

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: FATHER SENTENCED TO 40 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR MURDER OF HIS TWO MINOR CHILDREN

The Pretoria North Magistrates' Court sentenced Victor Timothy Phetla (36) from Soshanguve in Pretoria to 40 years imprisonment for the murder of his two minor children.

This is after he was convicted for two counts of murder on 01 September 2021 for killing his two minor children, a girl (4) and a boy (1 and 6 months).

On 01 September 2016, Phetla called the mother of the children requesting to take the children out and spend time with them. The mother agreed though they were no longer in a relationship but asked him to bring the children back by 14h00 the following day since the children were going to leave for Mpumalanga with their grandparents.

The following day on 02 September 2016 while at work, the mother called Phetla to ask him to get the children ready so they are not late for the agreed time. After multiple attempts of calls the girl child finally responded to the call sounding different from her usual self, she told her mother that they were fine and had slept well. While having the conversation the father snatched the phone from the child and dropped it and that was the last time the mother was able to get in contact with Phetla and the children. Later, Phetla sent the mother a message on WhatsApp telling her that she should live her life the way she wishes but should ensure that she buries him next to his children.

After this message, she asked to be released from work and called Phetla's cousin to accompany her to Phetla's place. When they arrived at his place the cousin asked the mother to wait outside while he went inside the outside room which Phetla occupied. He saw the body of the girl child. He also saw Phetla attempting to commit suicide by stabbing himself on the floor. He then came out and told her to call the police. In shock

she ran inside the main house to Phetlas mothers' room where she found a lifeless body of her baby boy on top of the bed. She collapsed and lost consciousness.

The police and ambulance were called on the scene and when she regained consciousness she was taken to hospital for observation.

The children were declared dead due to multiple stab wounds. Phetla was taken to hospital under police supervision and has been in custody since. Before trial, Phetla displayed signs of mental illness, however assessment done at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital found him to be fit to stand trial.

Phetla denied killing his children and pleaded not guilty to the charges of murder and claims that his children are still alive.

The prosecutor, Hanlie Du Preez asked the court to impose the prescribed maximum sentence because there are no compelling or substantial reasons to divert from it. In fact, there was overwhelming aggravating evidence in that Phetla was the father of the children and was in a position of care and trust, she added. The children were vulnerable and defenceless and he betrayed their trust, Du Preez said.

The National Prosecuting Authority Welcomed the sentence.

Lumka Mahanjana

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