



Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim.

PICTURE: JACQUES NAUDE

Mobilisation, solidarity offer hope

Day Seven: World Aids Day

The Epidemiologist / researcher / academic: Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim

Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate Scientific Director of Caprisa, an NRF A-rated scientist and international associate of the National Academy of Medicine, is an infectious diseases epidemiologist.

She is the recipient of several prestigious local and international awards, including the 2013 African Union's Kwame Nkrumah Prize for Science and Technology, 2014 TWAS-Lenovo Prize from The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) "for her exceptional and distinguished contributions to HIV prevention and women's health", and South Africa's highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe, from the president of South Africa in 2013.

Professor Abdool Karim's main research interests are in understanding the evolving HIV epidemic in South Africa; factors influencing acquisition of HIV infection in adolescent girls; and sustainable strategies to introduce HAART in resource-constrained settings.

She holds professorship in

Clinical Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, USA, and in Public Health at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, University of KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa.

Professor Abdool Karim is currently chair of the South African National Aids Council Prevention Technical Task Team, a member of the UNAids Scientific Expert Panel and scientific adviser to the Executive Director of UNAids.

Notably she was the principal investigator of the landmark Caprisa 004 tenofovir gel trial which provided proof of concept for the use of anti-retrovirals to prevent HIV infection in women highlighted by Science as one of the Top 10 scientific breakthroughs in 2010.

16 Days of Activism: Karim explains what it means to her

"The 16 days of activism against gender-based violence in South Africa overlaps with World Aids Day, that falls on December 1 each year.

"There is a bi-directional relationship between these two epidemics that are closely intertwined, and where young women, aged 15-24 years, who have the least power in society, bear the brunt of both epidemics. While we have

made much progress on transforming Aids through the use of anti-retrovirals from an inevitably fatal condition to one that is chronic and manageable, and reduced transmission from infected mothers to infants from 30-40% to less than 2%, young women continue to experience high rates of new HIV infections and have limited options to keep themselves HIV-free, particularly if they have a partner who is HIV infected, or of unknown HIV status, and with whom they cannot negotiate monogamy, use of condoms, circumcision or treatment adherence if infected.

"With both epidemics, love and trust keeps women in relationships with partners that place their lives at risk. Women take responsibility and find excuses for their partner's inexcusable behaviour. Feelings of shame, stigma and discrimination, whether real or perceived, keep women silent.

"In the case of HIV, where women seek and access health care services, and are more likely to have an HIV test and know their status, being the messenger of a positive result is associated with loss of security, accommodation and experience of physical and emotional abuse.

"It is sad that despite

opportunities provided by our liberal and progressive constitution for full participation and opportunities for men and women to contribute fully economically, politically,

culturally and at a societal level, it is compromised both by gender-based violence and HIV, and where advances we have made in ensuring survival of infant and girl and boy children diverges with onset of secondary sexual development.

"Teenage pregnancies and curtailment of secondary schooling leads to vicious cycles of dependence on men and increasing risk of HIV and experience of gender-based violence.

"To change the face of these two epidemics needs substantial rethinking and conceptualisation at a structural level on constructions of masculinity and femininity and the value placed on women and their rights.

"The coercive arm of the law offers some hope and protection to vulnerable women experiencing both epidemics, but it is social mobilisation and solidarity that will enable true transformation and the real possibility for all women to reach their full potential in a safe and healthy manner."



25 November - 10 December

Court told of 11-year-old's rape claims in Chatsworth

NOELENE BARBEAU

A PINETOWN man accused of raping an 11-year-old girl says the 11 counts he faces are the result of a vendetta against him by the girl's step-brother.

The 54-year-old man and the girl's mother, 50, yesterday told the Chatsworth Magistrate's Court they intended pleading not guilty to the 11 counts, which included child abuse, rape, compelled rape and sexual assault.

The court also heard from the investigating officer, Constable Anele Jingela, that the girl's mother had sold her daughter for sex to the man on more than one occasion.

Jingela also said the mother was alleged to have undressed the 11-year-old and locked her in a room with the Pinetown man.

Families of both accused were in court, along with community activists, who voiced their disgust as they listened to the detailed allegations.

Outside court, Chatsworth residents chanted: "No bail. Go to jail."

The pair, who cannot be named to protect the minor's identity, were arrested on November 20 and had first appeared in court last week.

According to the Pinetown man's affidavit in support of bail, read out to the court yesterday by his attorney, Shameer Goolabjith, he is married with three adult children and supports his family as a taxi owner and taxi driver.

The man said he had ob-

tained a peace order from the Pinetown Magistrate's Court on November 19 against the girl's stepbrother, which, he felt, led to the "contrived charges" against him in this case.

He said he first heard of the rape allegations on November 16, when the girl's stepbrother allegedly stoned his vehicle.

He also accused the stepbrother of being a drug addict and had an affidavit from the stepbrother's father in support of this allegation.

He said the girl was sometimes seen walking alone on the road late at night, which was "not normal behaviour for a young child".

He denied touching the young girl and denied ever being left alone with her.

He felt the evidence against him was extremely weak and said the girl had never complained to anyone before this.

The mother's affidavit was also read out to court by her attorney, Ramiah Narain.

The court heard that she was married with one child and lived with her daughter in Chatsworth.

