

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: KRAAIFONTEIN MAN SENTENCED TO 85 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND DRUGS

The Bluedowns Regional Court sentenced Brendon Opperman to 85 years imprisonment subsequent his conviction on illegal possession of firearms, illegal possession of ammunition and illegal possession of thousands of mandrax tablets.

Opperman was convicted for illegal possession of three revolvers, illegal possession of three semi-automatic firearms, illegal possession of 2 208 rounds of ammunition and illegal possession of 6 597 mandrax tablets. The court sentenced him to 15 years imprisonment for the three counts of illegal possession of revolvers, 45 years imprisonment for the three counts illegal possession of semi-automatic firearms, 10 years imprisonment for the illegal possession of ammunition and 15 years imprisonment for the illegal possession of mandrax. The court ordered that some of the sentences run concurrently effectively sentencing him to 35 years imprisonment. The sentenced was handed down yesterday morning.

The prosecutor, Chandre Smit, described Opperman as a 'channel'. These are 'normal' residents with no criminal record, no known gang affiliation who are undetected by police but are used by gangs to store their illegal items like firearms and drugs.

In this case, police received a tip off that Opperman was storing ammunition in a backyard premise on 28 Dune Street, Scottsville, Kraaifontein. Police reacted immediately as the tipoff indicated that it was a huge cache of ammunition that was likely to be removed from the storage. Police found Opperman on the premises and after searching the property, they found various firearms on top of the cupboard, found the ammunition in a set of drawers and the drugs were found packed in packets with 1 000 tablets each.

Smit called several witnesses in building her case including Captain Dirk van Rheenen who testified on the impact of illegal possession of firearms, gang violence in the Scottsville area and how this case is directly linked to that. He also testified that the drugs were packaged in 1000 mandrax tablets per bag and one bag was open and had 507 in tablets inside. The packaging spoke to fact that there was drug dealing taking place and some drugs were collected from Opperman for distribution. He further told the court that the illegal firearms were commonly used in gang related incidents in Kraaifontein and innocent bystanders suffered with some losing their lives due to these shootings.

Smit argued that the Kraaifontein area was number one in South Africa for recorded murder cases committed with firearms. "The community of Kraaifontein lives in fear due to ongoing gang violence in the area. The community is left with no recourse but to look up to the courts for protection against these violent acts. Yes, Opperman was only found in possession of firearms and numerous ammunition and drugs, but we cannot lose sight that these are tools used to commit crimes, end lives and wreck families on a daily basis more especially in the Kraaifontein area.

"The accused aided the suffering that is happening and that needs to be stopped. A clear message should be sent out by the court that Opperman's actions are not condoned. The only way to do that is through a strong sentence that will deter not only him from future actions but also serve as a warning to those in the community that these crimes are punished and not with a slap on the wrist."

Opperman declined to testify in his own case or to call any witnesses and closed his case.

Smith argued that the State proved its case beyond any reasonable doubt. The court agreed, found Opperman guilty on all counts preferred against him and handed down the lengthy sentence. It further declared him unfit to possess a firearm. The NPA welcomes this sentence.

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