

Former journalist and provincial spokesperson convicted on 4 rape counts

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in the Northern Cape has confirmed the sentencing of former provincial government spokesperson and journalist, Douglas Mthukwane (45), who has been convicted on four counts of rape in the Northern Cape Division of the High Court.



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Numerous delays

Mthukwane was sentenced after the court found him guilty on all four counts during proceedings concluded in January 2026. The matter had been enrolled on the High Court roll since 2022 and was characterised by numerous delays occasioned by the conduct of the accused, including repeated changes of legal representatives and a 30-day psychiatric observation process.

Count one relates to the rape of the first complainant, who was only 14 years old at the time of the offence in 2016. The accused had befriended the complainant's family and, under the pretence of transporting her to school, instead took her to his apartment, where he raped her before dropping her off at school. The complainant immediately reported the incident to the deputy principal, who contacted the police. Although the accused was arrested and appeared before the court, the complainant later requested the withdrawal of the matter due to severe trauma and subsequently relocated to Johannesburg.



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The second count relates to the rape of the second complainant in 2017. The complainant was walking to a nearby shop when the accused stopped his vehicle and requested directions to Dadelboom Street. Pretending to be unfamiliar with the area, he persuaded her to enter the vehicle and direct him. Instead, he drove her to a secluded area where he raped her. As the complainant did not know the accused, he was o

identified and arrested in 2018 after she unexpectedly saw him at the police station in Phakamile Majiba Street and pointed him out to the investigating officer.

Counts three and four relate to the rape of the third complainant in 2019. The complainant and the accused had become acquainted through Facebook. After she requested assistance in obtaining copies of her curriculum vitae, the accused collected her from her residence and drove her to his apartment in Beaconsfield, where he raped her. To escape, she pretended that she needed to use the bathroom. Although initially allowed to leave the room, the accused became suspicious when she remained away for too long, threatened her, and raped her again.

The 2017 and 2019 matters initially served on the lower court roll and were subsequently struck from the roll. Upon referral to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, a decision was taken to proceed with the 2016 matter alongside the remaining charges, resulting in a consolidated prosecution before the High Court.

The presentation of evidence by senior state advocate Adele Van Heerden proved particularly challenging due to the severe trauma suffered by all three complainants. Cross-examination was lengthy and emotionally taxing, with the accused frequently refusing to answer direct questions and instead providing lengthy narratives. Proceedings were further marked by emotional outbursts and insulting behaviour from the accused.

Antisocial behaviour

During sentencing proceedings, the defence presented evidence from the probation officer who compiled the pre-sentencing report, as well as testimony from the accused's mother. The State presented victim impact reports relating to complainants two and three. Although the complainant no longer resides in the province, her victim impact statement, including her own testimony, was also presented before the court.

The court further heard evidence from Dr. Hammer, who formed part of the psychiatric observation panel. Evidence before the court revealed that the accused suffers from frontal lobe epilepsy and antisocial personality disorder. Both the probation officer and Dr. Hammer were of the view that the accused remains capable of rehabilitation through correctional programmes and continued medical treatment.

Van Heerden argued extensively throughout the protracted proceedings that the accused had demonstrated himself to be a danger to society and that lengthy direct imprisonment was warranted for each count of rape.

In sentencing, the court found substantial and compelling circumstances warranting deviation from the prescribed minimum sentence of life imprisonment on counts one, three and four. Mthukwane was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment on count one and 18 years' imprisonment on each of counts two to four. The court ordered the sentences on counts two to four to run concurrently with the sentence imposed on count one.