

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 24 AUGUST 2017

RE: RACKETEERING CONVICTION

The East London High Court sentenced Galweni Nombo and two others to heavy sentences for racketeering. The events that gave rise to the arrest of the accused took place between 2008 and 2011. During this period, they were arrested on several cases relating to theft of motor vehicles but for numerous reasons, they never went on trial. They often provided a reasonable explanation for their possession or could deny "common purpose" or "joint purpose" which often could not be refuted.

During 2010, a task team led by Brigadier Wolfaards was formed to identify all dockets where the accused were linked. Through the vigilance of the task team, they uncovered that Galweni Nombo and his brothers, Sodladla Nombo and Thembani Makaula were the main perpetrators in this syndicate involving theft of motor vehicles. Their role was to actively participate and further solicit assistance from other young men (from their rural origins of Mt Frere) to steal motor vehicles. The theft of motor vehicles occurred in the coastal towns between Eastern Cape and Cape Town.

The modus operandi of the syndicate was to falsify the registration history of the stolen vehicles, for example, changed chassis and engine numbers, cloned identities, fraudulent license discs and papers. This helped them to make the appearance of the motor vehicles legitimate. All the accused played a prominent role in the offences for their own financial gain and for the benefit of the group of individuals they associated with in their operations.

The stolen vehicles were used to derive income. Other cars were used as taxis or personal vehicles whilst some were sold to unsuspecting buyers or car dealerships. It is alleged that some dealerships were aware that the vehicles were stolen. In 2012 authorisation was given to prosecute the accused on charges of racketeering, theft of motor vehicles, money laundering as well as various charges relating to the syndicate's

operation. The trial became protracted and took almost six years to finalise. The accused were finally convicted and sentenced on 15 August 2017.

Galweni Nombo was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, 15 years for racketeering (POCA); 10 counts of vehicle theft, 5 years each; 4 counts of vehicle theft with contents, 6 years each; 5 counts of money laundering, 8 years imprisonment; possession of housebreaking/car breaking implements, 2 years imprisonment; and conspiracy to commit theft, 3 years imprisonment. The court ordered that the sentences imposed on the predicate offences run concurrently to the sentence imposed on count 1 and effective sentence was 25 years imprisonment.

Sodladla Nombo and Thembani Makaula were sentenced to 18 years effective imprisonment.

The hard work of Advocate Henke Ackerman did not go unnoticed. The DPP of Grahamstown, Advocate Mahlati, SC applauded him together with the task team that brought this brazen syndicate to its knees.

The NPA welcomes the sentence.

Kind Regards,

Tsepo Ndwalaza

NPA Regional Spokesperson

Eastern Cape: DPP Grahamstown & DDPP PE

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