

Media Statement



Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Email:
media@npa.gov.za

Victoria & Griffiths
Mxenge Building
123 Westlake Avenue
Weavind Park
Silverton
Pretoria

www.npa.gov.za

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 03 NOVEMBER 2017

RE: CHRISTOPHER PANAYIOTOU AND CO-ACCUSED FOUND GUILTY

Yesterday, Judge Daylin Chetty found Christopher Panayiotou and his co-accused Sinethemba Nenembe and Zolani Sibeko guilty on various charges that were preferred against them.

Christopher Panayiotou who turned 31 yesterday was convicted of murder while hitman Sinethemba Nenembe 28) was found guilty of murder and robbery with aggravating circumstances and Zolani Sibeko 35) was found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder. This emanates from an incident in April 2015 where Jayde Panayiotou, a 29 year-old school teacher went missing prompting a search that lasted a day with her body being found in Uitenhage with bullet wounds.

It later transpired that Christopher Panayiotou, her husband was involved in a conspiracy to have her abducted and killed under these circumstances. Christopher Panayiotou, Luthando Siyoni, Sizwezakhe Vumazonke, Sinethemba Nenembe and Zolani Sibeko were arrested as suspects in this case. Soon after this, Luthando Siyoni turned state witness and during court proceedings, he was declared hostile by the court because he reneged from his affidavit in which he agreed to be a 204 witness. Vumazonke who was believed to be the triggerman died before he could face the charges in court.

A lot happened during trial and there was a trial-within trial to determine the admissibility of Siyoni's testimony that he was beaten by the police to get a confession. At some stage, Siyoni's girlfriend, Babalwa Breakfast was called to testify in court and she was also declared hostile by the court due to the fact she also deviated from her original statement in which she told the police everything and promising to work with the state. They were charged with conspiracy to commit murder, murder, kidnapping and robbery with aggravating circumstances. All this period during trial, they have maintained

their innocence even though evidence before court proved they were indeed involved in this crime.

Then came the issue of the recordings in which the defence wanted to be thrown out of the court because they believed the right processes were not followed to have the recordings done. The state was fortunate that the court allowed the recording as part of evidence. It was a very difficult case with many technical processes.

The sentencing will be on 17 November 2017.

The NPA is satisfied with the decision of the court as it will bring back confidence in the criminal justice system. Advocate Marius Stander could not hide his happiness after the court's decision and said he was relieved that, Judge Daylin Chetty successfully convicted the accused.

Kind Regards,

Tsepo Ndwalaza
NPA Regional Spokesperson
Tel: 012 842 1418
Cell: 071 680 3701