

KHASHO

NEWS

11th Edition



FEATURED INSIDE

- A case that's one of a kind
- Prosecution fights tooth and nail to sentence a father to life imprisonment for raping his daughter
- Fighting femicide and the NPA's commitment to justice for women
- Makhanda NPA leads charge against GBV



National Prosecuting Authority
South Africa

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Letter from the Managing Editor

The festive season is upon us. It is that time of the year when we let our guard down and become less vigilant, making the life of fraudsters far easier. Cybercriminals and fraudsters know that we will share our information unwittingly, as we will frequently be required to disclose our details to access our bank accounts. Let us all take precautions to protect our personal information and not fall prey to possible scams during this holiday season. Page 24 of this edition features an article captioned "Wellness tips for the festive season". Please read this wholesome article that is meant to empower you this festive period.

We close the year with a powerful article that seeks to promote prosecutor excellence in the NPA. Please read the article on page 14 where exceptional work of a few prosecutors in the space of infrastructure sabotage were recognised and appreciated. This article is also shared to reinforce the importance of collaboration with other stakeholders in the fight against organised crime.

We just came out of 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. This is the period where action of mobilisation to end violence against women, girls and those that are vulnerable takes place. Khasho has the pleasure of sharing with you an article where the Makhanda NPA office took the lead and collaborated with other stakeholders to raise awareness about genocide and GBV. Read further about all the efforts and actions undertaken by the NPA to fight the scourge of GBV on the Leadership Corner of this edition.

As we all wind down to have a well-deserved rest after the NPA's busy year, we hope that you will enjoy this edition.

Arrive Alive!



**Adv Bonnie
Currie-Gamwo**
SDPP: SOCA

Leadership Corner

In a blink of an eye, South Africa commemorated yet another 16 Days of Activism (25 November to 10 December) for No Violence Against Women and Children, presenting the NPA, with an opportunity to reflect on what we have done to address the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV) in our beautiful country. Sadly, this introspection must be viewed against the all too familiar backdrop of a country which appears to be regressing in its fight against GBV, with 957 women and 315 children murdered between July and September 2024.

The NPA's response to this scourge displays a continued commitment to addressing gender-based violence with all its might whilst striving to secure justice in our society so that people can live in freedom and security. The NPA has ensured that it once again reached its target for the conviction rate for sexual offences, and it has increased access to justice for victims of gender-based violence by expanding the footprint of Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs) to 65, adding 10 new centres in just over 3 years and re-accommodating several others across the country in beautiful state-of-the-art structures.

Targeting specific GBV irritants such as teenage pregnancies and serial rapists, the NPA has ensured the enrolment of cases and access to services for many victims. Bolstered by heightened strategic public awareness campaigns, a highly successful DNA backlog project, the Community Prosecutions Initiative, lucrative public private partnerships, a world class constitution and impressive GBV legislation, the NPA will, with its formidable partners within government, continue to fight the good fight. Failure is not an option.

To the women raped and murdered, their bodies discarded in ditches, to the children raped and murdered by the people they trust, to the victims who have been trafficked for financial gain and to all victims of gender-based violence, we will not forget you. The NPA men and women will continue to seek justice for you. We will leave no-one behind and continue to be the voice of the vulnerable.

A CASE THAT'S ONE OF A KIND

Lumka Mahanjana

RCM: Gauteng Division: Pretoria

Senior State Advocate Emile Van der Merve began his legal career working as a court clerk in 1991 and later enrolled to study BJuris. After completing his studies, he went on to practice as a prosecutor in January 1992 at Kempton Park Magistrates' Court. He left to join a private law firm in 2001 before returning to the NPA in 2021 as a Regional Court Prosecutor. Upon his return, he said he was welcomed and given a docket of which he thought was unique. In this case, a former SANDF employee, Leon Santos Conga (48) was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for raping his girlfriend, and additional 10-year direct imprisonment for attempted murder for knowingly exposing and factually infecting her with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Adv Van der Merve had this to say about the case:

When I received the docket, the case was already on the roll for three years and was not ready for trial. Secondly, the complainant did not trust me because she had a lot of bad experiences with the justice system, and the fact that I am a man did not assist the situation either. However, after building the report with the complainant, she began to relax and be open with me. It is important to build relations with the complainant, that's what also assisted me in this case. But what was more challenging was the case itself.

I had to deal with aspects of the law that I had never dealt with before. I spent a lot of time researching, because I needed to do a slip of charges, rape and exposure to HIV.

The fact that the two were in a relationship, and the fact that the consent was conditional "no condom, no sex" was going to prove difficult since this was going to be a new case, as there was never a case like this before. The investigating officer in the case also died before we could finalise the matter. But through experience and extensive research, I overcame those challenges. I called a doctor who is a world specialist in the field of HIV. She testified and assisted in proving the attempted murder charge. Also, after preparing the complainant, she



Senior State Advocate, Emile Van der Merve

became an excellent witness on the stand, which helped me prove the rape charge.

But through experience and extensive research I overcame those challenges, I called a doctor who is a world specialist in the field of HIV who testified and assisted in proving the attempted murder charge. Also, after preparing the complainant, she became an excellent witness on the stand which helped me prove the rape charge.

I have learnt that hard work pays off, if you research well enough, your opponent cannot argue when they have not done the same. Rapport between a complainant and a prosecutor is very important. My advice to other prosecutors is that, if you do not prepare, you will lose the fight before it even starts. Don't take chances, if unsure, ask for advice, there is always someone with experience willing to assist.

I miss prosecuting such cases. I am a litigant. I enjoy being in court more than being in the office. At the IDAC, I am mostly in the office preparing. Though I dislike rape cases, I am good at them. I love how I made a difference with this matter because the victim now has faith in the justice system, which she did not have in the beginning. At the IDAC, the type of work I do is challenging, extremely complex and not everyone's cup of tea. You are permanently challenged with law, principles of law, working with clever criminals and making sense of the facts while applying the law.

There are more cases that I still need to finalise at the Pretoria Magistrate's Court, one being the Brits drowning case that had a lot of media attention.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Adv Sibongile Mzinyathi, congratulated the prosecutor for successfully prosecuting the first case of this kind. This case proves and shows the dedication of our prosecutors to providing justice to victims of crime and GBV.

