

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 09 JULY 2019

RE: MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR TAVERN DISPUTES WHICH LED TO MURDER

The high court sitting in Johannesburg sentenced Nhlakanipho Zungu to life in prison for tavern disputes on 05 July 2019.

Zungu faced charges of murder, unlawful possession of firearm and ammunition. In November 2017, he was apprehended by the Mahlabathini Police a few days after he killed Nombuso Baig who was renting his tavern in Tokoza.

The witness, Fikile Hadebe, who was the girlfriend of the accused told the court that Baig and her boyfriend were renting Zungu's tavern in Tokoza from the accused. The accused wanted his tavern back and he served the deceased with notice of intention to cancel the lease agreement. However, Baig refused to accept the termination and stopped paying rent.

On the night of commission of the offences, the accused waited at his friend's place at night until around 20h00, he then visited the tavern where he found Baig outside together with friends and shot her several times with a firearm. She died on the scene.

Baig's mother testified as the state witness and explained how negatively the incident has impacted on the family, she left two boys of 14 and 4 years and she was a breadwinner. She also said the family never received an apology from the accused.

Counsel for the accused prayed for a lesser sentence, as the 30 year old is relatively young and a first time offender and that he spent 2 years awaiting trial. However, the court ruled that these factors are not justifiable enough for the court to deviate from the prescribed minimum sentence.

Advocate Khethokwakhe Ngubane persuaded the court and submitted that the incident was planned, and that time spent in custody alone, as submitted by the defence, does not amount to substantial and compelling circumstances, thereby justifying a departure from what the law dictates as a minimum sentence.

In handing down the sentence, Judge Thomas Mathunzi decided that the court had to judiciously consider the two contrasting submissions and came to the conclusion that the aggravating factors outweigh the mitigating factors.

The NPA welcomes the sentence.

Kind Regards,

Hurbetin Phindi Louw-Mjonondwane

Regional Spokesperson: DPP South Gauteng

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