

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: MAN SENTENCED FOR KILLING HIS EMPLOYER

Yesterday, the High Court sitting in Breyten convicted and sentenced Banele Sihlali (28) of Thusi Village in Ermelo to life imprisonment for murder and additional sentences for assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, robbery with aggravating circumstances, and four counts of fraud.

The accused is a former employee of the deceased. His employment was terminated in 2015 after he stole the deceased's motor vehicle.

Two of these crimes were committed in No 70 Klein Street in Ermelo, where the accused in count 1 approached his victim, stabbed him with a screw- driver and there after fled the scene. The most remarkable one is that, on 21 November 2016, the accused attacked the deceased in her house and her lifeless body was found in the boot of her car that was parked on the premises. Her mouth was wrapped with bandages and an electric cable was found around her neck. During the attack, the accused took an amount of R2500 and a Standard Bank Card from the deceased's purse. He further withdrew a cash amount of R5000-00 at three different ATM's from the account of the deceased using a Standard Bank card. After the investigations commenced, the accused became a suspect and he tried to evade arrest on several occasions but was eventually arrested at his house.

During the trial, the accused pleaded not guilty, however, the state represented by advocate David Pudikabekwa, led evidence of 8 witnesses including the evidence of Eben Dippenaar, the son of the deceased. He told the court that after the death of her mother, he realised that an amount of R2500 was missing together with her Standard Bank Card .The state further argued that the prescribed minimum sentences to be imposed.

During sentencing, the presiding officer, Judge Strydom told the court that the deceased was brutally killed in the sanctity of her own home. "It is disappointing to see how the accused betrayed the relationship of trust with the deceased as the accused had worked for the deceased for approximately 10 years", said Judge Strydom. He then sentenced the accused to 10 years for assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, life imprisonment for murder, 15 years for robbery with aggravating circumstances, 5 years each for four counts of fraud.

The accused was facing eight counts; he was convicted on seven counts and was found not guilty on possession of a firearm and ammunition.

The Judge ordered the sentences in count 1, 3,4,5,6 and 7 to run concurrently with the sentence in count 2. Effectively, he will serve life in prison.

The NPA welcomes the sentence with the hope that it will restore confidence in the criminal justice system.

Kind Regards,

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