CHILD TRAFFICKER AND CHILD RAPIST SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT

Eric Ntabazalila
RCM: Western Cape Division

Cape Town Regional Court prosecutor Ruwayda Badrudeen, has once again secured a heavy sentence for a man who trafficked a minor from the Eastern Cape to the Western Cape where he kept her as his wife and repeatedly raped her. The successful prosecution and sentencing of the child trafficker and child rapist, Ayanda Wellington Vellem, followed a laborious trial which saw the minor being cross examined over a period of six years.

The state charged Ayanda Wellington Vellem and three women with abduction, trafficking in persons for sexual purposes, failure to comply with the requirements of a valid customary marriage, and charged Vellem with rape. Vellem was acquitted on the charge of abduction; two of the women were acquitted on all charges while the third passed away during the trial. The court sentenced Vellem to life imprisonment for trafficking in persons for sexual purposes; 9 months imprisonment for failure to comply with the requirements of a valid customary marriage, life imprisonment for rape and 6 months for assault. The court ordered the sentences to run concurrently, effectively sentencing him to life imprisonment. The court ordered his name be entered into the National Register of Sex Offenders and the National Child Protection Register. It further declared him unfit to possess a firearm.



Regional Court Prosecutor, Ruwayda Badrudeen

The ordeal for the 16-year-old Ngqamakhwe girl began when a woman who was very familiar to her approached and asked if she was interested in getting married to a young man. At the time she was already an orphan, staying with her grandmother and still at primary school. She enquired how old the man was, and the woman told her that he was 25 years old. It was agreed that when she leaves with the woman, some people will inform her grandmother of the marriage. Vellem sent money to the woman which was used to traffic the girl to Queenstown. In Queenstown, she met another woman who was with the sister of the woman who earlier approached her about the marriage. The following day a group of women dressed her in clothing that is usually used by "makoti" which indicated that she was married. The man she was being married to was not present.

He arrived two weeks later, and it was only then that she was informed that he was her husband. After seeing him, she told the sister of the woman who approached her that she wanted to go home, but the woman ignored her. She later saw Vellem's identity document and found out that he was born in 1967, was 45 years old and was the same age as her late mother. In the evening, she was asked to take food to Vellem but when she returned to the main house, the lights were switched off. Vellem called her into the bedroom, instructed her to take off her clothes and raped her. She was afraid of him and obeyed his instructions. She told him that she was 16 years old, did not like what he was doing but he continued to rape her. She cried during the rape ordeal.

The next morning, she protested again and asked to go home but she was laughed at and asked to pack her clothes as she was going to Cape Town with the accused. In Cape Town she was taken to the accused's sister in Khayelitsha where she stayed while the

accused stayed in Du Noon. The accused would visit on weekends and raped her. She felt that she was being watched while in Khayelitsha and suggested to the accused that she wanted to go to Du Noon. She had an uncle in the Western Cape. She knew that the accused would be drunk, and she would have the opportunity to contact her uncle. The drinking and rapes got worse in Du Noon to the extent that she developed injuries in her private parts. The accused gave his sister money for the girl to go to a clinic in Khayelitsha where she met Nonkosi Ngingi, a nurse at the clinic who asked her age and why she was wearing "makoti clothes". It is then that she relayed what had happened to her from being trafficked from the Eastern Cape, to being married to an older man who raped her repeatedly. It is also on this day that she learned that she had contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

Ngingi contacted the girl's uncle and told him what happened and shared the girl's cellular phone number with him. Her uncle phoned her and they met at a taxi rank. He took her to his house and they later laid charges against the accused. The accused was arrested together with the women.

In strengthening her case, regional court prosecutor, Ruwayda Badrudeen, called four witnesses and later argued that the crimes committed by the accused were horrendous and the enormity of it could hardly be over emphasised. The complainant was a defenceless child who was subjected to the abuse in the worst form. The offences which the accused is convicted of are considered by our courts to be very serious and normally attract severe sentences. He lacked remorse and did not take responsibility for his actions.

It needs to be emphasised that communities all over South Africa are appalled by the type of crimes committed by the accused especially where the victim is a 16-year-old girl who freely trusted adults and believed that they would protect her from harm. She was taken to a place that was completely unknown to her which made her vulnerable to be exploited in the most undignified manner.

Western Cape Director of Public Prosecutions Adv Nicolette Bell, applauded the work of the prosecution and investigation teams and expressed shock at the level of cruelty committed by the accused on a defenceless child.

VOICE OF THE CHILD VICTIM

Although the NPA ensured justice for the victim of this heinous crime and the court passed the severest prison sentence at its disposal, the damage and the pain it

caused can only be told by her. Please hear her voice in this Victim Impact Statement she compiled with the assistance of Court Preparation Officer, Babalwa Hlatana:

"I was and still traumatised because of what happened. As a result, I don't trust men, and I don't, and I don't even have love for men. I was deprived of my youth. I never enjoyed life like other kids. I have anger issues, and I am always scared. I was forced to get married to a man who's a year older than my mom. This man is supposed to be my father. I was only 16 years old. The pain of sleeping with someone who is old enough to be your father is so unbearable. I wouldn't even say something or have a voice because I was told that I must stop acting. I feel like he took advantage of a vulnerable young girl who couldn't even speak for herself.

I would be fine during the day, but things will change when I think that I must go to bed with this man. This incident destroyed me, sometimes I feel like not talking about it. I still have a picture of everything that happened. It's something that I think about all the time. I was a young girl who was helpless and couldn't fight for myself. I am so grateful to God that I never fell pregnant because things could have been worse. The child would have been a constant reminder of what happened to me. Sometimes I would ask myself why he chose me. I believe there were so many girls in my village who were almost the same age as I am. Is it because I didn't have parents? I always ask myself those questions, but unfortunately, there are no answers.

My life has changed and will never be the same again. I feel like I am a useless human being. I feel like I can't expect more from a person that I am dating because I feel like I'm a secondhand goods or furniture. My freedom was taken away from me. It is so difficult, but what choice do I have. After I managed to leave Ayanda, I wanted my childhood back. There were times that I would want to go and play with other kids just to enjoy that stage of my life, but things were never easy. The sad part about this is my family in the Eastern Cape are not educated about this. It made me scared to even go home because people might judge me. I don't have a close relationship with my family because of this. My love life is being affected because I cannot be free and love fully while in a relationship.

