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## SCOURGE OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY EXAMINED AT UKZN SEMINAR



**Panel members from left: Advocate Dawn Coleman-Malinga, Dr Monique Emser and Ms Thora Mansfield.**

UKZN hosted a public seminar on child pornography and the violation of children's rights as part of an awareness campaign during Human Rights Month,

The panel leading the debate included Dr Monique Emser of the University of the Free State, Advocate Dawn Coleman-Malinga of the National Prosecuting Authority and the Open Door Crisis Care Centre's Ms Thora Mansfield.

Emser spoke on how the internet had 'revolutionised' the distribution of child pornography, making it a global crime.

She cautioned against sharing photographs of children on social media sites as there had been cases where innocent photographs, such as from a church website, were manipulated and children's faces added onto existing pornographic images.

Emser advocated for strong privacy settings on social media, and not geo-tagging your location or 'checking in' to venues via Facebook.

Coleman-Malinga outlined legal aspects related to the creation and distribution of child pornography. She said everyone was obligated to report activities related to child pornography.

She also outlined the grooming process used by perpetrators, which often included lavishing special attention on a child. 'Grooming is a slow, calculated process and pornography or child pornography is often used in the process,' she said.

Mansfield said offenders were often fathers, brothers and uncles. She said the Open Door Crisis Care Centre had to deal with the 'silent screams, not only of the children, but of the families that have been destroyed.'

The Centre assists with healing and restoration and runs a shelter to accommodate victims of abuse and trafficking.

Mansfield encouraged those interested to visit [www.opendoor.org.za](http://www.opendoor.org.za) to find out more about the work the centre does to end human trafficking.

She advised parents to 'look below the surface' and to monitor children's cellphones and internet use which were often used in the grooming process.

The event, which also featured a mini documentary on sexting, was organised by UKZN's Division of Corporate Relations and facilitated by Advocate Victoria Balogun of the School of Law.

Raylene Captain-Hasthibeer