

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: CROSS-BORDER CRIMINAL SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR MURDER

On Friday, 04 October 2019, the Mthatha High Court, sitting in Ntabankulu, sentenced former taxi owner Moeletsi Tsoho (59) to life imprisonment after convicting him for the murder of a taxi driver, whose taxi he subsequently sold in Lesotho. The court also sentenced him to eleven years on a count of robbery with aggravating circumstances. The sentences were ordered to run concurrently.

The court heard that in May 2016 Tsoho, of Tsolobeng village in the district of Mount Fletcher, went to the neighbouring country to sell a Toyota Quantum minibus. The minibus belonged to another taxi operator who was unable to pay instalments and the bank was about to repossess it. When they succeeded in the unlawful sale, Tsoho got more "orders" from his cousin, who is a Lesotho national.

A month later, on 13 June, Tsoho lured the deceased, a taxi driver who was driving a minibus belonging to his employer, to his house where he plied him with alcohol and offered him a bedroom to sleep in. When the deceased was deep in his alcohol-induced sleep, Tsoho bludgeoned him to death with a Knobkerrie. He later got an accomplice to assist him with disposing the body of the deceased in a culvert at the Coldstream farm in Maclear, more than 50 kilometres away, where it was discovered days later.

Together with the accomplice, who became the state witness in accordance with Section 204 of the Criminal Procedure Act, Tsoho drove the minibus taken from the deceased to Lesotho where they sold it with the assistance of Tsoho's cousin. The said minibus taxi was later recovered by police in Lesotho, already having been registered there.

During trial, Tsoho pleaded not guilty and suggested that the 204 witness is the one that killed the deceased, however when confronted with the evidence of the state, he succumbed under gruelling cross-examination by State Advocate, Luvuyo Pomolo.

Delivering the sentence, Judge Mbulelo Jolwana said he never showed any remorse during trial, maintaining his innocence which he sought to sustain through sheer craftiness until the whole façade of innocence and ignorance about the crimes unravelled under relentless cross-examination by state counsel, Pomolo.

The judge agreed with the state that Tsoho's choice of electing not to tell the full truth of what actually happened was an aggravating factor. "The person or persons to whom the vehicle was sold in Lesotho and how it got registered in that country are part of the facts that remain unknown. Other criminals involved are walking freely, roaming the streets with a real potential to commit further crimes," added Judge Jolwana.

The NPA welcomes the sentence.

Luxolo Tyali

Regional Spokesperson

National Prosecuting Authority

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