I don't have bruises and wounds that anybody can see, but I am living with something that I cannot wash away. Something that will never vanish. My scars are not visible, but they are tearing me apart

Please note that some parts of the Impact Victim Statement were redacted as they are personal and refer to areas, we cannot mention in the publication.

DUO SENTENCED FOR GRANNY'S MURDER

Natasha Kara
RCM: KZN Division

The KwaZulu-Natal High Court, sitting in Scottburgh, sentenced Siyabonga Mphathi Hlengwa, to life and 15 years imprisonment for the murder and robbery of an elderly woman, Fikile Doreen Gumede (71), in June 2019 in the KwaMashu area.

However, Hlengwa did not act alone as he was recruited by his friend, Zama Gumede, who was also Gumede's granddaughter. Zama lived with her grandmother in KwaMashu.

Prior to the offences, Zama was disgruntled with her grandmother, believing that she (the grandmother) had unduly benefitted from Zama's late father's estate. To this end, she enlisted Hlengwa's assistance to kill her grandmother.

On the morning of 05 June 2019, Hlengwa attacked Gumede in her house, stabbing her to death. He stole her bank card, a television, a handbag and two cell-phones before fleeing the scene. Hlengwa used Gumede's bank card to withdraw various amounts of money, purchasing food, items of clothing, shoes, etc. Gumede's family eventually closed the account, putting an end to his shopping spree.

Following the incident, Gumede's family received cell-phone messages regarding the murder, and investigations into the cell-phone records established that the incriminating messages were being sent from a cell-phone belonging to Zama. This led to her arrest.

Zama subsequently led the police to the Kwamthethwa area in Empangeni, where Hlengwa was arrested. He was found in possession of one of Gumede's cell-phones. Gumede's second cell-phone was found at his home in the Lindelani area. Hlengwa then led the police to the place where he had sold Gumede's television.

Zama opted to plead guilty to the murder and a separation of trial was ordered. In her plea, she said that while she wanted her grandmother dead, the robbery was Hlengwa's idea. She said that she had not benefitted from the robbery. She was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for the murder, and she agreed to testify against Hlengwa in his trial.

In the prosecution against Hlengwa, Senior State Advocate Bonginkosi (Bonga) Mbokazi, led Zama's evidence in addition to the testimony of a traditional healer where Hlengwa had taken Zama for cleansing.

Adv. Mbokazi also led the evidence of bank statements showing the various amounts of money that were withdrawn from Gumede's account, following her death.



Senior State Advocate, Bonginkosi Bonga Mbokazi

According to Adv. Mbokazi, Zama's testimony was crucial because the evidence of pointing out and the confessions was excluded by the court. The state also handed in a Victim Impact Statement compiled by Gumede's son and facilitated by Court Preparation Officer, Thandeka Nadi Mofokeng. In his statement, the man said that he is still traumatised by the horrific manner in which his mother died. He said that she was a religious and respectful woman. He mentioned that she had taken very good care of Zama. She used Zama's inheritance wisely, ensuring that Zama's needs were catered for and that she enjoyed a comfortable life. He said that the incident has tainted their lives and has brought them stress, grief and depression.

Hlengwa was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and 15 years imprisonment for the Robbery with Aggravating Circumstances.

Note from the Prosecutor:

- Have you always wanted to be a Prosecutor?

I started my career with Legal Aid South Africa as a candidate attorney, as it was my life-long dream to be a lawyer. While working at Legal Aid South Africa, I was assigned to a court where Mr Vincent Hlatshwayo was the Presiding Officer. At some point, due to a certain issue, I resigned from the Legal Aid South Africa and stayed at home, looking for another job.

Following my resignation, I received a call from Mr Hlatshwayo asking me to come and see him. At this meeting, he enquired why I was no longer at court, and I advised him that I had resigned.

What drives/motivates you?

I am a person who will fight for the community, it is something that runs in my blood. I love what I do as it's something that comes second nature to me. My passion for Prosecution is more than the renumeration I receive. I am well-known in my community and people always approach me for assistance and advice on how to tackle crime related matters.

THE NPA'S COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN AND FIGHTING FEMICIDE

Mojalefa Senokotsoane
RCM: Northern Cape Division

In South Africa, femicide, the killing of women has reached alarming levels, leaving communities devastated and families shattered. As this brutal and senseless violence continues to plague the nation, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) has pledged to stand firm in the fight against femicide. With a relentless commitment to ensuring justice for victims, the NPA is working tirelessly to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and sentenced to the harshest penalties under the law.

By vigorously prosecuting these cases, the NPA aims to send a passionate message: that violence against women will not be tolerated, and that those who commit such heinous crimes will face long prison sentences. Through their efforts, the NPA seeks not only to bring justice to the victims, but to also create a society where women can live free from the fear of violence.

In a tragic case that has shocked the local community, Farel Bamberg, a 33-year-old man from Carnarvon, was



State Advocate Terche Engelbrecht

sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted of the brutal murder of his 33-year-old girlfriend, Roylene Jostine Mondsinger. The High Court of South Africa, Northern Cape Division, sitting in De Aar, found Bamberg guilty of murder, with the charge read in accordance with Section 51(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 105 of 1997.

The chilling incident unfolded between 03-04 November 2022. On the night of 03 November, the accused was reportedly heard arguing with Mondsinger outside their residence. A witness, who overheard the heated exchange, alerted Mondsinger's mother in the early hours of 04 November 2022, informing her of the disturbing argument. Concerned, the victim's mother immediately went to check on her daughter at the residence. She discovered her daughter's lifeless body lying on the kitchen floor, upon arrival.

Shocked and devastated by the sight, Mondsinger's mother called the police, who swiftly arrived at the scene and began their investigation. The authorities immediately arrested Bamberg and charged him with murder. During his trial, the accused pleaded not guilty to the charge, denying any involvement in the death of Mondsinger.

The prosecution, which was led by State Advocate Terche Engelbrecht, presented a damning case against the accused. A crucial piece of evidence in the trial was the post-mortem report, which revealed the horrific nature of the crime. According to the forensic pathologist's findings, Mondsinger's cause of death was determined to be

decapitation. The gruesome nature of the murder stunned the courtroom and left the community in disbelief. The brutal killing painted a tragic picture of the violence that often occurs behind closed doors in intimate relationships.

