

## Serial rapist a danger to society

Written by reporter

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Convicted serial rapist Tsediso Letsoenya was a dangerous criminal and a danger to society, it was contended in the Cape High Court on Monday.

Prosecutor Christenus van der Vijver told that court he had "absolutely no doubt about this". Van der Vijver presented argument to Judge Abe Motala and two assessors as to an appropriate sentence to be imposed on Letsoenya on Friday.

Letsoenya is to be sentenced on 28 counts of rape, of which eight qualify for life sentences, and eight of robbery for which he qualifies for minimum sentences of 15 years on each of the robbery charges.

Van der Vijver said he had intended to request the court to declare Letsoenya a dangerous criminal, which would have required Letsoenya's appearance in court again before his eventual release on parole.

The prescribed sentence for someone declared a dangerous criminal is in fact more severe than a life sentence of 25 years, in the sense that an offender sentenced to life does not have to first appear in court prior to his eventual release on parole.

Van der Vijver said case law dictated that where possible, an offender had to be given a life sentence rather than be declared a dangerous criminal.

According to the Supreme Court of Appeal, life imprisonment was the ultimate sentence in South Africa, as it had replaced the death penalty, he said.

Van der Vijver added: "Where a life sentence can be imposed, you cannot declare an offender a dangerous criminal."

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Van der Vijver said it was of utmost importance for the court to establish "what makes the accused tick", but this had been impossible because all Letsoenya was willing to say about the many rapes was that he could not remember them. The judge responded: "I still don't know what makes him tick."

Van der Vijver said if ever there was a case where one could say that the facts spoke for themselves, this was such a case.

He said the rapes had all been carefully planned and each time Letsoenya had ensured he was at a place such as a railway station where he could carefully choose his victims.

He said the rapes had taken place over a protracted period of time, and Letsoenya had had ample time to come to his senses and stop.

Van der Vijver said Letsoenya had only stopped due to the intervention of the police.

He said rape was the most degrading and humiliating ordeal a woman could experience.