

APARTHEID ERA SECURITY POLICEMAN'S DAUGHTER LAYS HISTORICAL CHILD ABUSE CHARGES AGAINST FATHER

The daughter of Joao (Jan) Rodriguez, the apartheid-era policeman accused of murdering teacher & activist Ahmed Timol in a 1971 staged suicide, today laid charges of historical child abuse against her 80-year old father.

Tilana Stander today decided to go public about the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her father between 1972 and 1976, and filed charges today at the Wynberg FCS offices in Cape Town (where she now resides) and she has committed herself to travelling to Gauteng for the trial. The case will be forwarded to Pretoria since the crimes were committed whilst Rodriguez was based at SAPS HQ during the time of the abuse.

Standar contacted WMACA after a spate of historical child abuse cases and the recent Frankel 8 amendment to the Criminal Procedures Act (overruling the 20-year prescription period for prosecution) came to her attention, encouraging her to finally take the plunge and disclose her own childhood trauma at the hands of her biological father.

Women & Men Against Child Abuse applaud her bravery in both disclosing and now taking, a step she describes as not just her personal quest for justice, but also for her message to other victims: "When I was subjected to this abuse, we as children were so dominated not to speak out and did not have the support now offered by organisations such as Women & Men Against Child Abuse. Part of my drive to act now, are all those adults and children who don't have voices to come forward. I now realize it doesn't matter how far back this happened – do this for yourself and others that needs the courage to bring this into the open so that we can teach other parents and children to always be on the watch out for these predators. It can happen anywhere with any child...boy or girl."

LATE DISCLOSURE OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE - UNDERSTANDING DECADES OF SILENCE

**_WE AS A SOCIETY NEED TO ACTIVELY INTERROGATE
OUR OWN WAYS OF THINKING
ABOUT ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL
ABUSE AND HISTORICAL ABUSE_.**

To ensure that we as a society do not also think the same way as the accused and enablers, by denying the victim the opportunity to have their story told and HEARD. Recent disclosures of historical abuse all reiterate similar reasons for not disclosing: In the past, childhood sexual abuse wasn't discussed as freely nor reported on as widely by media, and was much easier to cover up. More often than not, the perpetrator was in a position of power or provided financially for the victim's family, placing them in a catch-22 position. The fear of being branded a liar or ostracised for speaking up has kept many women like Stander from seeking legal recourse against their abusers, leaving them to cope with a lifetime of psychological trauma.

WMACA will continue to assist Stander in her plight for justice, and we trust that the NPA will prioritise this case due to Joao Rodriguez' age.

Miranda Jordan, founding director, states: "_As society we need to develop a better understanding of the reality of late disclosure, and embrace the need to see perpetrators held accountable for their crimes, regardless of their age or the lapse in time. Cases such as this one need to deliver a harsh message to child abusers about the life sentence they force upon victims._"

**STATEMENT BY TILANA STANDER WITH REGARDS TO HER
LATE DISCLOSURE:**

I today at last had the courage to formally lay a charge against the man who sexually abused me as child from 1972 till 1976.

I have been contemplating since 2007 to take this step, to have him prosecuted for what he did to me, not to let him get away with what he did. I was however always afraid that nobody would believe me, felt ashamed and was under the impression that such cases prescribed after 20 years and that it was thus too late to take any legal action.

As I grew older, the realisation of what he actually did to me became more vivid and had a very negative impact on my life. I made several attempts to convince my siblings to acknowledge what I went through, and to speak out about what happened to me, only to be cast out by my family as a trouble maker for speaking up. I am now completely estranged from my family. All I ever wanted was for them to admit what he has done, for him to acknowledge it to them. This never happened, even after I made it public last year, which now led to further estrangement from my family.

Recently, my memories again came to the forefront of my mind, due to the regular appearance of that man on television in an unrelated case. As fate would have it, during the same period the ruling was made regarding the recalling of the restriction on prosecution of historical sexual abuse cases. The action taking by others since then motivated me to do the same. With the help of people close to me, I started to write down what happened to me, which now was handed in at the SAPS for further investigation.

My reasons for only formally going ahead with a complaint now is:

1. I was always so ashamed and believed I must have done something wrong and I would be further labelled, disgraced and rejected.
2. I was concerned that nobody will believe me, having been unsuccessful in earlier attempts as mentioned above.

3. My failure until now to receive any acknowledgment from the rest of my family I want them to realise I am not the trouble maker in this whole event. I want them to know exactly what happened and everything he did to me so that they can know I didn't do this. Even if they still don't believe this, I've had my say and hopefully have encouraged other woman/children to come forward. Nobody deserves this!."

FOR COMMENTS OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
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