Throughout the trial, the prosecution meticulously presented evidence, including testimonies from witnesses who had heard the argument between the couple. The witnesses' accounts painted a picture of a volatile relationship, marked by tension and conflict. The state also argued that Bamberg's actions were premeditated and that he had taken extreme measures to end Mondsinger's life.

The accused claimed that he was not responsible for the murder, but his defence was dismissed by the court, which found the evidence against him overwhelming. The brutality of the crime, coupled with the witness testimony and forensic evidence, led the court to conclude that Bamberg had intentionally taken his girlfriend's life in a violent and premeditated manner.

In delivering the sentence, the judge stated that decapitation was a particularly heinous and brutal form of murder. The judge emphasised that there could be no justification for such extreme violence and that the sentence of life imprisonment was warranted to reflect the severity of the crime.

"Such violence against another human being, particularly in an intimate relationship, is unacceptable. The brutality of the murder and the violent end to Roylene Mondsinger's life is a tragedy that cannot be overlooked," the judge stated.

State Advocate Terche Engelbrecht expressed her satisfaction with the outcome, emphasising the importance of holding perpetrators of intimate partner violence accountable. "This sentence sends a clear message that there will be no tolerance for such brutal acts of violence," Engelbrecht said. "The court's decision ensures that the accused will be held accountable for taking the life of Roylene Mondsinger, and it serves as a reminder that justice will be pursued for victims of Gender-Based Violence."

The murder of Roylene Mondsinger has left her family and the community grieving. The case highlights the continued need to address and prevent violence in intimate relationships. While the sentence provides some measure of justice, the pain and loss suffered by the victim's loved ones cannot be undone.

The case also serves as a reminder of the importance of raising awareness about Gender-Based Violence and the critical role of the justice system in ensuring that perpetrators are prosecuted. The community of Carnarvon, like many others across South Africa, continues to grapple with the deep scars left by such violent crimes, underscoring the need for continued efforts to combat domestic violence and protect vulnerable individuals from harm.



PROSECUTION FIGHTS TOOTH AND NAIL TO SENTENCE A FATHER TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR RAPING HIS DAUGHTER

Mojalefa Senokoatsane
Acting RCM: Free State Division

In its continued pursuit to serve as the people's lawyers, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) remains at the forefront of the fight against crimes that target vulnerable individuals, especially women and children. This commitment was profoundly demonstrated in a recent case led by Regional Court Prosecutor Thabang Makokwe from the Bloemfontein Cluster, where a 27-year-old father from Majwemasweu, near Winnie Mandela in the Free State, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the horrific rape of his 7-year-old daughter. The Brandfort Regional Court found him guilty of this heinous crime, sending a strong message that crimes against children will not be tolerated and that justice will be relentlessly pursued.



Regional Court Prosecutor Thabang Makokwe

The rape occurred between 25 May 2023 and 09 June 2023, after the grandmother who had custody of the child was admitted to hospital. The court heard that because of the grandmother's hospitalisation, she had to leave the child at her grandfather's house for a short period until she was discharged.

During this period, the father of the child visited the family where his child was staying and requested that they allow his daughter to visit him at his parental home.

During the night, the accused would rape his daughter and when she tried to scream, he would cover her mouth with his hand so that no one could hear. The accused would threaten the child not to tell anyone when he took her back to her grandfather's house.

Upon her release from the hospital, the grandmother noticed that the victim was having difficulty walking. The grandmother asked what was wrong but the child was too scared to tell. After some persuasion, the child relented and informed her grandmother about what her father had done to her. The grandmother reported the matter to the police and the accused was arrested. He was charged with 1 count of rape which was read with the provisions of section 51 (1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the reason being that the alleged offence to a child and 1 count of incest crime as the accused is the biological father of the said child.

When the trial commenced, the state called two witnesses, first, the child and second, her grandmother. The prosecution led by Prosecutor Thabang Makokwe, made an application in terms of Sections 153,157 and 170A for the intermediary. The court then granted the said application and the victim testified through a closed circuit television. During her testimony, the victim painted a picture to the court of how

her father had brutally raped her and how the rape had changed and affected her. The prosecution submitted a Victim Impact Statement report which was compiled with the assistance of a Court Preparation Officer, Tieu Rafael Rametse, which indicates how the victim suffered during the ordeal and how her life has changed as a result of the accused's actions.

In his defence, the accused's version was that of bare denial on count 1 of rape and made the admission in terms of section 220 regarding count 2 being that of incest because he is indeed the biological father of the victim. The accused refuted the evidence by claiming that he was never with the victim during the night since she slept in the same bed with his mother. The accused remained adamant that he did not sleep with the victim and blamed the grandmother. He indicated that the maternal grandmother did not like him and that she was the one who influenced the victim to falsely implicate him with these serious allegations. He could not provide the court with reasons why the maternal grandmother hated him. The grandmother also testified that there was no bad blood between her and the accused.

The defence case closed by only leading the accused's evidence. Prosecutor Makokwe addressed the court that it should find the accused guilty as there was overwhelming evidence against him and that the victim was clear in all material aspects and honest in her testimony.

The defence asked the court to acquit the accused as the state was relying on a single witness, and the court should apply the cautionary rule.

In mitigation of the sentence, the defence asked for 15 years imprisonment indicating that the accused is 27 years of age and that he was young and can still be rehabilitated.

In sentencing, the court found the accused guilty and sentenced him to life imprisonment on count 1 and 1-year imprisonment on count 2, which would run concurrently with life imprisonment.

The court ordered that the accused's name be listed on the national sexual offences register and he was also declared unfit to possess a firearm in terms of section 103 of the Firearm Control Act.

"As people's lawyers, we wake up every day with a belief that our work will make a huge difference in the lives of the masses, as we fight for the voiceless and most vulnerable members of our communities. This sentence will surely bring closure to the victim as well as her family. This conviction underscores the NPA's vital role in safeguarding the most vulnerable members of society and ensuring that those who commit such atrocious acts face the full might of the law', said Prosecutor Makokwe, after the sentencing.



