

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 04 NOVEMBER 2015**

**RE: FOUR LIFE TERMS AND 95 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR A SERIAL RAPIST**

Thembisizwe Ngwendu (34) of Gobozana Administrative area near King William's Town was sentenced by the Bhisho High Court to 4 life terms and 95 years imprisonment yesterday. The accused was charged and convicted of 10 counts of rape and 5 counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances committed during the period August 2012 to June 2014.

The accused preyed on vulnerable young women between the ages of 16 and 25 years-old in the De Nek area. He would approach them and rob them of their cellular phones at knife point. Thereafter, he would force them to the nearby bushy area and rape them. Four of the victims were raped twice by the accused and the other two were raped once. Another victim was only robbed of her cellular phone and managed to escape being raped by the accused. One of the victims was stabbed with a knife in her arm by the accused when she attempted to resist him. Her arm was injured to such an extent that she was unable to use it for a while. In one of the incidents the accused forced the victims to suck blood from his injured finger after raping them. On another occasion, the accused acted with an unknown accomplice. After raping the victims the accused would allow them to go.

Most of the victims were unable to identify the accused and the state therefore had to rely on DNA evidence linking the accused to the commission of the offences. The victims in the last incident were able to identify the accused and pointed him out in an identification parade. The cellular phone of one of the victims was retrieved from a person who bought it from the accused shortly after the last incident. The accused pleaded not guilty to all counts, but after evidence of the first state witness was led changed his plea to that of guilty.

In aggravation of sentence, Advocate Charlene Monis told the court that the accused's lack of respect for women was evident in the heinous and horrific way in which he committed his crimes. She urged the court to consider not only the physical scars suffered by some of the victims, but also the psychological scars suffered by all of them, as these scars take a longer time to heal. Adv Monis handed in victim impact statements that were compiled by a few of the complainants. A common sentiment through all of the statements was a feeling of shame, anger and disempowerment. The NPA court preparation officer who facilitated the victim impact statements was Phelisa Matinise.

The accused was sentenced as follows: 4 life terms for 8 of the rape counts, a further 2 terms of 10 years imprisonment for the remaining 2 counts of rape respectively and 5 terms of 15 years imprisonment for each of the robbery with aggravating circumstances counts. The sentences were ordered to run concurrently with that of life. The presiding officer held that the accused is a danger to society and that no substantial and compelling reasons were present.

The NPA applauds the hard work of Advocate Charlene Monis and Court Preparation Officer, Phelisa Matinise and we welcome the sentence.

Kind Regards,

**Tsepo E Ndwalaza**

**NPA Regional Spokesperson**

**Eastern Cape: DPP Grahamstown, Bhisho, PE, EL, & Queenstown Cluster**

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