

## MUT students march to demand justice for Zolile and raise GBV awareness

It was 06h00 on Monday, 2 March outside the Lonsdale Residence in Durban's South Beach and members of the eThekweni Metro Police had already started cordoning off a section of the road where it would all begin. This was the starting point for a march to the Durban High Court to demand justice for the murder of slain MUT student, Zolile Khumalo.

The Lonsdale Residence was carefully chosen as the starting point for the march to symbolise taking Zolile's spirit from where she was murdered to the court where her murderer, Thabani Mzolo, was going to appear. Monday also marked an important day in the trial: Judge Nompumelelo Radebe was going to start delivering judgement on the case, which has been in court for two years.

"Our students were part of this trial from the beginning when Zolile's murderer appeared in court for the first time," said Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications. "The march was an opportunity to reaffirm the University's stance against GBV and to make it clear that MUT will not tolerate GBV or any acts of abuse."

Although it was business as usual on campus, with lectures continuing as scheduled, the march was too important for some students to miss. It was an opportunity to raise awareness about the scourge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the busy streets of Durban's city centre and to demand justice for a fellow student who was now part of the statistics of those who had lost their lives to GBV.

Students started trickling in as small numbers were being dropped off by buses organised to bring students to the march. Each of these students walked into Lonsdale Residence first to pick up their black T-shirts in line with the all-black dress code which has become a uniform for any activity against GBV at MUT. A voice on the loud hailer called on all students to get into their positions as the march was beginning. Meanwhile, the marshals in their reflector jackets



*MUT students giving support to the Khumalo family, and saying NO to GBV*

formed a line that would be the barrier between the marching students and the cars using the other side of the road.

The police led the march with vehicles and motorbikes, the crowd following behind them with song and dance. When the march got to the middle of Anton Lembede Street (Smith Street), a rhythm was now developed which was the highlight of the march. It was song, dance, singing while sitting down in the middle of the road and humming. The busy street came to a halt with spectators from buildings on both sides of the road coming out in their numbers to watch. The message on the placards said it all: There is no place for gender-based violence at MUT.

At the end of the march, across the road from the Durban High Court, students demanded to get into the court to watch as judgement was handed down. The students could not enter the court because it was full, so they waited across the road from the court and met the Khumalo family to show their support, as they have done throughout the trial.

Their patience and dedication were rewarded when they were back outside the Durban High Court again on Thursday, 5 March, when Mzolo was sentenced to life in prison for taking Zolile's life. As they exited the court after the sentencing, the Khumalo family was greeted by a group of MUT students who were singing outside the court, celebrating the sentence which was a long-awaited positive step in the struggle.