

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 19 DECEMBER 2019**

**RE: GANG RAPISTS SENTENCED**

Philani Magwaza, Siyanda Ngcobo, Bonginkosi Msomi and Philani Luthuli were sentenced in the Verulam Regional Court last week for the February 2018 gang rape of a 16 year-old girl in Verulam.

The girl was at a school when Magwaza (who was waiting for his girlfriend at the school gates) propositioned her. After she rejected his advances, he grabbed her by the arm and dragged her to his co-accused who were drinking at a nearby tavern. They took her to an abandoned building where they assaulted her, and all, except Msomi raped her. Ngcobo stole her shoes while Msomi and Magwaza threatened her with a toy firearm. When they finally let her go, she took a taxi straight to the police station and returned to the scene with the police. The accused were arrested and the toy firearm recovered.

In court, Regional Court Prosecutor, Ishara Sewnarain led the complainant's evidence as well as the medical findings by the district surgeon. In aggravation of sentence, Prosecutor Sewnarain handed in a Victim Impact Statement facilitated by Court Preparation Officer, Bongiwé Qwabe. Here the complainant said the following, "I was treated like an animal on this day. I begged them to stop; instead, they beat me, strangled me and laughed at me. I had to speak up and come to court because no one will speak out against them. The court has heard me speak now I want to hear the court speak for me. I will live with the emotional pain forever. No human being deserves to go through what I went through."

The court sentenced them as follows: Magwaza was sentenced to life for rape, 5 years for kidnapping and 3 years for pointing the toy firearm (leading the complainant to believe it was real) and Ngcobo was sentenced to life for rape and 2 years for theft of the complainant's shoes. Msomi was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for pointing of the toy firearm and Luthuli was sentenced to life for rape.

The court ordered that their names be entered into the National Register of Sexual Offenders and they were declared unfit to possess a firearm.

The Kwa-Zulu Natal Director of Public Prosecutions, Adv. Elaine Zungu welcomes the sentence and conviction. She said, "This sentence is indicative of our commitment to the fight against crime."

**Natasha Kara**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN**

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