

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: WOMEN SENTENCED FOR KIDNAPPING

Zinhle Zungu (26) and her mother Buselaphi Zungu (48) pleaded guilty to kidnapping and committing fraud in the Durban Regional Court yesterday.

In February 2010, the 7 year-old complainant was on her way back from school and waiting at the Durban train station when she was approached by accused 1. She told the child that her mother had asked her to fetch her and take her home as the child's mother had to go to Johannesburg.

On their arrival at the accused's home in Folweni, the child was told that her surname was now Zungu and that she had to speak isiZulu and not English. Accused 2 arrived home later and told accused 1 to take the child to the police station but she was ignored and the child remained there.

Eventually, accused 2 went to the Department of Home Affairs and fraudulently obtained a birth certificate for the child, registering her surname as Zungu and stating that she was the mother of the child. She then used this birth certificate to fraudulently obtain a child care grant from SASSA. Accused 1 used the fraudulent birth certificate to enrol the child into two different schools over the period that she was in their captivity.

Since the child's disappearance, her mother had insisted that a local newspaper regularly publish photographs and articles about the missing girl. A neighbour of the accused eventually called the journalist and advised that there was a 10 year-old child who resembled the missing girl living in her area. The accused were arrested in October 2013.

The Regional Court Prosecutor, Priscilla Patterson told the court that the offences committed by the accused were serious and the sentence should be in accordance.

In their victim impact statements which were facilitated by court preparation officer Nondumiso Nyembe, the mother and child told of the trauma they experienced. The child mentioned that she had been emotionally affected. She was ill-treated by the accused and felt detached from her mother. Her mother advised that she was highly traumatised and relied on anti-depressants to get through the day.

Accused 1 was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for kidnapping and 6 years for the two counts of fraud. The court ordered that the sentences for fraud run concurrently, thus resulting to an effective 20 years imprisonment. Accused 2 was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment for kidnapping and 6 years for each of the fraud counts. Here too, the fraud counts will run concurrently, giving her an effective 14 years imprisonment.

The Director of Public Prosecutions in KZN, Advocate Moipone Noko said; "We are pleased with the sentence and the fact that there was a breakthrough on this matter which led to the reunion of the mother and child. Providing safe and secure surroundings for the vulnerable, especially children, is part of our mandate".

Kind Regards,

Natasha Kara

Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN

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