

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 20 January 2016

RE: GANG SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR ROBBERY & MURDER

On Thursday, 14 January 2016, the Mthatha High Court sitting in Ntabankulu circuit, sentenced the gang of four to effective life imprisonment for their part in the 2011 brazen robbery of Shoprite Checkers store in Mbizana, which resulted in the death of a police officer and one of the robbers.

Mzudumile Maquthu (47), Zinikele Sandi (49), Lundi Bunyongo (29) and Elijah General Roto (45) were all convicted on two counts of murder, 14 counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances, seven counts of attempted murder, possession of prohibited firearms and illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. Initially, five people were indicted but another suspect, Mbulelo Gebenga, died before the case was finalised.

On 27 September 2011, the gang entered Shoprite Checkers store in Mbizana carrying AK 47 and R5 rifles and at gunpoint ordered everyone inside the shop to lie down, demanded cell phones and forcefully took R212 000 in cash from the store and R3000 from one of the shoppers. During the robbery police arrived at the scene and a gunfight ensued resulting in the fatal shooting of police officer Monwabisi Gqamane and one of the robbers, Phindile Nyale. Other police officers and members of the public, who were near the shop, were wounded.

High Court Judge, Sithembele Mgxaji, sentenced Maquthu to life imprisonment plus 65 years running concurrently with life imprisonment, Sandi to life imprisonment plus 70 years running concurrently with life imprisonment and both Bunyongo and Roto to life imprisonment plus 80 years running concurrently with life imprisonment.

The case was prosecuted by Senior State Advocate, Mduduzi Mzila.

The National Prosecuting Authority welcomes this sentence with the strong hope that it will serve as a deterrent to would-be robbers, and send a strong message that police killings will not be tolerated.

Kind Regards,

Luxolo Tyali

DPP Mthatha: Spokesperson

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