



ODPP MEDIA UPDATE

Expert gives evidence in State-v-Peni Vukici Rape Case

“Child sexual assault is incredibly damaging to the human psyche and victims can suffer from severe mental health damage that may or may not be reversible. Additionally, the evidence tells us that the psychiatric outcomes for sexual abuse survivors are the same around the world and there are no differences between cultures.”

These were some of the conclusions highlighted by Dr Daryn Reicherter when presenting his report *“The Mental Health Consequences of Sexual Violence, Rape, and Child Rape in the Context of Child Rape in Fiji”* as expert evidence in the State v Peni Vukici rape case on Monday (29.10.18) at the Suva High Court.

Dr Reicherter is the Director of the Human Rights in Trauma Mental Health Programme and a Clinical Professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine’s Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences. He was in the country following an invitation by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to give expert evidence in the State v Peni Vukici rape case.

Peni Vukici was convicted of 7 representative counts of rape and two counts of indecent assault. He had raped his daughter who fell pregnant and then also raped her daughter (his granddaughter) when she was 10 years old. The incidents happened over a thirty-year period from 1982 to 2013 and involved more than 400 sexual assaults on his daughter.

Dr Reicherter remarked that the case was one of the worst he had ever seen and said both victims in this case had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and showed severe anxiety symptoms as well as chronic suicidal thoughts and behaviour. He said that people who are raped by their fathers and grandfathers have severe traumatic reactions that are chronic throughout their lives.

The case has been adjourned to 13 November 2018 for sentencing.

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NB: A copy of Dr Daryn Reicherter’s report *“The Mental Health Consequences of Sexual Violence, Rape, and Child Rape in the Context of Child Rape in Fiji”* has been uploaded to the ODPP website.