

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 31 AUGUST 2017**

**RE: KILLER ROBBERS SENTENCED TO LIFE**

Yesterday, the Mthatha High Court sentenced a six-men gang to an effective life imprisonment after they were convicted on a string of charges relating to the robbery of a pension pay point ten years ago. Bonginkosi Nyengane (34), Zolisa Vuwane (39), Sithembiso Pakule (37), Mfundo Malindi (38), Mkhululi Mpusu (43) and Mkhusele Gada (29) were sentenced to life for murder, 15 years imprisonment for three counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances, 15 years for attempted murder and 15 years for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. The court ordered all the sentences to run concurrently with the life imprisonment term.

Evidence presented in court was that the gang conspired and agreed to rob money at the pay point serviced by Cash Paymaster Services, and further agreed that they needed to hijack a motor vehicle in order to execute the robbery. On the night of 07 June 2007, the gang ambushed a well-known teacher, Xolile Songca, near Jojweni village in the district of Tsolo. They shot and killed him and made off with his Toyota Hilux vehicle.

Armed with prohibited fully automatic firearms, the six men attacked a pay point at Zimbeleni village in the district of Qumbu on 08 June 2007, where there was a shootout with security guards. They forcefully took R200 000 and fled the scene in the high-jacked vehicle but one of the vehicle's tyres burst. Wielding firearms, the men robbed another Toyota Hilux from a motorist passing by and drove to a forest where they shared their loot.

During the trial, the group of criminals, five of whom are currently serving sentences ranging between 18 years and life imprisonment for murder and robberies committed in the Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Free State, were linked to their crime by Senior State Advocate, Mduduzi Mzila, through their confessions and eyewitness testimonies. A trial within a trial had to be conducted when all of the accused denied the confessions

they made to the police when they were arrested, but the court ruled their confessions admissible.

Sentencing the gang, Judge Shylock Ndengezi said it was clear that the men had waged a war against society and never felt any sense of humanity towards any victims.

The NPA welcomes the sentence and hopes it shows that criminals will be prosecuted and sentenced even if the crimes were committed a long time ago.

Kind Regards,

**Luxolo Tyali**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP Mthatha**

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