

Media Statement



Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Email:
media@npa.gov.za

Victoria & Griffiths
Mxenge Building
123 Westlake Avenue
Weavind Park
Silverton
Pretoria

www.npa.gov.za

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 23 MAY 2017

RE: MURDERER SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT

Active roles played by families of victims of crime are proving to benefit the police and the courts in ensuring that perpetrators get arrested, successfully prosecuted and sentenced.

Last week, the Western Cape High Court sentenced Bongani Zitha to life imprisonment after convicting him on five counts which included murder, attempted murder and robbery with aggravating circumstances, attempted robbery, and possession of an illegal firearm and illegal possession of ammunition.

Zitha handed himself over to the police after the family of his murder victim, Bin Jiang, published clear pictures of the accused and his co-accused in a local newspaper of 23 October 2015 following the fatal shooting of their family member during robbery.

The ordeal for the family started on the Sunday afternoon of 20 September 2016, when Zitha and his two accomplices entered the China Town shopping complex in Ottery in a vehicle they stole almost a year ago. The vehicle was kitted with new registration numbers. They went to Jiang's shop and pretended that they wanted to buy a bag that was on display. As the shop assistant was going up a ladder, she heard a loud gun shot. Zitha then shouted at her in isiXhosa asking where the money was.

He and his accomplices left the shop, jumped over the fence as security in the complex closed the main gate to stop them from escaping. The accused then went on a shooting spree and damaged vehicles of other motorists and endangering the lives of bystanders. They escaped. It was discovered that Jiang has been shot and he died on the scene.

During the trial, Advocate Pulane Thaiteng argued that until then the police had no leads in the case. "The state submits further that, were it not for the published pictures, the case could have gone cold and the identity of the suspects forever undiscovered".

She further argued for a life imprisonment as the murder was premediated, the accused put the lives of other people in danger and he never showed remorse.

"The attempted robbery was evidently pre-planned. The accused and his companions arrived in the same car, which was reported stolen. The video footage shows that at least two people including the accused were armed. They acted like hooligans in a Wild West movie. They showed no respect for the people in the store, or respect for the life of the deceased", said Thaiteng.

On the day in question, the deceased was working attending to customers when he was senselessly shot and killed. Video footage shows presence of vulnerable members of the society like women, young people, a pregnant woman and a small child who was later seen hiding behind a box with his mother. The accused are also observed taunting the mother and her child.

Thaiteng also argued that the accused failed as he never identified his accomplices and their addresses to the police. She said that true remorse would have prompted the accused to report to the police a lot sooner than a month later.

Zitha was sentenced to ten years for attempted robbery, fifteen years for robbery, life imprisonment for murder, six years for illegal possession of a firearm and another six years for illegal possession of ammunition. The court ordered that all sentences run concurrently.

Kind Regards,

Eric Ntabazalila

Regional Spokesperson: DPP Western Cape

Enquiries: entabazalila@npa.gov.za

073 062 1222