64-YEAR-OLD WOMAN AND TWO CO-ACCUSED SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR MURDER AND RELATED CHARGES

Sivenathi Gunya
Communications Officer: North West Division

The High Court of South Africa, sitting in the Klerksdorp Regional Court, has sentenced Monokwa Malewu (26), to life imprisonment for murder and seven years for attempted murder. Maseiso Clementinah Kokama (64), received a life sentence for murder and fifteen years for conspiracy to commit a crime, in violation of section 18 (2) (a) and (b) of the Riotous Assemblies Act 17 of 1956. Moeketsi Petrus Lesuhlo (47), a Lesotho citizen, was also sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and fifteen years for conspiracy to commit a crime under the same Act. The court ruled that all sentences would run concurrently with the life sentences that are imposed on each of the accused.

The charges stem from a tragic incident that occurred in Kanana, a township in Klerksdorp. Evidence presented in court revealed that the 64-year-old Kokama was in a relationship with Dingaan Dlamini, which ended hostily, leading to their separation. Shortly after, Dlamini became romantically involved with Nonzame Hondwana, Kokama became jealous and orchestrated a hit on Hondwana.

On 01 April 2022, while Hondwana was having dinner at home with Dlamini, someone knocked at the door and when Dlamini opened, the accused, Malewu indicated



State Advocate Kokeletso Phetlhu

that he was there to see Hondwana.

He then shot her multiple times and killing her instantly. Dlamini was also injured in the attack. The court heard that the murder was premeditated and that Kokama had paid R20,000 to have the hit carried out. Malewu and Kokama were arrested on 08 April 2022 and have been in custody since. Lesuhlo, accused number three, was apprehended on 17 February 2023. Following his arrest, Malewu voluntarily confessed to his involvement in the crime in a statement to Captain Olihile Mokae.

In court, State Advocate Kokeletso Phetlhu emphasised the rise of violent crimes, particularly those against women, urging the court to impose the harshest sentence. Judge President Hendricks denounced contract killings as among the most egregious crimes. In response, the Director of Public Prosecutions in the North West, Dr Rachel Makhari, welcomed the sentences and praised the efforts of the Police Service,

State Prosecutors and all involved in securing the convictions. "We stand united in our resolve to ensure justice is served, and we reiterate that violent crimes will not be tolerated," said Dr Makhari.

Advocate Phetlhu Kokeletso had this to say about the case:

1. How was it to prosecute an elderly person at the age of 64?

The prosecution of a 64-year-old accused of the murder of a younger woman who was her boyfriend's girlfriend was bizarre, firstly, one hardly expects a woman of her age to be embroiled in a fight over a boyfriend. Secondly, in most cases the harm is usually directed at the alleged offending party, but in this case, the accused wanted the girlfriend to be killed so that the boyfriend would return to her.

2. What are the lessons learned from this case?

It is important to note that conviction in this matter could not have been achieved if it was not for a concerted team effort from members of the NPA as well as members of the South African Police Service. Team work is absolutely crucial in such cases. Warrant Officer Van Heerden worked around the clock to ensure the smooth running of the proceedings.

3. How different was this case from other cases you have prosecuted?

The state led evidence of a Section 204 witness in this case and utilised the services of Witness Protection to secure the safety of the Section 204 witness. This case was different in a sense that it involved contract killing where the 64-year-old paid an amount of R20 000 for the murder to be carried out. The hit was carried out by members of a gang known as Marussia.

4. How did you persuade the court to hand down life imprisonment to the accused including the 64-year-old woman?

In persuading the court to impose life sentences on the 64-year-old and her co-accused, the state handed in two Victim Impact Statements in respect of two murder counts, which implored the court to impose the most severe sentences for the murders. The state highlighted the prevalence of murder of women in the country and the accused persons failed to show any remorse for their actions.



APPRECIATING PROSECUTORIAL EXCELLENCE

Adv Mthunzi Mhaga
NPA Spokesperson

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is proud to recognise and appreciate the exceptional dedication and expertise demonstrated by Prosecutors who have played a pivotal role in prosecuting organised crime cases related to infrastructure sabotage. These cases, particularly targeting Transnet's fuel pipelines, are critical to ensuring the protection and functionality of South Africa's vital infrastructure.

South Africa faces significant challenges from organised crime syndicates targeting critical infrastructure, as highlighted in the Strategic Organised Crime Risk Assessment for South Africa report by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC). The theft and sabotage of essential infrastructure, including Transnet's fuel pipelines, disrupts the supply of critical resources and poses a threat to the nation's economy and society.

Transnet, as a key State-Owned Enterprise (SOE), manages South Africa's fuel pipeline network, which is frequently targeted by criminals. The successful prosecution of individuals involved in such crimes has been instrumental in mitigating these threats. The NPA, in collaboration with other stakeholders, has made significant strides in protecting critical infrastructure through specialised prosecutorial expertise. Prosecutors dedicated to handling cases of infrastructure damage and sabotage have been at the forefront of efforts to disrupt organised crime networks and ensure justice is served.

The following cases were handled by the prosecutors who were handed the appreciation awards:

Prosecutor Kgakgamatsso Letsholo – Pretoria
Central Magistrate Court (Gauteng Division: Pretoria), finalised the case of S v Thobane Skosana and others under Boschkop CAS: 221/12/2022 & Silverton CAS: 507/12/2022. The accused were convicted of tampering with essential infrastructure being the fuel pipeline and the theft of fuel from the pipeline. They were sentenced to 20 imprisonment for tampering with infrastructure and 10 years imprisonment for theft of fuel.

Prosecutor Ntombifuthi Patience Mbonani – Vosloorus
Magistrate Court (Gauteng Local Division), prosecuted and finalised the case of S v Rodney Makalela and other, under Dawn Park CAS: 27/11/2022. The accused

were charged with tampering and theft of fuel from the Transnet Fuel pipeline. The accused were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for theft and 10 years imprisonment for theft of fuel.

Prosecutor Mphakamisi Teki – Sasolburg Magistrate (Free State), finalised the case of George Kharumba under Zamdela CAS: 12/08/2020. The accused were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for tampering and theft of fuel from the pipeline. Mr. Teki is also currently prosecuting the case of alleged kingpin of fuel from the pipeline, in S v Madoda Nxumalo and others under Harrismith CAS: 128/12/2022.

