

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: LIFE SENTENCE FOR MUTHI KILLERS

Nino Mbatha (32) and Lungisani Magubane (32) each received a term of life imprisonment in the Pietermaritzburg High Court yesterday. The sentence relates to the killing of 24 year-old Zanele Hlatshwayo in July last year.

Magubane approached Mbatha, a traditional healer, for muthi that would bring him luck in the various aspects of his life. Mbatha advised him that the ancestors required blood to be spilled for this kind of muthi and advised that he bring a woman or child.

In July 2017, the deceased was at the time in Estcourt and taken to the Esigodlweni location. Here, Mbatha slit her throat and beheaded her. With the assistance of Magubane, they removed her internal organs, hands, feet, and other soft tissue. They concealed the remaining body parts amongst some rocks.

In mid-August, Mbatha went to the Estcourt Police Station where he told the officers that he needed help as he was being forced to eat human flesh. From his bag, he produced a hand and foot, belonging to the deceased. An inspection of his home revealed the cranium of a skull, parts of a jawbone and decaying internal organs stored in various containers. The deceased identity was established via DNA analysis.

In court, the state, represented by Senior State Advocates Wendy Greeff and Val Dafel led the evidence of the police officials who were on duty when Mbatha arrived at the station, as well as other officers who went to his house. The state's other witnesses were Mbatha's ex-girlfriend and her brother who were his neighbours. Since, Mbatha denied producing the body parts at the station; his girlfriend testified that he had shown her the human hand at his house. Her brother corroborated this evidence.

A victim impact statement compiled by the mother of the deceased and facilitated by Court Preparation Officer, Babongile Chuene was also handed in to the court. Here the mother mentioned that their family is still in shock about how their daughter was killed. She said that they were in pain and were battling to get over the incident.

The accused received a life sentence each.

The Director of Public Prosecution in KwaZulu Natal, Advocate Moipone Noko welcomes the sentence. "It is my hope that sentences such as this will deter like-minded. Cases of this nature translate to murder and we will prosecute without fear, favour or prejudice. Congratulations to all NPA officials involved in the finalisation of this matter."

Kind Regards,

Natasha Kara

Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN

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