

## **A Young Girl Brutally Killed by the Father of Her Baby**

By Sinalo Peyi

10 January 2026

At Bathurst Location, in the Eastern Cape under Ndlambe Municipality, on the 19th of December, a 30-year-old man was arrested that evening for murder. The man brutally killed a 23-year-old woman, a mother of a six-month-old baby, with whom he was in a relationship. Community members who tried to stop him and were at the scene say the man beat the woman using a pole and his fists, assaulting her to death that night.

The 23-year-old Siyamthanda Zondani, who is the victim and the deceased, died from her injuries. She had not taken any alcohol and had left her baby with her mother. She was buried on 23 December in her hometown, at her home in Bathurst. Witnesses who asked not to be named described the incident as something that used to happen, and they did not think it could lead to such brutality. A 56-year-old man, a neighbour of the alleged killer, said they were fighting as usual when they heard a loud scream and saw the victim running out of the house asking for help. They went to intervene and managed to pull the man away, allowing her to run. When she went to a neighbour's house, everyone thought she was safe, only to find out that there was no one there. The alleged killer returned after people had left and finished the attack, leaving her body in a neighbour's yard, severely injured and unrecognisable.

Nomawabo Tshisa, a neighbour and Isikhalo representative, commented that there have been brutal killings in Bathurst before, but this one stands out as it involves an orphaned child. "I think we are also to blame as neighbours; we should not have left without ensuring that Siyamthanda was safe," she said. She concluded that the matter will not go unresolved, and that Isikhalo will support the family and ensure that justice is served.

Thozama Peyi, a Police Forum member and part of the Isikhalo Women's Movement, said she believes the movement has not done enough to empower women to speak out and refuse abuse. "Siyamthanda once attended a workshop with Isikhalo where people were taught about abuse and joined the movement, but I guess she did not have enough time to ask for help," she said. She added that no one who beats a young woman to death, especially the mother of his child, can be considered humane.

The community held a meeting and went to support the family of Ms Zondani to ensure that the accused does not receive bail until he is sentenced. The case will continue in the Port Alfred Magistrate's Court and is expected to be referred to the High Court in February 2026.

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