

# The Weekly

## NTOMBELA CALLS FOR TOUGH RAPE SENTENCES

February 15, 2013

The MEC for social development, Sisi Ntombela, has condemned the increase of rape incidents in the province and called on law enforcement agencies and courts to work together to arrest and impose stiff sentences on those convicted of rape.

Ntombela's plea follows the arrest of nine young men in Heilbron for allegedly assaulting a man and raping his wife.

Ntombela, who has led several marches against the abuse of women and children in her capacity as the provincial chairperson of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), has called on the court not to grant the suspects bail.

She told The Weekly that it was particularly disturbing that young people were committing heinous crimes such as rape.

"It's hurting to see that we are being abused and attacked by our own children. I am just happy that police managed to trace and arrest the culprits, Gone are the days when we felt safe around our own kids.

"It's very disturbing to note that our kids have the audacity to attack a man and rape his wife. I call on community organisations and all the people of Phiritona to press for justice so the guilty are jailed," said Ntombela.

Incensed residents of Phiritona outside Heilbron in the Ngwathe Local Municipality came to the local magistrate's court in droves this week, for the trial of nine young men who are charged with assaulting a man and raping his wife.

The residents came to show their support to the victims, as well as demonstrate disgust at the accused, who are all teenagers.

One of the community members, Nthateng Likgethe, called on the court to give the suspects lengthy jail sentences.

"I came here to see them (the accused). I am confident that justice will prevail. They have caused both the rape victim and her man to go through hell and they must rot in jail."

Another resident, Tseko Maduna, concurred with Likgethe.

"As residents we are here to convince the court to mete out that it has to issue harsh sentences against the culprits. We are saddened by the evil actions of the nine boys; we are also calling on the police to beef up patrols in our streets."

The suspects were all remanded in custody prison pending investigations.

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“The people are furious and were planning to take matters into their hands if the suspects were granted bail. We are happy that they will be locked for the duration of their trial,” said Motlalepule Kotolwane.

According to the police, the boys are aged between 16 and 19; four of them are from Sasolburg, while one is from Sebokeng in Vaal. The other four are Heilbron locals.

The teenagers are reported to have been intoxicated with dagga on the night of the attack. They bumped into the victim and her partner. According to Northern Free State police spokesperson Peter Kareli, the youngsters allegedly demanded money from the couple and threatened to kill them.

“They assaulted the man but he managed to escape to seek help, which saw the youths apprehended,” he said.

[Source: [www.theweekly.co.za](http://www.theweekly.co.za)]