

# Media Statement



Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Email:  
[media@npa.gov.za](mailto:media@npa.gov.za)

Victoria & Griffiths  
Mxenge Building  
123 Westlake Avenue  
Weavind Park  
Silverton  
Pretoria

[www.npa.gov.za](http://www.npa.gov.za)

**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 15 AUGUST 2016**

**RE: ZEPHANY NURSE KIDNAPPER SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS  
DIRECT IMPRISONMENT**

Today, the Western Cape High Court has sentenced the 52 year old woman who kidnapped Zephany Nurse and kept her for more than 17 years, to ten years direct imprisonment. The woman who cannot be named to protect the true identity of Zephany Nurse who was three days old when kidnapped, was convicted on charges of kidnapping, fraud and contravention of sections of the Children's Act.

Judge John Hlophe sentenced her to 14 years for kidnapping with four years suspended for five years on condition she doesn't get convicted for a similar crime during the period of suspension. She was also sentenced to two years for fraud and three years for contravention of sections of the Children's Act. Judge Hlophe ordered that the latter sentences run consequently with the ten years. This means the accused has been sentenced to an effective ten years direct imprisonment.

Justice for Celeste and Morne Nurse who are biological parents of Zephany Nurse has been served more than 17 years later. Their nightmare began on 30 April 1997, when their three day old first born child disappeared from Groote Schuur Hospital. A day before that, 29 April 1997, the accused attempted to steal another baby at the same hospital. The mother of that child saw her and took her child back. The next day the accused went back to the same hospital dressed in clothes similar to the uniform worn by hospital staff. She pretended to be working at the hospital and stole Zephany Nurse while her mother was asleep. The new mother had just had a caesarean and was recuperating from the procedure while under heavy medication.

She kept the child from 30 April 1997 until 25 February 2015 when she was arrested. For 17 years she lied to her husband, Zephany and other family members telling them that the girl was her biological child. After her arrest, she told the court that she adopted the child legally in a process that was arranged by a woman called Sylvia. The baby was delivered to her at the Wynberg Train Station. Even today the accused had not told the child the truth despite being convicted by the court for the crimes she committed. In fact, she told the court that she was the primary victim and her only crime was raising the child.

Arguing for a harsher sentence, Advocate Avadne Kortje told the court that the crime the accused was convicted of is most serious and needs to be proportionally reflected in the sentence that will be imposed. "The accused planned the kidnapping. The irreparable emotional, physical and psychological trauma experienced and still being experienced by biological parents, Celeste and Morne Nurse and their respectable families is unfathomable. The evidence of parents illustrated the disastrous consequences of the crimes committed by the accused. The accused has shown no remorse for the crimes of which she has been found guilty and continued her manipulative behaviour blaming others and minimizing her actions in this matter. She has a lack of empathy towards all the victims of the crimes in this matter and she shows a lack of insight in failing to appreciate that she is not the victim in this matter." She said.

The state asked the court to sentence the accused to 15 years and have a portion of the sentence suspended and that she be sent to prison for ten years.

The NPA welcomes the sentence. We hope this sentence will send a clear message to other would be kidnappers.

Kind Regards,

**Eric Ntabazalila**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP Western Cape**

**Enquiries: [entabazalila@npa.gov.za](mailto:entabazalila@npa.gov.za)**

**073 062 1222**