

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF FIJI**  
**AT LABASA**  
**CRIMINAL JURISDICTION**

**CRIMINAL CASE NO: HAC 054/2012**

**BETWEEN:**                    **THE STATE**

**AND:**                            **TIMOCI ALUSENI**

**COUNSEL:**                    **Ms. P. Low for the State**  
   **Ms. M. Lemaki and Mr. R. Tagivakatini for the**  
   **Accused**

**Date of Trial:**                    **31/07- 01/08/2013**

**Date of Summing-Up:** **02/08/2013**

**Date of Judgment:**        **03/08/2013**

**Date of Sentence:**         **03/08/2013**

**SENTENCE**

[Name of the victim is suppressed. She will be referred to as JPP]

01. The Director of Public Prosecution had preferred the following charge against the accused above named.

## **FIRST COUNT**

### ***Statement of Offence***

**RAPE**: Contrary to section 207(1) and 207(2) (b) of the Crimes Decree No: 44 of 2009.

### ***Particulars of Offence***

**Timoci Aluseni** on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012, at Savusavu in the Northern Division, penetrated the vagina of JPP with his finger without JPP's consent.

02. After trial on the charge, the accused was found guilty of the charge. Accordingly he was convicted of committing Rape.
03. According to victim while she was playing after school in her compound the accused called her and poked his finger in to her vagina. She was five years old at that time. Medical examination done on the same day revealed her hymen is partially intact and her perineum and labia minora are slightly inflamed.
04. Accused took up the position that never poked his finger into victim's vagina and therefore denied the charge.
05. As per section 207(1) (2) (b) of the Crimes Decree No: 44 of 2009 the maximum sentence for an offence of Rape is to imprisonment for life.

### **Tariffs for Rape**

06. In the case of **Chand v State** [2007] AAU005. 2006S (25 June 2007), the court referred to the case of **Mohammed Kasim v The State** Appeal 14 of 1993 where the same court observed:

*“We consider that any rape case without aggravating or mitigating feature the starting point for sentencing an adult should be a term of imprisonment of 7 years. It must be recognized by the courts that the crime of rape has become altogether too frequent... the sentences imposed by the courts for that crime must...reflect an understandable public outrage”*

In **Sireli v State** [2008] FJCA 86; AAU0098 of 2008S (25 November 2008), the court also referred to the case of **State v Lasaro Turagabeci & others** HAC 0008 of 1996, the court observed:

*“The courts have made it clear that rapist will be dealt with severely. Rape is generally regarded as one of the gravest sexual offences. It violates and degrades a fellow human being. The physical and emotional consequences of the victim are likely to be severe. The courts must protect women from such degradation and trauma. The increasing prevalence of such offending in the community calls for deterrent sentence”.*

In the case the complainant was a child at the time of the incident. Hence the tariff for the rape of a child is a sentence between 10 to 15 years. See **Mark Mutch v The State** Criminal Appeal No.AAU 0060 of 1999, Fiji Court of Appeal; the actual sentence will depend on the mitigating and aggravating factors.

In **State v AV** [2009] FJHC24: HAC 192.2008(2 February 2009) the court stated:-

*“Rape is the most serious form of sexual assault. In this case a child was raped. Society cannot condone any form of sexual assault on children. Children are our future. The courts have a positive obligation under the Constitution to protect the vulnerable from any form of violence or sexual abuse. Sexual offenders must be deterred from committing this kind of offences.”*

07. The accused is 45 years of age. He is the sole bread winner of the family. He is married has two children. He is in the remand for about 11 months.
08. In **O’Keefe v State** [2007] FJHC: 34 the Fiji Court of Appeal held that the following principle of sentencing:

*“When sentencing in individual cases, the court must strike a balance between the seriousness of the offence as reflected in the maximum sentence available under the law and the seriousness of the actual acts of the person”*

09. I have carefully considered these submissions in light of the provisions of the Sentencing and Penalties Decree No: 42 of 2009 especially those of the sections set out below in order to determine the appropriate sentence.

10. Section 15(3) of the Sentencing Decree provides that:

*“as a general principle of sentencing, a court may not impose a more serious sentence unless it is satisfied that a lesser or alternative sentence will not meet the objectives of sentencing stated in Section 4, and sentence of imprisonment should be regarded as the sanction of last resort taking into account all matters stated in the General Sentencing Provisions of the decree”.*

11. The objectives of sentencing, as found in section 4(1) of the Decree, are as follows:

1. To punish offenders to an extent and a manner, which is just in all the circumstances;
2. To protect the community from offenders;

3. To deter offenders or other persons from committing offences of the same or similar nature;
  4. To establish conditions so that rehabilitation of offenders may be promoted or facilitated;
  5. To signify that the court and the community denounce the commission of such offences; or
  6. Any combination of these purposes.
12. Section 4(2) of the Decree further provides that in sentencing offenders, a Court must have regarded to:
- (a) The maximum penalty prescribed for the offence;
  - (b) Current sentencing practice and the terms of any applicable and guideline Judgments;
  - (c) The nature and gravity of the particular offence;
  - (d) The defender's culpability and degree of responsibility for the offence;
  - (e) The impact of the offence on any victim of the offence and the injury, loss or damage resulting from the offence;
  - (f) Whether the offender pleaded guilty to the offence, and if so, the stage in the proceedings at which the offender did so or indicated an intention to do so;
13. Now I consider the aggravating factors:
1. The victim is 05 years old at the time of the offence.
  2. The victim is emotionally disturbed.
  3. The act done to the victim by the accused person took away the victim's dignity in the society.
14. Now I consider the mitigating circumstances:
1. Accused is the sole breadwinner of the family.

2. Accused is 45 years old and a carpenter by profession.
  3. He has two children
  4. He has been in remand since 14/09/2012.
  5. He has no relatives in Vanua Levu and has been estranged from his family whilst in remand.
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15. Considering all aggravated and mitigating circumstances I take 10 years imprisonment as the starting point. I add 04 years for aggravating factors to reach the period of imprisonment at 14 years. I deduct 02 years for the mitigating factors.
  16. You have been in remand since 14/09/2012. You have rib fracture. Considering all these I deduct further 02 years from your sentence.
  17. Now your sentence is 10 years imprisonment.
  18. Your counsel request from this court not to set parole period. You have committed the offence on a girl who was 05 years old. You took away her dignity in the society. You put her future in dark.
  19. Considering all and acting in terms of section 18(1) of the Sentencing and Penalties Decree, I impose 08 years as non-parole period.
  20. 30 days to appeal.

P. Kumararatnam

**JUDGE**

At Labasa

02/08/ 2013

