

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 10 APRIL 2014**

**RE: TWO MEN SENTENCED FOR MURDER, ROBBERY**

**BLOEMFONTEIN-** The Free State High Court has, today, sentenced two men from Lesotho to life imprisonment each after they were found guilty of two counts of murder, two of robbery with aggravating circumstances, one of unlawful possession of firearm and one of unlawful possession of ammunition.

Judge Sesele sentenced Mr Motlatsi Namane, 29 and Mr Thabo Mapuru, 26 to life imprisonment each for two counts of murder and 15 years for each count of robbery with aggravating circumstances. Mr Mapuru was sentenced to an additional five years for unlawful possession of firearm and three years for unlawful possession of ammunition.

All the sentences will run concurrently with the life sentences. The two accused were part of the five men who robbed Mi-Ning supermarket in Ipopeng Township in Bloemfontein belonging to Mr Xiugui Weng on 8 January 2013.

It was stated in court that the five men came to the supermarket in the morning to assess the situation and concluded that they will need more firearms and two getaway cars to pull off the robbery.

In the afternoon, they came back to the supermarket armed with two firearms and robbed the supermarket of undisclosed amount of money and airtime vouchers. They also robbed the employees and customers of their cellular phones.

Two police officers arrived at the scene while robbery was in progress. A shootout ensued between the robbers and the police and one police officer, Sergeant Ephraim Mokhasi was shot dead. The robbers took his firearm and flee from the scene after police reinforcement had been called.

The police searched for the robbers and shot dead one of them. Three were arrested and one suspected evaded the police and is still on the run. The fourth suspect disappeared during the course of the trial and the state

applied for separation of trial. The third accused, Mr Louis Mphou, pleaded guilty last year and was sentenced to 20 year imprisonment by the Bloemfontein Magistrate's court.

NPA welcomes the sentence. We believe that it reaffirms our commitment to successfully prosecute all serious crime to ensure justice in society so that people can live in freedom and security.

**ENDS**

Note: The NPA's media statements are available on the website:

[www.npa.gov.za](http://www.npa.gov.za)

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