

Media Statement



Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Email:
media@npa.gov.za

Victoria & Griffiths
Mxenge Building
123 Westlake Avenue
Weavind Park
Silverton
Pretoria

www.npa.gov.za

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 05 JUNE 2015

**RE: NPA WELCOMES HEAVY SENTENCES HANDED DOWN TO
GEORGE 'GEWELD' THOMAS AND CO-ACCUSED**

The National Prosecuting Authority welcomes the heavy sentences that were handed down to George 'Geweld' Thomas and his co accused at the Western Cape High Court on Wednesday, 03 June 2015. Thomas was sentenced to seven life sentences and 175 years. Six of his co accused were sentenced to life imprisonment and the rest were handed sentences ranging between 12 and 25 years.

It has been four long years of hard work on one of the biggest and most complex gang cases in the province. This is not the first gang case where we have managed to secure long sentences and making a dent on gang syndicates in the Western Cape. We have managed to secure lengthy sentences in our first case that was against Shamiel Eyssen followed by the case against the Fancy Boys of Atlantis and the case against Salim John. Our hard work has paid off once again and we hope this sends a message of hope to the residents of the Cape Flats that the partners within the JCPS Cluster are working towards ensuring that they are and feel safe. This sentencing has set a precedent for prosecuting organised crime syndicates and gangs.

There were nineteen accused in the matter but accused two, Jason Stynder, was acquitted on all charges. They faced 166 charges and the State called more than 70 witnesses to prove its case. They were convicted on various charges including premeditated murder, attempted murder, racketeering, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition and gang offences. Besides accused two, all of the other accused were convicted on serious charges, which we consider to be a major success. The convictions should be a comforting message to members of the public that the NPA is serious about confronting gang violence head-on and that success can be achieved when we have the cooperation of the public. At the same time it serves as a stern message to people with

criminal intentions, that the NPA will not be tolerant of gang violence and that in appropriate cases criminal gangs will face the full might of the law.

The successful conviction and lengthy sentences can be attributed to the allocation of a good team of three dedicated and diligent prosecutors to this case. The hard work by Advocates Willie Viljoen (Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions), Advocate Catherine Breytenbach and Advocate Christian De Jongh in very difficult circumstances, not only concerning their own safety but to overcome the reluctance of civilian witnesses to testify in court paid off. The cooperation of 70 civilian witnesses who testified in the matter, often only on small and almost insignificant matters, but corroborating other witnesses in the process, particularly the Section 204 witnesses, thereby each one making his or her contribution to the achievement of justice.

The NPA is satisfied with the sentence.

Kind Regards,

Issued by:

Luvuyo Mfaku
NPA Spokesperson
0823786199
lmfaku@npa.gov.za