

IN THE HIGH COURT OF FIJI
AT LAUTOKA
CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

CRIMINAL CASE NO: HAC 008/2010

BETWEEN: THE STATE

AND: SAILASA KOROITAMANA

COUNSEL: Mr.Semi Babitu for the State
Mr.J.Savou and Mr.R.Kumar for the Accused

Date of Trial: 20-21/08/2013

Date of Summing-Up: 22/08/2013

Date of Judgment: 22/08/2013

Date of Sentence: 23/08/2013

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

SENTENCE

01. Sailasa Koroitamana has been found guilty after trial and convicted on one count of Rape contrary to sections 149 and 150 of Penal Code, Cap.17.
02. According to victim accused under the guise of taking her to Ba town on 12/10/2008, raped her at an isolated bus shelter. As she trusted him, went alone with the accused to go back to her original place.

Immediately after the offence she ran to a nearby house informed the incident to the inmates of the house. After seen her sorry plight, they helped her to contact her aunt.

03. In this case the accused took up the position that he never had sex with the victim. But he admitted that he accompanied the victim in the early hours on 12/10/2008.

04. As per sections 149 and 150 of the Penal Code, Cap.17, the maximum sentence for an offence of Rape is to imprisonment for life.

Tariffs for Rape

04. 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 and 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 and 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”.

06. The accused is 42 years of age and separated from his defecto partner. He has five children in the age of 21,19,16,11 and 10 years respectively. He is the sole breadwinner of the family. He works as a labourer and earns about \$42.00 per week. He has no previous convictions in the last 10 years.

07. 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”

08. 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.

09. 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”.

10. 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.

11. 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;

12. Now I consider the aggravating factors:

1. The accused is a relation of the victim.
2. The accused under the guise of providing protection raped the victim on the way.
3. The accused showed total disregard to the victim's right to a peaceful life by committing this offence.

13. Now I consider the mitigating circumstances:

- (a) Accused is 42 years old and works as a labourer.
- (b) He is separated from his defecto partner.
- (c) He has five children in the age of 21,19,16,11 and 10 years respectively.
- (e) He is the sole breadwinner of the family.
- (f) He has no previous convictions in the last 10 years.
- (g) He has been in remand for one month and five days before being granted bail.

14. Considering all aggravated and mitigating circumstances I take 07 years imprisonment as the starting point. I add 03 years for aggravating factors to reach the period of imprisonment at 10 years. I deduct 02 years for the mitigating factors.

15. In summary you are sentenced to 08 years imprisonment.

16. Acting in terms of section 18(1) of the Sentencing and Penalties Decree, I impose 06 years as non-parole period.

17. 30 days to appeal.

P Kumararatnam

JUDGE

At Lautoka

23rd August, 2013