Prosecutor Thobeka Sinenjabulo Phungula – DPP Mbombela (Currently at VGM), handled a matter of S v Mabunda and other under Leslie CAS: 10/07/2022. The accused Bongani Msizi entered into a plea agreement with the State and he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for theft of fuel from the pipeline. Trial is continuing in respect of other accused.

Prosecutor Amukelani Rikhotso – Vereeniging Magistrate Court (Gauteng Division: Pretoria), prosecuted the matter of s v Razaad Okai, under Vereeniging CAS: 85/03/2020. The accused were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for tampering with the pipeline and 10 years imprisonment for theft of fuel.

To honour the dedication of these individuals, the NPA hosted an event to recognise five Prosecutors who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to prosecuting infrastructure sabotage cases without fear or favour and as such saving the economic harm and impact on the South African economy. The event was graced by the DNDPP: SOC, Adv Anton du Plessis who delivered the keynote address, the Special Director of Public Prosecutions: Organised Crime, Adv Elaine Moonsamy, DPP: Free State, Adv Navilla Somaru, Acting DPP: Mpumalanga, Mr Sonja Ntuli, DPP: Gauteng Division: Pretoria, Adv Sibongile Mzinyathi, DPP: Gauteng Local Division, Adv Andrew Chauke, Chief Director: Communications, Ms Bulelwa Makeke and other NPA colleagues who came to congratulate the five-star prosecutors.

Their remarkable efforts have played a vital role in safeguarding Transnet's fuel pipeline network and contributing to the fight against organised crime in South Africa. The fight against organised crime targeting critical infrastructure requires the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders. Prosecutors are at the forefront of this battle, ensuring that those who threaten the nation's vital resources face the full might of the law.

This recognition will serve as a testament to the importance of their work and reinforces the value of continued collaboration between the NPA, Transnet, and other stakeholders in protecting South Africa's infrastructure.



From left to right: Chief Director: Communications, Ms Bulelwa Makeke; DNDPP: SOC, Adv Anton du Plessis; DPP: Free State Division, Adv Navilla Somaru; Acting DPP: Mpumalanga Division, Mr Sonja Ntuli



DPP: Free State Division, Adv Navilla Somaru with award recipient, Prosecutor Mphakamisi Teki; Bidvest representative and SDPP: Organised Crime, Adv Elaine Moonsamy



DPP: Gauteng Division: Pretoria, Adv Sibingile Mzinyathi; DPP Free State Division, Adv Navilla Somaru; Acting DPP: Mpumalanga Division, Mr Sonja Ntuli with award recipients, Prosecutors Mphakamisi Teki and Amukelani Rikhotsso



SDPP: Organised Crime, Adv Elaine Moonsamy; DNDPP: SOC, Adv Anton du Plessis; DPP: Gauteng Local Division, Adv Andrew Chauke with award recipients, Prosecutors Thobeka Phungula and Ntombifuthi Mbonani

BELGIUM'S SEX WORKERS WIN MATERNITY PAY AND PENSION RIGHTS IN WORLD FIRST

Move by Lawmakers hailed as 'huge step forward', ending legal discrimination against Sex Workers

Jennifer Rankin in Brussels

Belgian sex workers have gained the right to sick days, maternity pay and pension rights under the first law of its kind in the world. Lawmakers voted in May 2024 to give sex workers the same employment protections as any other employee, in an attempt to clamp down on abuse and exploitation. The law, which went into force on Sunday, ensures that sex workers have employment contracts and legal protection.

It is intended to end a grey zone created in 2022 when sex work was decriminalised in Belgium but without conferring any protections on sex workers, or labour rights such as unemployment benefit or health insurance.

Under the law, sex workers have the right to refuse sexual partners or to perform specific acts and can stop an act at any time. Nor can they be sacked for these refusals.

Employers must be of "good character" with a business residence in Belgium; they must also ensure their premises are equipped with panic buttons, clean linen, showers and condoms.

The protections do not cover home working, or activities such as striptease and pornography.

The Belgian Union of Sex Workers described the law as "a huge step forward, ending legal discrimination against sex workers".

But it said the rules could "be instrumentalised" to reduce or eliminate sex work. It added: "We already see certain municipalities hiding behind the words 'safety' and 'hygiene' to promulgate very strict local regulations that make sex work almost impossible on their territory."

Some feminist organisations have criticised the law. When the bill was published in 2023, the Council of Francophone Women of Belgium said it would be "catastrophic" for young girls and victims of trafficking.

"To assume that prostitution exists and that we must protect workers is to accept this sexist violence and not to fight it," the head of the organisation told *Le Soir*.

COURT ORDERS FISHROT PLEA PROCEEDINGS TO CONTINUE

Legalbrief

Plea proceedings in the Fishrot fraud, corruption and racketeering trial should continue, acting Windhoek High Court Judge Moses Chinhengo has directed. In the judgment handed down at the court which is sitting at the Windhoek Correctional Facility, Chinhengo said four of the accused have been given reasonable time to secure funds for defence lawyers, and if they have not managed to get legal representation in this time they would have to continue without the assistance of defence lawyers.'

'A time must surely arrive, and it has, when the trial must proceed with the applicants acting for themselves,' Chinhengo said. The Namibian reports that he dismissed an application for the trial to be split into two separate trials. Former Justice Minister Sacky Shanghala and three other accused – James Hatuikulipi, Ricardo Gustavo and Pius Mwatelulo – applied for a separation of trials, claiming they need more time to make efforts to get legal representation for themselves while the trial of their co-accused, who are represented by defence lawyers, can then continue separately.

Chinhengo noted in his judgment that if Shanghala, Hatuikulipi, Gustavo and Mwatelulo cannot secure legal representation, they can bring an application in the High Court to have the Directorate of Legal Aid ordered to provide state-funded legal aid to them. However, they have chosen not to pursue such an application. The first six accused charged in connection with the Fishrot scandal – Shanghala, Hatuikulipi, Gustavo, Mwatelulo, former Fisheries & Marine Resources Minister Bernhard Esau and his son-in-law Tamson Hatuikulipi – were arrested in November 2019. They have been held in custody since then. Legalbrief reports that they are accused of having been involved in a scheme in which Icelandic companies paid to get access to Namibian fishing quotas between 2014 and 2019.

