

Media in court over identity ban

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Media houses have described the blanket ban sought by children's rights lobby groups, on the identification of child victims of crime, as extraordinary, with far-reaching consequences.



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The media houses, including Media24 and Times Media, argued through advocate Wim Trengove SC in the Pretoria High Court yesterday that such a blanket ban did not exist anywhere in any open democratic society.

He said this was because it infringed rights to freedom of expression.

According to Trengove, children's rights are sufficiently protected in a number of laws aimed at giving effect to children's rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

Children's rights lobby groups Centre for Child Law, Childline, Nicro and Media Monitoring Africa have approached the court for the provisions in the Criminal Procedure Act, which protect child offenders and witnesses, to be extended to protect child victims.

The legal wrangle was sparked by the case of a kidnap victim, a teenager who became known as Zephany Nurse.

The media said it would reveal her true identity once she had turned 18.

But CCL intervened and swiftly obtained an interdict to stop media from identifying her once she turned 18.

Trengove argued that the Criminal Procedure Act was meant to regulate court proceedings, not to protect children.

Source: The Times

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