She intended pleading not guilty and said her daughter was being influenced by her stepson.

The pair agreed to abide by any bail conditions.

Prosecutor Owen Subban called Jingela, from the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit in Chatsworth, to testify in opposition to bail.

Jingela told the court of three incidents between Sep-

tember and November, as relayed to her by the young girl.

The first was on the girl's 11th birthday, in September.

It is alleged the mother was seated in the man's taxi with him when she had called the girl to join them.

The girl was then apparently told to perform oral sex on the man and, when she refused, the mother apparently hit her and then showed her how to perform the task. It was then alleged that the pair had sex in front of the girl.

The second incident was in November at the girl's home.

It is alleged the mother had undressed the girl, warned her "not to do anything stupid, like scream", and locked her in the mother's bedroom with the man, who is then alleged to have had sex with the girl.

Jingela testified that afterwards, the girl said she saw the man pay her mother R300.

"The mother then told the girl to go have a bath," she testified.

The third incident was on November 8, and again at the girl's home, and alleged with the same modus operandi as the second incident. Again, she saw the man give her mother money afterwards.

On November 15, Jingela said the girl fled to her stepbrother's house. She had attended a family function with her mother, and her stepbrother lived nearby.

Jingela said a report was made the following day.

The bail application contin-

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Eighteen years for abusing child, 8

A 29-YEAR-OLD man has been sentenced to 18 years imprisonment for raping an eight-year-old girl in KwaXimba, police said yesterday.

Lindelani Mbatha was sentenced last week for the rape of the girl in 2012.

"It is said that the victim, who was eight years old at the time, had gone to Mbatha's room in the KwaXimba area to fetch some food. He closed the door, raped the victim and gave her R5," said police spokesman Thulani Zwane.

"The victim did not reveal the incident up until she was questioned by her mother for poor performance at school. The victim then revealed that she was actually raped twice by the accused, on different occasions."

The Pinetown Family violence, Child protection and Sexual offences (FCS) unit took over the investigation and gathered enough evidence for a conviction. - African News Agency



25 November - 10 December

Paternity test spurs baby sale

Partner demanded maintenance back

SHERLISSA PETERS

THE young woman who tried to sell her 19-month-old son for R5 000 via Gumtree, committed the shocking crime after her boyfriend discovered he was not the baby's father and demanded the return of his maintenance money.

Crying silently in the dock of the Pietermaritzburg Regional Court yesterday, the 20-year-old woman from Azalea township in Imbali was convicted after pleading guilty to one count of trafficking persons, acquiring proceeds as a result of unlawful activity, and a count of contravening the Children's Act.

The woman was arrested in October in a police sting after the Hawks were advised of the advert.

Undercover

The undercover operation was conducted at the KFC outlet in Chief Albert Luthuli Street.

In her plea, read out by her legal aid advocate, Jeffrey Mthimkhulu, the woman told Magistrate Rose Mogwera and a packed court gallery that she became pregnant in 2013 when

she was 18 years old.

"I was no longer attending school and I was in love with two boyfriends.

"When I fell pregnant, I did not know who the actual biological father was, but I told the two of them I was pregnant," she said.

One of her boyfriends immediately denied paternity and disappeared, while the other said he wanted to see the baby first. The little boy was born on January 20, last year.

The woman's boyfriend saw the baby in February and accepted that it was his. He then started to provide financial support for the child of R1 300 a month.

The young woman said she and her boyfriend had an argument this year over an issue she could not recall, and he then demanded a paternity test.

"All three of us, my boyfriend, my child and I, were subjected to the DNA test. Two weeks later, my boyfriend sent me an SMS saying that he was excluded as being the biological father of my son," the woman said.

It was heard in court that the woman's boyfriend then demanded that she pay him

back the money. He demanded R24 000.

It was subsequent to this demand that the woman placed the advert on Gumtree, advertising the baby for sale for R5 000.

Two days after doing so, she received a call from an Indian woman, who showed interest in buying the child. The mother, who is unemployed, was unaware this was an undercover police agent.

Action

She was subsequently arrested by Captain Jageesh Devnarain "JD" Singh and other members of the local Hawks team, who swung into action after they were told of the advert.

The female officer had contacted the woman, discussed the fee and made arrangements to meet her.

The policewoman then met the mother, with the toddler present, at KFC and negotiated the deal there.

Police handed over R5 000 to her in R200 notes and she said her goodbyes to the baby. As she left the restaurant, the rest of the police team surrounded her and she was arrested.

After consultations with

Captain Singh, prosecutor Val Dafel and the woman's relatives, Magistrate Mogwera granted the woman bail of R2 500, pending her sentencing hearing on February 29 next year.

Sentencing had to be adjourned to allow the state and defence to compile probation officer, correctional supervision and psychologists' reports.

Bail was granted subject to strict conditions, including that the woman report to the Plessislaer police station twice a week, and she has been placed under house arrest.

Mogwera implored the woman's mother, who was present in court, to "exercise control over her daughter" and make sure she returned to court for sentencing.

Addressing the young woman, Mogwera said: "I have decided to fix bail. I am doing this primarily because I do not believe you will run away, and I do not believe you are a danger to society.

"You are a first offender and I believe you will adhere to the bail conditions. Please do not disappoint me."

The child is in the custody of the department of social services.

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