

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: SERIAL RAPIST DECLARED DANGEROUS AND SENTENCED TO INDETERMINATE PERIOD IN PRISON

The Grahamstown High Court was full to capacity to witness the sentencing of the worst serial rapist, Lonwabo Solontsi who raped wherever he lived. He committed his crimes in three provinces.

It is shown in court papers that, the majority of his crimes were committed in and around Eastern Cape whilst some were committed in the North West and Western Cape Provinces. During sentencing Judge Thami Bheshe, informed the court that Solontsi was serving time for two other rape cases that were committed previously. This put the tally of rapes committed by him to 41.

On 23 March 2018, Judge Bheshe sentenced Solontsi to an indeterminate period and declared him a dangerous criminal. She said she would have no qualms in sentencing him to 12 life terms plus 706 years for 39 rapes, 7 counts of robbery, and 14 counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances, 12 counts of housebreaking with intent to rape and 3 with intent to rape and rob. According to Senior State Advocate, Nicola Turner who represented the state, it was unusual for a court to resort to declaring someone a dangerous criminal in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act. She said this could only happen in cases where the court is convinced that the society needs protection from such a criminal. She alluded that in such cases, the court rather than the parole board will be the arbiter over any future chance of the criminal being released.

His rape spree kicked off in 2010 when he was a student at the University of Fort Hare. He terrorised the Alice campus students where, he is alleged to have raped at least six students over three years. He also robbed most of the women he raped. In about 10 of the 39 rape incidents, he is alleged to have either raped women and teenagers multiple times or raped more than one woman in a house that he had broken into. He also raped

a child in her own home and teenagers on their way to and from school. Victims were forced into the bushes, humiliated, threatened, assaulted and raped, sometimes in broad daylight. He admitted to raping two women in two different incidents in Bathurst (Eastern Cape) on the same day.

According to the court papers, his guilty pleas confirmed him as one of the country's worst serial rapist. The law stipulates that once a court has sentenced a person to an indeterminate period, it should then determine when the matter be brought before the court for reconsideration. Judge Bheshe said Solontsi would be eligible for parole after 25 years in prison and should not be brought before court for reconsideration of his sentence before 25 years had expired.

The NPA is satisfied with the sentence, as it believes that this sentence will bring back confidence in the criminal justice system. Advocate Nicola Turner based in the DPP Grahamstown office together with the team of investigators were applauded for their efforts in the case.

Kind Regards,

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