

Beat: Miscellaneous

South African serial killer sentenced to life for 5 murders

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USPA News - A South African man who lured women by offering them rides has been sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of raping and killing at least five women in 2010, prosecutors said on Friday. It is believed the man may also be responsible for other murders.

Ntokozi Skhumbuzo Mthimkhulu, 32, was linked to all five murders through DNA evidence. He was sentenced at Mtunzini High Court in KwaZulu-Natal province to five life sentences plus 45 years after being found guilty of five counts of murder, three counts of rape, and five counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances. According to prosecutors, between May 2010 and August 2010, Mthimkhulu would target women who were arriving at or leaving from a bus and taxi station in the remote KZN town of Empangeni. He would lure his victims into his car by promising to take them to their onward destination, but instead he took them to nearby bushes or sugar cane plantations where he robbed, raped, and killed them. Even though Mthimkhulu initially maintained his innocence, the man later told investigators that he was angry at his mother for abandoning him at a young age, and expressed bitterness over the fact that his girlfriend had aborted their child. But in handing down the sentence, presiding officer Nompumelelo Hadebe said those events were "no justification for the heinous crimes committed." Willies Mchunu, a provincial official whose portfolio includes community safety, welcomed the sentencing. "Once again our justice system has emerged victorious. We applaud the decision as it sends a clear message to criminals that they do not have a place in our society," he said. Mthimkhulu is also a suspect in a sixth murder, which occurred in the Empangeni area during the same period in 2010.

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