

ZINHLE MAPUMULO

zinhle.mapumulo@citypress.co.za

Lizeka Fandesi (not her real name) woke up from a troubled sleep with a throbbing headache, her half-open eyes burning in their attempt to adjust to the light. She shielded them until her disorientation cleared.

That's when Fandesi (21) realised she was in strange surroundings and a barely familiar male face was sleeping on a bed adjacent to hers.

Before she could work out what was happening, someone walked in. It was her ex-boyfriend, who she had bumped into at a nightclub a few metres from the Fort Hare University's East London campus where she was a resident student.

"What did you do to me?" she asked, infuriated.

"I found you at Vegas nightclub. You were drunk and I brought you here because I didn't know your room number," he told her.

Fandesi lived in the opposite unit of the same university residential block.

After interrogating her ex-boyfriend, he allegedly told her that his friend in the bed alongside her had slept with her.

But the fourth-year economics student had no recollection of what had happened to her between midnight and the early hours of that Saturday morning in March last year.

"The last thing I remember, I was with three friends at Vegas nightclub, indulging in a bottle of vodka mixed with a fizzy drink," she said.

What happened to Fandesi is all too common among tertiary female students, in particular, and young people in general. Local and international research has documented how alcohol consumption increases the risk of sexual assault of women.

Thoko Budaza, provincial manager for the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication in the Eastern Cape, told City Press that the organisation's

Bad cocktail of booze and rape



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF IN PUBLIC

- Never accept drinks of any kind – from anyone – that are already poured into a glass.
- Open containers of any drinks yourself.
- Avoid alternating between different alcoholic beverages.
- Keep your drink with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom.
- Don't share drinks.
- Don't drink from punch bowls or other common, open containers. They may already have drugs in them.
- If someone offers to get you a drink from a bar or at a party, go with the person to order your drink. Watch when the drink is poured and carry it yourself.
- Don't drink anything that tastes or smells strange.
- Have a non-drinking friend with you to make sure nothing happens.
- If you realise that you left your drink unattended, pour it out.
- If you feel drunk and have not drunk any alcohol – or you feel that the effects of your alcohol consumption are stronger than usual – get help immediately.

research had shown that women were at risk of sexual assault because of either being in the vicinity of, or inside, an establishment that served liquor.

A 2009 study on alcohol-related campus sexual assault, conducted by Wayne State University in Detroit,

Michigan, found that by the time female students were seniors, one in five would have been sexually assaulted by a classmate. It also suggested that more than 80% of campus sexual assaults involved alcohol.

This week, Dr Leane Ramsommar, a lecturer at the