION: Regulations will save many lives

"Most of the people who run these illegal initiation schools have no experience, but you find that there's no law against what they are doing."

past weekend, a 19-year-old boy died while trying to make his way to the hospital after an initiation ceremony.

"In 2009 and 2010, 100 young

boys died during initiation ceremonies in the Eastern Cape alone. We cannot wait for two or three years before the legislation is established. How many more boys are we going to have to lose before something is done?"

"We are not negotiating, we are saying this must be done, and it must be done now," said Moreroa.

A report with recommendations on initiation in South Africa has been compiled by the CRL Rights Commission and one of the propos-

als was for the SA Police Service to establish an "initiation-event unit".

"Most of the people who run these illegal initiation schools have no experience, but you find that there's no law against what they are doing. Even if they are arrested they will not be charged."

"Some are even using this as a way to make money, they have commercialised initiation and that is not right and there should be laws against this," said Moreroa.

Moreroa also reiterated the need for initiates to go through a series of thorough medical check-ups before they undergo circumcision.

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NELSON MANDELA BAY

Metro under fire for grave violations

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Cultural watchdog has tough questions for officials

ANATIONAL cultural watchdog body is expected to grill the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality today on how it plans to rectify the violation of about 150 graves on which it built RDP houses in the early '90s.

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities said the outcome of its meeting with the municipality today would set the benchmark for other municipalities which had also

been found to have violated historic burial sites in the country.

The commission was in Port Elizabeth in February on a fact-finding mission after local activist group Isiziba Community Development Agency complained last year on behalf of residents whose relatives had been buried at the cemetery in Veeplaas.

The cemetery is situated near Soweto on Sea township. Agency chairperson Norman Mapela said about 100 graves had been violated when RDP houses were built in 1994.

Commissioner Mlawu Tyatyeka said their fact-finding mission had

confirmed the graves had been violated. "It's frightening that in almost all the municipalities [we have gone to] we experienced the same problem. We will ask the municipality hard-hitting questions why the graves were violated. Many townships were built on top of graves.

"The municipalities and developers should get their act together."

Tyatyeka, who also serves as the Eastern Cape convener of the commission, said they would report back to the communities on their findings. "But we won't dictate terms to the municipality or the de-

veloper who built the houses on what should be done, although they will have to let us know what they have agreed on with the families."

Tyatyeka urged municipalities not to take the issue of graves lightly as [people believed] they were chains linking the spirits of the dead to the living.

"What if your mother appears to you in a dream and says: 'My child it's cold here where you have buried me.' Then you won't be able to perform any rituals because RDP houses have been built in the area."

He said the outcome of the meet-

ing with the municipality and the affected families would serve as a beacon guiding them on how to solve similar cases in other municipalities which had also been found to have violated historic burial sites.

Municipal spokesperson Kupido Baron confirmed the meeting had been scheduled with the concerned group and that the matter would be discussed at length today.

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