

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: FOUR MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO MURDER

The Free State High Court has sentenced four men from Phuthaditjhaba to sentences ranging from 10 to 20 years after they pleaded guilty to murder and robbery. Itumeleng Moloi (20), Peter Tshabalala(29), Stanley Modipa (22), and Thabang Buthelezi (17) pleaded guilty to robbery and murder of Dannis Malakoane.

In their plea, the accused stated before the court that on the day of the incident, 25 May 2019, they were drinking at Manti's tavern in Namahadi, Phuthaditjhaba when the deceased arrived. He was in the company of Mpho Tsoaela. Mpho informed the accused that the deceased had a lot of money and a discussion ensued about how to rob him.

Thabang Buthelezi then approached the deceased asking for a lift to Three Star Tavern which was on the way Mpho and the deceased would have taken home. He agreed and the four accused got at the back of the vehicle whilst Mpho was in the front seat.

Arriving at their drop-off spot, the accused did not get out of the vehicle, instead Modipa started strangling the deceased from the back seat. Tshabalala strangled Mpho as they were demanding money from her and the deceased. They took R80 and a cellular phone from Malakoane who offered to give them more money which was at his house.

Buthelezi drove the car to Malakoane's home but it broke down at Sekoto Bridge. Malakoane tried to run away but they caught up with him and stabbed him. They then threw him over the bridge, he landed on the water below and succumbed to his wounds.

His vehicle was left behind and they together with Mpho walked to Modipa's house. Moloi sold Malakoane's cellular phone and this led to the arrest of all of them. Malakoane's vehicle was taken by another person who later set it alight.

The accused admitted all the elements of the crime and the state and the defence reached an agreement that, upon acceptance of the plea of guilty by the court, Molo, Tshabalala and Modipa will be sentenced to 10 years for robbery and 20 years for murder. The sentences will run concurrently and they will each serve 20 years imprisonment effectively.

Buthelezi, who was a minor at the time of the commission of the crimes, was sentenced to eight years for robbery and 10 years for murder. He will effectively serve 10 years imprisonment after the judge ordered the sentences to run concurrently.

All the accused were declared unfit to possess a firearm.

Phaladi Shuping

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