

Mitchells Plain man accused of raping baby set free

The 57-year-old man charged with the rape of his neighbour's one-year-old daughter has been set free due to a lack of evidence. On Wednesday, police confirmed charges against him had been withdrawn provisionally while they await DNA test results. After his release late on Tuesday night, the accused was taken to a secret location for his safety.

Provincial spokesman for the National Prosecuting Authority, Eric Ntabazalila, said a decision was made to release him while they await the DNA test results, which have been "prioritised". "I can confirm that after careful consideration of factors and analysis of the evidence in the docket, the State took a decision to provisionally withdraw charges against the accused pending the outcome of the DNA (tests)," he said.

Police spokesperson, Captain FC van Wyk, also confirmed his release: "The case against the accused was withdrawn by the Senior Public Prosecutor (SPP) pending a DNA report. The accused was released on condition that he stay out of the Mitchells Plain area for his safety. DNA analysis was prioritised by SPP for DNA report."

The accused was arrested last Thursday after the baby's mother found blood on her nappy. The child was in the care of her nanny in Woodlands, Mitchells Plain at the time of the incident. Angry community members gathered outside his house, baying for his blood.

On Monday, when the accused appeared at the Mitchells Plain Magistrate's Court, the Lentegour Community Policing Forum revealed he was a convicted rapist dating to an incident more than 20 years ago. Community members also demanded the child's nanny be arrested as an accessory.

Denwor Olhson, the public relations officer for the Lentegour CPF, says they are disappointed at his release and hoped police will prioritise the investigation. He asked the community to remain calm while the police do their work. "At the moment the State doesn't have any direct evidence, they only have circumstantial evidence because the accused was the only person in the house at that time and there is nobody else that can testify to it, or against it." Denwor also stated that the Directorate of Public Prosecutions instructed that he be let go until the DNA results are known.

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