

False rape claim keeps dad jailed for 10yrs

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Department of Correctional Services officials are now receiving management training to assist them in coping with the increasing stress of dealing with large volumes of prisoners. A warder at an East London Prison keeps a close eye on prisoners. 241006 Picture: Steve Lawrence

Durban - A Westville prisoner's fight for justice is due to end on Wednesday when he finally walks free, three years after his daughter admitted she had lied that he had raped her.

And his daughter, Pinky Dube, 18, will be at the prison gates waiting to welcome him.

"I am very happy my dad is finally being freed. I am really excited," she said on Monday.

It will be an emotional reunion as Cedric Shezi and his daughter have only seen each other twice since he was convicted of two counts of rape in 2005, receiving a life sentence.

Shezi, 39, was arrested soon after the alleged offence, and has been in prison for 10 years.

A court is expected to issue the J7 form on Tuesday, instructing Correctional Services to release him. He will still have to go to court to get his conviction overturned.

He has always maintained his innocence and has twice attempted suicide.

Dube – who has given the media permission to use her name – had claimed that her father had raped her when she was eight years old.

But, haunted by the knowledge that it was her testimony that had sent him to prison, she later told her school principal and social workers that it was her mother – who was estranged from Shezi – who had put her up to it, coaching her what to say.

She had not understood the consequences, according to a report written by the Centre for Child Law in 2010.

Two separate sets of social workers who interviewed the teenager both reported that Dube had told them she had lied to the authorities about the rape.

Her mother died in 2007.

The prisoner advocacy group, Justice for Prisoners and Detainees Trust, has been fighting for Shezi and the Supreme Court of Appeal recently granted Shezi leave to have the convictions and sentence reviewed.

He has been granted R1 000 bail pending his appeal and was to have been released last Friday.

But a regional court official issued old and incorrect papers which meant Shezi had to spend even more time behind bars, leaving his disappointed daughter upset and in tears at the prison gates.

“I will be returning to the court (today) to correct the mistakes,” said Derrick Mdluli, the director of the Justice for Prisoners and Detainees Trust.

Dube, who lives with an aunt, said she visited her father in 2009 and last year and was very sad.

“I tried to hide how heartsore I was because he is sitting in jail for something he never did,” she said. “I was young (when she falsely accused her father) and did not know what was going on.”

She planned to tell her father that she loved him and also to ask for forgiveness on her mother’s behalf.

Mdluli planned to arrange for psychological treatment for Shezi, “because of the stress he has been under”. He said he would help Shezi to sue the government and the Minister of Justice for Shezi’s wrongful arrest, wrongful detention and “malicious” prosecution.

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<https://www.iol.co.za/news/false-rape-claim-keeps-dad-jailed-for-10yrs-1533749>