

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**RE: LAND AFFAIRS OFFICIAL GETS 10 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR FRAUD**

Patrick Bhekumuzi Masoka (53) was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in the Durban Commercial Crime Court yesterday after being convicted of fraud and two counts of theft.

The accused was employed as a chief principal planner at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and was project manager of the department's settlement and production land acquisition project. The department had acquired a farm in Ladysmith that was to be allocated to the farm dwellers that wished to farm and possibly did not have access to land. The department would assist these individuals financially to purchase the farm on which they would conduct farming operations.

Instead the accused, his wife and her family benefitted from the land acquisition wherein the wife was made a trustee of the trust, even though she was not a farm dweller on the property. The accused and his family then took up residence on the farm.

During the trial, Senior State Advocate, Ranjini Govender led the evidence of seven witnesses including a forensic investigator, farm dwellers, the owner of the farm and valuers who worked with the accused.

The accused was convicted of fraud, theft of livestock valued at R40 000 and theft of cattle valued at approximately R19 000. He was sentenced to an effective 10 years imprisonment.

The Director of Public Prosecutions in KZN, Adv. Moipone Noko welcomes the sentence. "I trust that a sentence of this nature will send out a clear message to government employees about the repercussions of fraud and corruption."

Kind Regards,

**Natasha Kara**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN**

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