

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Public Statement**

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### **South Africa: Court's judgement a positive step forward against hate crime**

The conviction of a South African man by the Johannesburg High Court for the rape and killing of a lesbian woman and the strong condemnation by the presiding judge of the discriminatory attitudes fuelling these crimes is a positive step forward and will help in addressing hate crime in the country, Amnesty International said today.

Lekgoa Motleleng was convicted and sentenced for the rape and murder of Duduzile Zozo in Thokoza, near Johannesburg, in June last year. In delivering his sentence, Judge Tshifiwa Maumela stated that "no-one has been given the right to correct others when it comes to the right to love their own gender".

The rape and murder of 26-year old Duduzile Zozo, apparently because she refused Motleleng's sexual advances, caused a public outcry and led to a concerted effort by the authorities to investigate and bring to justice the perpetrator of this crime.

"It is shocking that these hate crimes continue to occur in South Africa when the Constitution clearly recognises the right of all people to human dignity, equality and freedom regardless of their sexual orientation," said Deprose Muchena, Regional Director for Amnesty International in Southern Africa.

"The judge's reported comments condemning discrimination against individuals on the grounds of their sexual orientation and his recognition of the gravity of the crime committed has demonstrated to the wider public that violence targeted against a person because of their sexual orientation is wrong, a violation of their human rights and will be punished," said Muchena.

This judgement has occurred in the context of increased efforts by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development officials with members of Civil Society Organizations to encourage effective prevention and improved investigations of targeted violence and other acts of discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals.

There are lessons to be learned from the successful investigation and prosecution in the Duduzile Zozo case as violence against LGBTI people persists in South Africa and there are deeply entrenched problems caused by biased attitudes, the lack of skills and effective management in the conduct of investigations into other incidents, and

consequently undermining the successful prosecution of perpetrators of similar hate crimes. The South African government must continue in its efforts to ensure the human rights of all South Africans without discrimination.

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