

Mozambican man gets eight life terms for child rape

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Child rapist Raul Balele. Picture: Ilse de Lange.

The man's victims ranged in age from seven to 15.

A Mozambican man who kept a 15-year-old girl locked up in his shack as a sex slave and repeatedly raped her and three other young girls was a disgrace to his family, the community and to other men, a high court judge said before sentencing him to eight life terms.

Sentencing Raul Balele (47) to life imprisonment on seven charges of rape and one of human trafficking, Judge Vincent Ratshibvumo said if there was any harsher sentence available, he would have imposed it.

“The accused is a disgrace to us as men because as a result of what he did children don't trust us and run away when they see us, thinking it can be another Balele.

“...Word needs to go out ... that life imprisonment will be imposed on anyone who does not respect the rights of our children,” the judge said.

A case was opened against Balele in 2015 after his then girlfriend caught him having sex with her 11-year-old daughter.

It then turned out that it wasn't the first time he'd had sex with the child, who regarded him as a father, but he had done so on many occasions with her and two of her friends, then aged nine and seven.

The case was closed as he could not be traced, but he did not learn his lesson and hardly 10 months later trafficked a 15-year-old relative from Mozambique to come and stay with him as his sex slave.

He kept her captive and raped her on several occasions. She was already pregnant with his child when she managed to escape.

Judge Ratshibvumo said Balele had broken the trust of the girl who revered him as a father figure; he wondered how a man could be so desperate for sex that he broke his own relative's virginity.

The emotional trauma Balele inflicted was permanent. To rub salt in the wound, he refused to let the girl have an abortion; she would now have to live with the consequences of the crime for the rest of her life.

The judge said it was unfortunate that some of Balele's family members had blamed his victim and her mother for what he did to gratify his uncontrolled sexual desires. He could now no longer support them financially.

He said Balele had clearly preyed on children and society deserved an environment without criminals like him in it.

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