

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 28 AUGUST 2020**

**RE: CHILD RAPIST AND MURDERER SENTENCED TO TWO LIFE TERMS PLUS 13 YEARS**

The High Court of South Africa: Western Cape Division, sentenced Reagan Zietsman to two life terms and 13 years subsequent to his conviction on charges of kidnapping, rape, murder and defeating the administration of justice.

The high court, sitting at the Bredasdorp Sexual Offences Court, convicted Zietsman for kidnapping of six year-old Delvina Europa, brutally raping her, her murder and defeating the administration of justice. It sentenced him to eight years imprisonment for kidnaping, life imprisonment for rape, life imprisonment for murder and five years imprisonment for defeating the administration of justice. The court ordered all the sentences to run concurrently condemning the accused to life imprisonment. It ordered that his name be recorded forthwith in the national register of sex offenders.

There was a sigh of relief in the packed court which battled to hold back tears during the week as the accused recounted what he did on the morning on 24 March 2019, in the small quite town of Elim. He told the court that he knew Delvina Europa as he was friends with her father. After smoking tik and mandrax on that fateful morning, he went to look for the girl's father, David Jagers. He met the girl and told her he was looking for her father. He claims that she accompanied him to look for the father.

He took her into the bushes far away from her home where he raped her. He covered her mouth and nose with his hand in order to stop her from screaming. He later discovered she had stopped breathing and was dead. He threw her body into a shallow pool of water to hide her body and rid it of any DNA evidence.

Later that day, a community search party asked him whether or not he had seen the girl. He lied and denied seeing her as he was afraid that the community and the street

committee would assault him. He was arrested on 26 March 2019, after the body was found and a member of the community came forward and said the accused was seen with the girl shortly before she went missing.

In arguments in mitigation of sentence, the defence asked the court to sentence the accused to one life term as he has pleaded guilty, saved the court time and the state did not have to go through a lengthy process of proving a case.

The prosecutor, Advocate Maria Marshall, dismissed the defense's assertions and said the accused did not plead guilty because he felt responsible. She said there was overwhelming evidence against him as he was linked to the crime by DNA evidence and was seen walking with the child before she disappeared.

"The accused was advised and conceded that the charges of rape and murder in this case carry a prescribed sentence of life imprisonment each. He showed no remorse as he denied seeing the child when he was asked by the community. He went to work on a Monday and Tuesday as if nothing has happened. "He was convicted and sentenced for a similar offence on 18 January 2017, where he raped a 15 year old girl. He received a suspended sentence. That sentence should have served as an albatross around his neck but that did not deter him. This shows the character of the person we are dealing with. He is a violent person. He has a perverse attitude of committing sexual offences against young people. The accused is a monster and a coward who preyed on a little innocent girl who did not deserve to die in the way she did," she argued.

She said that the Western Cape was experiencing high numbers of murders of children. In the last financial year, 75 children were killed in the Western Cape. There are 42 children who have lost their lives since beginning of this year. Our society is currently experiencing high levels of violent crimes, especially against women and children, as was evident in recent publicised femicide cases. It is submitted that, where a crime is prevalent in society, a severe sentence may be justified in order that it may act as a deterrent to others.

The court agreed and sentenced Zietsman accordingly. Acting DPP, Advocate Nicolette Bell, welcomed the sentence and thanked the prosecutor and investigation team for their dedication and hard work. "The prosecution of child murders is a key priority for the NPA. Various protocols, such as participating in child death reviews, are in place to ensure child murders are identified from the onset, that the investigation is prioritized and the prosecutions are successful. This matter is one such success. The NPA will

continue to strive to bring justice to all victims of child murders and their families," she added.

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