MAJOR NEW DECISION BY ESWATINI'S HIGHEST COURT AFFIRMS HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Legalbrief

Carmel Rickard

In an extraordinary judgment, the highest court in Eswatini has come out strongly supporting human rights and against the kingdom's police chief. The stance taken by the supreme court in this decision is almost unheard of in that country, particularly in the way that it outlines constitutional principles that must rule in democratic states.

This is a judgment for the record books: Eswatini's highest court has come out in favour of human rights and against the established order in that kingdom. All most unusual in a state whose human rights credentials, even in the courts, are constantly questioned.

The case is an appeal by the Royal Eswatini Police Service staff association (REPOSA) against a decision of the high court in 2022. The high court found in favour of Eswatini's national commissioner of police, the commission of correctional services and the attorney general. And that earlier court judgment is typical of what observers might have expected in its approach.

The supreme court decision, however, delivered with commendable speed on 29 November, can only be described a milestone.

The dispute between the two sides has its origins in a circular, issued by the ministry of public service in 2014. At the time it was said that the circular was at least in part intended to improve the lives and welfare of members of the Royal Eswatini Police Service by increasing their salaries.

But what happened in fact was something different.

It was to be implemented in two phases. The first would affect senior officers and it was immediately put in place. Phase two, affecting the more junior members, has never been implemented, even after ten years.

As the supreme court put it, 'government reneged from its legal obligations as contained in the circular, after awarding senior officers lofty salaries.' Of course, this led to ill feeling between the junior and senior officers, and, as the supreme court wrote, by failing to live up to its promises and creating that ill-will, the action of non-implementation 'was itself a threat to national security'

Ironically, given the current state of human rights in Uganda, the supreme court of Eswatini quotes a decision of Uganda's constitutional court in 2004, stressing that where human rights provisions conflict with other provisions of the constitution, 'human rights provisions take precedence, and interpretation should favour enjoyment of the human rights and freedoms.'

In the REPOSA case, 'there was no iota of violence or pending violence or likelihood of destruction of property or riotous assembly, but instead the junior officers were welcomed by the under-secretary at the cabinet offices.'

'Again, the holding of a meeting to discuss terms of employment cannot be a danger to national security. The commissioner (gave no reasons) for his actions except a display that he had powers to do what he did.'

Without justification, declared the court, 'his actions fall short of what is expected in a democratic society.'

Court orders government to honour commitment to junior officers

Finally, the five justices held that the high court order had to be overturned, the threatened disciplinary action against REPOSA members was unlawful and was not to proceed and finally, the disputed circular was declared to be binding on the government and it was directed to comply with it and honour its commitments to the junior officers within a 'reasonable time'.

As a final aside here, when so many people have been made a promise by government, perhaps 10 years could be considered a 'reasonable time' to take action – even for Eswatini?

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

This year marks the 26th anniversary of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign. This year's theme; "30 Years of Advancing Collective Action to End Violence Against Women and Children". The theme focuses on prevention and economic empowerment to foster financial independence and resilience.

Over the years, the campaign has raised awareness of the devastating impact that Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) has on women and children, and the social fabric of our society.

The 2024 campaign was launched on 25 November 2024 in the North-West. The 16 Days campaign forms part of the government's comprehensive 365 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children.

In an effort to address the scourge of GBVF, government adopted the National Strategic Plan (NSP) in 2020 which is being implemented by all sectors of society. Through the plan, we continue to work in partnership with the government and its agencies, independent institutions, civil society, development partners and businesses to address the high levels of GBVF.

This year's campaign emphasises addressing the root causes of GBVF, while promoting positive masculinity and gender equity, along with creating economic opportunities for women and children. Moreover, it affirms the importance of an all-of-society approach to combatting GBVF and the importance of multisectoral accountability.

The campaign aligns with the annual United Nations campaign from 25 November (International Day of No Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Other key commemorative days observed annually during these 16 days include World Aids Day on 1 December 2024 and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2024.



MAKHANDA NPA LEADS CHARGE AGAINST GBVF AT SPORTS DAY INITIATIVE

*Nokuthula Makupula
Communications Officer: Eastern Cape Division*

The Makhanda National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) recently took the lead in organising a transformative Interdepartmental and Private Business Sports Day, aimed at raising awareness about Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). This initiative brought together government departments, private businesses, and local organisations for a day to focus on both action and solidarity in tackling these critical issues.

Held in collaboration with the Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture, the event featured a 5km walk and indigenous games, designed not only to promote health and well-being, but also to engage the community in the fight against GBVF. By highlighting this issue, the NPA emphasised the importance of collective community involvement and the role each individual and organisation plays in creating safer environments for women, children, and vulnerable groups.

Makhanda: A Hotspot for GBVF

Recent reports have highlighted Makhanda as a hotspot for GBVF with a disturbing increase in incidents of violence against women and children. These troubling statistics underscore the urgency for continued intervention. In this context, the NPA's leadership in the sports day event was especially significant in reinforcing the need for a unified community effort to challenge GBVF head-on. The NPA's role in prosecuting these cases and working with various partners is critical in combating this pervasive issue.

A 5km Walk for Awareness

The event kicked off with an arduous 5km walk dedicated to raising awareness about GBVF. This walk was more than just an exercise; it was a statement of solidarity for the victims and survivors of GBVF, highlighting the need for society to create safe spaces and engage in open conversations. The walk was particularly poignant given the region's challenges with high rates of GBVF. It brought together individuals from various sectors united in the shared goal of advocating for change and sending a clear message that GBVF must be a priority issue in South Africa.

The NPA's Role in Combating GBVF

As the primary prosecuting authority, the NPA plays a pivotal role in ensuring that those responsible for GBVF are held accountable through the legal system. This event highlighted the NPA's commitment to combating GBVF both in the courtroom and within the community. Through strong partnerships with local law enforcement, social services, and the private sector, the NPA ensures a holistic approach to addressing this issue. The event served as a significant demonstration of the importance of collaboration in the fight against GBVF, with diverse groups working together toward a common goal.

A day of solidarity and action

The event was more than just a day of physical activities; it was a call to action. The 5km walk and indigenous games underscored the importance of collective responsibility in addressing the crisis of GBVF. The NPA, alongside its partners, reaffirmed its commitment to ending GBVF, ensuring justice for survivors, and holding perpetrators accountable. This event served as a powerful reminder that the fight against GBVF is ongoing, but through continued collaboration, meaningful change is possible.



