

## Sentencing of man 20 years after rape welcomed

An Eastern Cape women's rights organisation has hailed the sentencing of a man who raped a Eastern Cape teenager in 1997 but was only charged more than 20 years later, as a milestone for victims in 'historical' rape cases. **News24** reports that the Zwelitsha Regional Court sentenced 58-year-old Xolani Qanqane to 11 years in prison for raping the 14-year-old girl, who is now a 41-year-old social worker. At the time, she was visiting a shopping centre in Qonce (formerly King William's Town), where Qanqane was working as an independent photographer. After violently raping the then-teenager, Qanqane threatened her with death if she told anyone about the incident. This terrified the victim and indeed she made no report about this incident for years,' NPA Eastern Cape spokesperson Luxolo Tyali said. 'In 2020, she spotted a driver of a minibus taxi ... in East London .. She recognised the driver as the man who raped her years ago.' She opened a case in 2021 and the only evidence in the docket was her statement. 'The senior prosecutor, Brenan Sam, had to find evidence to corroborate the victim's version after more than 20 years. He embarked on a painstaking process and built a case against the accused from scratch,' Tyali said. The executive director of the East London-based Masimanyane Women's Rights International, Lesley-Ann Foster, said **the sentencing was very significant because some victims were reluctant to come forward to report rape incidents that had taken place several years ago.**