SOCIAL MEDIA USERS URGED NOT TO RESPOND IRRATIONALLY TO FALSE REPORTS

As a fake story about a gang rape in a police cell in Mamelodi continues to circulate, social media users are being urged not to respond irrationally to unconfirmed reports.

A screenshot has gone viral of a Facebook post claiming a lesbian woman was arrested for public drinking on Sunday night, thrown into a police cell with 19 men, and gang-raped before she died in hospital.

The post - which police say is false - has since been deleted from Facebook.

The police’s Mashadi Selepe has described the post as false and inflammatory.

“We’re scaring people and creating a situation which is not conducive to both the police and members of the public.”

Fact checking agency Africa Check’s Nechama Brodie says social media users must be careful of people who try to use pertinent social issues for their own gain.

“One of the factors that they exploit is that they know there are certain social and human behaviours where we’re more likely to think less and act. Anything that triggers high emotional response is much more likely to make us share before thinking.”
Selepe says the police’s legal department is working to identify the culprits of such posts and make sure they are brought to book.

(Edited by Zamangwane Shange)