A team of participants engaging in an indigenous game, fostering community spirit and unity while celebrating South Africa's rich cultural heritage. This activity reinforces the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility in creating stronger, safer communities.



Various stakeholders demonstrating a united front in the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Their collective effort highlights the power of community action in creating safer spaces for all.



The NPA stands firmly against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), with their collective efforts sending a strong statement in the fight for safer communities.



The Makhanda NPA team leading the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Their active participation highlighted the NPA's commitment to raising awareness and fostering community action to create safer spaces for all.



At the forefront, Deputy Director: SOCA Adv. Maggie Tserere and Senior State Advocate Mlindeli Mkhwane lead the pack in the team's effort to combat Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), showcasing their commitment to raising awareness and driving community action for a safer society.

NPA JOINS FORCES WITH VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS IN FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

*Phindi Mjononwane
RCM: Gauteng Local Division*

The NPA continues to be a leader in the government's quest to have safer communities, by ensuring that perpetrators of crimes against members of the public are prosecuted and sentenced accordingly.

The NPA has been at the forefront of ensuring that those who are caught for crimes related to Gender-Based Violence and Femicide are always sentenced to the maximum period applicable for such heinous crimes, particularly against women, children and vulnerable people.

Human trafficking is a stark and alarming reality in South Africa, posing significant challenges to the country's social fabric. As part of its ongoing efforts to combat the scourge, government, through the Department of Social Development (DSD) launched a counter-trafficking initiative. This initiative seeks to educate communities about the prevalence and severity of human trafficking, aiming to provide citizens with the knowledge to recognise and prevent such crimes.

In line with the National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) commitment to advocating for vulnerable groups and ensuring justice for victims, the organisation participated in the DSD's Annual Trafficking in Persons Provincial Event held at the Braamfischer Community Hall in Soweto on 24 October 2024. The event, themed "Leave No One Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking" (Operation Buyisa), brought together various key stakeholders among them were Senior State Advocates, Tshimangadzo Mbodi and Leisha Surendra from the NPA, who shared their expertise and commitment to eradicating human trafficking. Also in attendance were representatives from the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Department of Labour (DOL), all of whom discussed their roles in addressing the issue.



Braamfischer community members listening attentively to Senior State Advocate Tshimangadzo Mbodi

In her address, Advocate Mbodi emphasised the NPA's central role in prosecuting human trafficking cases and reaffirmed the organisation's determination to protect the most vulnerable members of society, particularly women and children. She expressed concern over the increasing prevalence of human trafficking, stating that, "although the scourge seems to be getting out of hand, the NPA remains committed to combating and alleviating the problem to ensure the safety of victims."

Brennan Adams from the DHA urged the community to remain vigilant and aware of the signs of trafficking. He stressed that human trafficking is a pervasive issue that can occur anywhere, urging individuals to report suspicious activities to authorities. "Human trafficking is prevalent everywhere and our role as the department is to ensure that we safeguard our borders and protect the most vulnerable members of our society," Adams said.



The event also served as a platform for survivors of human trafficking to share their harrowing stories. Some of the survivors recounted their traumatic experiences, shedding light on the often unseen horrors of trafficking. Their testimonies underscored the impact that trafficking has on individuals and communities, while also highlighting the resilience of those who have survived such ordeals.

The Director of Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment Services at the DSD, Pearl Moabelo, highlighted the importance of interdepartmental collaboration in raising awareness about human trafficking. She explained that various government agencies and non-governmental organisations had come together to create a united front against the crime, sharing resources and knowledge to better protect vulnerable people. "The fight against human trafficking is a collective effort," Moabelo said. "It requires the involvement of every sector of society, from law enforcement to social services, to combat the scourge effectively."

The initiative is part of a broader government strategy to crack down on perpetrators of human trafficking and provide support for victims. The NPA, together with other law enforcement agencies have committed to strengthening legal frameworks, improving victim support services and increasing awareness at the community level.



Senior State Advocate Tshimangadzo Mbodi and Leisha Surendra addressing community members

WELLNESS TIPS FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

The festive season is a time for celebration, but it can also bring its own set of stressors and temptations that can affect your well-being. Here are some wellness tips to help you enjoy the holidays while maintaining balance and health:

MAINTAIN A BALANCED DIET

Indulge Moderately and stay hydrated: It's tempting to overeat during holiday meals but try to balance indulgence with healthier options. Opt for smaller portions of rich foods and focus on nutrient-dense items like vegetables, fruits, and lean proteins.

EXERCISE REGULARLY

Move Daily and Enjoy Active Celebrations: Don't let the festive season derail your exercise routine. Even a short walk after meals or a 10-minute home workout can help you feel energized and reduce stress.

PRIORITISE SLEEP

Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine: Wind down by avoiding screens an hour before bed and practicing relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.



MANAGE STRESS

Set Realistic Expectations and Practice Mindfulness or Meditation. The holidays can be overwhelming. Be kind to yourself and set reasonable expectations for gift-giving, cooking, and socializing. Take a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness or guided meditation. This can help reduce stress.

TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Set Boundaries and Spend Quality Time with Loved Ones: It's easy to overcommit during the holidays. Politely say "no" to events or obligations that may overwhelm you or compromise your well-being and surround yourself with supportive people who lift you. Meaningful connections can enhance your overall sense of well-being.

PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Acknowledge Your Emotions: The holidays can be difficult for some, whether due to grief, loneliness, or stress. It's okay to not feel "festive" all the time. Reach out for support if you need it.

Practice Gratitude: Take time to reflect on the positive aspects of your life and the season. Keeping a gratitude journal can help shift your focus toward joy and fulfilment.

STAY SAFE

Drive responsibly and protect your health.

By integrating these wellness tips into your routine, you can fully embrace the joy of the season while taking care of your physical and mental health.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH NPA EHWP

Employee Health and Wellness Programme (EHWP) offers a range of support options tailored to the needs of NPA employees:

Confidential Counselling Services: For anyone facing mental health challenges or stress. NPA EHWP can be accessed on the tollfree number - 0800 611 283

Employees can also reach out through the USSD number

*134*44184# to receive a call back from a registered and experienced therapist.

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