

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: N3 HIGHWAY ROBBERS THAT KILLED POLICE OFFICIALS SENTENCED TO LIFE

Two men were sentenced to 125 years plus two life imprisonment for killing two police officers on the N3 Highway in 2015. They were convicted on the following counts: Conspiracy to commit robbery with aggravating circumstances; three counts of murder, attempted murder, three counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances, two counts of unlawful possession of prohibited firearms, two counts of unlawful possession of firearms and one count of unlawful possession of ammunition.

The assailants, Sandile Nyathikazi and Lucky Nhlanhleni Nzama conspired with eight others, who since disappeared, to rob a truck transporting cellphones and cellphone parts or garments and accessories from OR Tambo International Airport to Worldnet Logistics in Edenvale. They held a meeting about the hijack and planned the robbery.

The trial revealed that the meeting to plan the robbery was attended by a group of plus minus 10 men including the two convicts. They recruited the security officers escorting the targeted truck and the driver of the truck to be of assistance during the robbery. Part of the plan was for the group to acquire before 29 March 2015 rifles and cellphones to be used only on the day of the robbery and powerful/fast vehicles, for the robbery to be successful. On 27 March 2015, they indeed hijacked a Mercedes Benz to be used on for the robbery.

On 29 March 2015, three police officers from Sandringham, whilst patrolling saw a BMW driving recklessly but the driver accelerated when they tried to stop it. They gave chase and managed to stop it on the N3 freeway at the offramp leading to Edenvale. Before the police could get out their marked police vehicle, there were bullets fired at them from the front and from the back. When they stopped their vehicle behind the BMW, there was a Mercedes Benz stopping behind them.

The police vehicle was riddled with bullets from the the assailants fired from both the BMW and the Mercedes Benz. It then appeared clearly that the Mercedes Benz was

driving together with the BMW. Police were in between the two vehicles. They struck the three police officers. One of the police officers was shot dead at the back seat.

Two police died, the third police survived by luck and one of the assailants in the Mercedes Benz was also shot at the scene when the Mercedes Benz stopped behind the police vehicle probably by gunshots fired from the BMW. After the shoot-out with an R5 Rifle and 9mm calibre firearms were stolen from the police officers. The assailants were arrested in KwaZulu Natal with the help of the Crime Intelligence.

Counsel for the State, Advocate Mothibe adduced evidence of cellphone data, video footage, confession statement, pointing out, police officers, circumstantial evidence through recruited security guards escorting the targeted truck and the truck driver.

This was a complex matter where the evidence was of a circumstantial nature except only in respect of the conspiracy charge against Nyathikazi whilst Nzama admitted through a confession statement to being party to the commission of the offence.

The state had to deal with several legal issues like common purpose, murder of a co-robber, joint possession of firearms, admissibility of confession and pointing out. Trial within trial was also held regarding the admissibility of confession and pointing out.

The NPA welcomes the sentence.

Kind Regards,

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