

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 29 MARCH 2017**

**RE: CIGARRETTE THIEVES GET HEFTY SENTENCES**

Mzisi Nene (27), Nhlanhla Dladla (31), Cebo Magwaza (21), Funda Ndawonde (36), Sizwe Zulu (29) and Nthuthuko Dubazane (26) were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in the Durban Regional Court yesterday for the robberies and kidnapping they committed during the period of May to August 2014.

The complainants were all employees of the British American Tobacco company and their job was to deliver cigarettes to various stores around the province. These places included Eshowe, Empangeni, Babanango, Inanda and Umbilo. The accused accosted the complainants on their delivery routes and drove them to unknown location where they (the accused) had another vehicle waiting. The cigarettes were offloaded and the accused drove off. They would rob the complainants (drivers) off their cell phones and cash.

In aggravation of sentence Regional Court Prosecutor Surekha Marimuthu led the evidence of a representative of British American Tobacco regarding the impact of the losses that the company suffered. The stolen cigarettes amounted to a loss of R 1 465 00.00.

One of the complainants testified on how he was robbed and kidnapped on 3 different occasions and despite going for counselling he suffered a lack of concentration and was always scared. He eventually took a pay cut and found work elsewhere.

Accused 1 was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment while accused 2 was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Accused 3 was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and accused 4 and 6 were sentenced to 8 and 5 years respectively. Accused 5 was acquitted.

The Director of Public Prosecutions in KZN, Advocate Moipone Noko, 'this sentence is indeed welcomed. I hope that it will send out the necessary deterrent message to would-be offenders.'

Kind Regards,

**Natasha Kara**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN**

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