

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 06 APRIL 2016**

**RE: LIFE SENTENCE PLUS 15 YEARS FOR A TAVERN KILLER**

On Thursday, 31 March 2016, the Ngqeleni Regional Court sentenced Mkhulekeleni Phakathi (32) to life imprisonment for murder, ten years for robbery with aggravating circumstances and five years for each of two counts of attempted murder. Only the two sentences of attempted murder were ordered to run concurrently.

Phakathi was sentenced for crimes committed on the night of 02 August 2014 in a tavern at Mdumazulu village near Ngqeleni. Phakathi, together with his accomplice, Ernest Ngema, had been drinking at the tavern during that day and when the owner of the establishment arrived they introduced themselves as visitors from Limpopo and continued conversing in Sotho. When the tavern owner was collecting beer empties, preparing to close, the duo suddenly pulled a gun and demanded money in Xhosa from the cashier. The cashier told them the money was with the owner and they started shooting randomly killing one of the patrons, Lindikhaya Sokhanyile and injuring the owner and other patrons. The pair only managed to take only R40 from the owner and fled the scene.

When the tavern owner was returning from hospital on the following day, he came across the two robbers in a red VW Golf already having been stopped by the police at a roadblock. He informed the police of what had happened and they were arrested. It turned out the pair were not from Limpopo but from neighbouring villages near Ngqeleni. Ngema died before the trial started. During the trial, Phakathi, who pleaded not guilty, tried to pin everything on his dead accomplice but eyewitnesses; the cashier and patrons, convinced the court that he was guilty.

The NPA welcomes these sentences and the Director of Public Prosecutions in the Eastern Cape Mthatha Division, Barry Madolo commends Regional Court Prosecutor, Gugulethu Madubela for the thorough prosecution and commitment in ensuring that justice is served.

Kind Regards,

**Luxolo Tyali**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP Mthatha**

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