

MM 23



Zackie Achmat <zackie.achmat@gmail.com>

FW: Media release: Z Nkonyana hearing - Monday, 19 May 2008 - Khayelitsha Regional Court

Zackie Achmat <zackie@pixie.co.za>
To: activist@tac.org.za

Dear All

Good report. TAC Khayelitsha participated.

Zackie



Media Release:

The Zoliswa Nkonyana Murder Trial - Khayelitsha Regional Court – 19th May 2008

The Western Cape Alliance for the 07-07-07 End Hate Campaign has reiterated their concern, frustration and indignation at the postponement for more than 3 months of the long-awaited trial of those Nkonyana, killed because of her homosexual orientation in February 2006.

Zoliswa was violently stoned and beaten to death by a mob of 20 young men. Only 9 of the 20 have been arrested and charged. The trial was postponed to 22 August 2008. Magistrate Watton issued a to be "fully prepared for a trial hearing" and that no further delays "would be condoned".

Members of the Western Cape Alliance of 070707 End Hate Campaign were present at the court to monitor the case, along with representatives of the Commission on Gender Equality. More than one organizations such including Triangle Project, The Treatment Action Campaign, Gender Dynamix, Engender, Rape Crisis, The Inner Circle and Legal Aids Network, staged a vigorous protest outside the court waving posters demanding justice for Zoliswa and her family, and calling for legislation which addresses hate crimes.

Provincial alliance partners are outraged that, as a result no legislation around hate crimes in South Africa, Zoliswa's case will be tried as an "ordinary" murder. "Violence and brutality against black lesbians same priority, media attention, vigorous police investigation and access to justice as similar crimes in well-resourced urban areas do. Political leaders are quick to condemn crime and violence if they are families. Ordinary women in rural areas and previously disadvantaged communities still find themselves on the margins and periphery of those communities. Activists and human rights defenders need crimes of hate and violence against vulnerable women, particularly black lesbians, is condemned and uprooted from its very core," said the Alliance's spokesperson and provincial convenor, Marlow Va

Triangle Project's director, Vanessa Ludwig expressed her anger at the increase in fundamentalism and misogyny based in heterosexual male power and privilege. "These men believe it's their right to 'they see access to women's bodies as their right. Women are still seen as commodities owned by men, especially in township and rural communities where the daily lived realities of women are far more race, and gender and heterosexism are all contributing factors in justifying the oppression, victimization, marginalization and abuse women – very often to the point of taking the lives of women. We know when we do not consider the alarmingly high rate of violence against women to be national emergency."

Addressing the crowd after the hearing, Commissioner Yvette Abrahams from the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) explained the reasoning behind the postponement. "The CGE is dedicated to make hate brought to our attention. Our legal officer, Keegan Lekay, will work closely with the State to ensure that full justice is sought for the murderers of Zoliswa. I urge the community to remain vigilant: orientation so that women feel supported and protected as survivors of these crimes."

Funeka Soldaat from Women In Action in Khayelitsha added her voice of concern and condemnation. "Women must know that they have rights. We cannot allow race, status and class to become barriers or support. We can't do this on our own, but we cannot wait for others to fight for us - we need to stand up, become visible and challenge the pillars that upholds destructive, stereotypical and discrimination

In a memorandum handed to the State Prosecutor, the WC End Hate Alliance calls upon the prosecuting authorities to ensure the following:

- That the vulnerable witnesses and their families receive the necessary protection.
- That the family of Zoliswa Nkonyana are able to access the right to information.
- That based on witness statements, hate and prejudice resulting from homophobic attitudes are fully investigated as the motives behind the crimes.
- That the State ensures a speedy trial and that no further undue postponements will be tolerated. Delayed justice is no justice for Zoliswa and her family.
- That the State Prosecutor ensures that the accused are not only found guilty of murder, but that the issue of hate, homophobia and prejudice are highlighted and taken into account.
- That the State ensures that the highest penalty and sentence is passed and that a clear message against crimes of hate is sent to the community.

Campaign 07-07-07 is an Alliance of national & provincial organisations from the LGBTI, Women and HIV and AIDS sectors as well as individual human rights activists and human rights defenders against crimes of hate.

Issued: Tuesday, 20 May 2008

CONTACT PERSONS

5
MM

1. Provincial Alliance Convener: Marlow Valentine - 0836685935 / 021 4483812 (endhate@triangle.org.za)
2. Commission for Gender Equality: Keegan Lekay - 0838781386 / 021 4264080
3. Triangle Project / Joint Working Group: Vanessa Ludwig - 0823075923 / 021 4483812

Marlow Valentine
Community Engagement and Empowerment Manager - Triangle Project
Challenging Homophobia, Appreciating Sexual Diversity
Physical Address: Unit 29 Waverley Business Park, Dane Street, Mowbray 7700
Postal Address: PO Box 13935, Mowbray, 7705
Tel 021 4483812 Fax 021 4784089
Email: marlow@triangle.org.za
Website: www.triangle.org.za

This e-mail is subject to a disclaimer, available at <http://www.triangle.org.za/disclaimer.html>

No virus found in this outgoing message.
Checked by AVG.
Version: 7.5.524 / Virus Database: 269.23.21/1455 - Release Date: 2008/05/19 05:04 PM