

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: FORMER SOLDIER SENTENCED FOR KILLING GIRLFRIEND

Last month, the Johannesburg High court sentenced a former soldier, Zwelabantu Ngubeni to 25 years imprisonment for murdering his girlfriend, Zestah September.

In August, the high court convicted Ngubeni on four counts ranging from murder, defeating the ends of justice, violation of a corpse and unlawful possession of ammunition.

Zestah September's body was found burnt beyond recognition in Lenasia in January 2017. The court heard how, on 29 December 2017 the couple argued about Zestah flirting with another man. The argument ended with the accused assaulting and strangling Zestah to death. Two days later, Ngubeni disposed of Zestah's body using her car to buy petrol and set the body alight.

State Advocate Lwazi Ngodwana argued that there were no compelling and substantial facts for the court to deviate from the minimum prescribed sentence of 15 years for murder. He in fact, insisted that due to the gravity of the crime committed and the prevalence of femicide cases, the court should impose a sentence in excess of 15 years. The court confirmed that Advocate Ngodwana's arguments were valid and sentenced Ngubeni to 25 years, 5 years for defeating the ends of justice, 5 years for violating the corpse and 3 years for illegal possession of ammunition (sentences which were ordered to run concurrently with the murder sentence of 25 years).

Judge Adams congratulated Sergeant Lukhele for her sterling investigative skills that resulted in a seamless prosecution.

Aggravation features that led the court to exceed the minimum prescribed sentence are amongst others, that the accused lied to the police and pretended to assist the family in searching for the deceased meanwhile he knew that she was dead. He also cleaned up the crime scene and burnt the body to destroy evidence.

Society continues to be dependent on the criminal justice system to impose harsh sentences to those who disregard the value of life and the NPA is confident that sentences of this nature will help reduce the scourge of femicide.

Kind Regards,

Hurbetin Phindi Louw-Mjonondwane

Regional Spokesperson: DPP South Gauteng

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