



Women on Farms Project (WFP)

PO Box 530 Stellenbosch 7599 SOUTH AFRICA

[wfp@wfp.org.za](mailto:wfp@wfp.org.za)

T: (+27-21) 887 2960/1/2

F: (+27-21) 887 2963

[www.wfp.org.za](http://www.wfp.org.za)

---

## **PRESS RELEASE FRIDAY 08 DECEMBER 2006**

### **RESPONSE TO STORY ON RAWSONVILLE RAPE ALLEGATIONS**

Women on Farms (WFP) learned about the contents of the Independent Complaints' Directorate (ICD) report this morning through the Burger's lead story.

After consultation with Sarah's<sup>1</sup> lawyers, the Women's Legal Centre, WFP is unable to comment on the report at this stage. To our knowledge, the ICD report has been handed over to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and forms part of the criminal case investigation. For this reason, it cannot be accessed by Sarah's lawyers until the conclusion of the investigation by the NPA when they will decide whether to proceed with the case.

The NPA has assured Sarah's lawyers that they would not have any discussion with the media on the matter. Both for this reason, and the history of silence on farm worker violations and sexual violence against women, we believe that is particularly shameful that the Democratic Alliance has chosen to use this sensitive case to play political games.

From our many years of experience in working with women survivors of sexual violence, we always knew that this case would be difficult to pursue. This is especially the case in rural areas where the obstacles faced by women in realising justice are multiplied.

In South Africa, 147 women are raped daily. Even in situations where rape cases are much more straightforward than this one, we know that the current rape conviction rate is lamentably low at 7 per cent.

Unfortunately, legal systems often have very little to do with justice and more to do with procedure. This is the reason why poor communities like farm workers often feel that justice does not serve them.

Anyone who has interacted with Sarah directly knows that she not fabricated the story. She has sacrificed a great deal: her life has been torn apart and she still finds herself exiled from her community while living in a Shelter far from those she knows and loves.

WFP remains committed to taking up cases of sexual violence against farm women regardless of how challenging they may be.

For further information, please contact Fatima Shabodien (Director: Women on Farms Project, Stellenbosch) on 072 7955 857 or (021) 887 2960/1/2

---

\* Not her real name.

---

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Moenieba Isaacs (Chairperson), Elma Geswindt (Treasurer), Fatima Shabodien (Director), John Brown, Marie Minnaar-McDonald, Nomthandazo Ntlama, Sarah Claasen and Siphokazi Mthathi