

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: ROADWORTHY CERTIFICATE SYNDICATE MASTERMIND AND MEMBERS SENTENCED

A syndicate mastermind, his girlfriend, a government employee and a corrupt vehicle fleet owner were sentenced to various prison sentence at the Bellville Magistrate's Court yesterday morning.

The syndicate mastermind, Elton Bernard Abrahams, who is also a businessman in the motor vehicle industry operating in the Bellville/ Belhar area was sentenced to ten years direct imprisonment with five years suspended for five years on condition that he is not convicted on charges of corruption during the period of the suspended sentence. This means he is sentenced to an effective five years direct imprisonment.

The court also ordered the 33 year-old man to pay back R1 051 470 to the Western Cape Department of Transport which was also a victim of the scam and R2m to the Criminal Assets Recovery Account. His girlfriend, Bronwyn Davids, 31, was sentenced to three years house arrest. The court was lenient to her because she showed remorse and was a first time offender. Laurel Richards who used to work for the Western Cape Department of Transport was not as lucky, as the court handed her a three year direct imprisonment sentence. The 37 years old was also handed a five years direct imprisonment suspended for five years on condition that she is not convicted of the same charge during the period of the suspended sentence. The court found mitigating factors as she was a first time offender, showed remorse and the more than a million rands which the Western Cape Department of Transport suffered was paid back by Abrahams.

Faizel Dollie asked Abrahams to organise road worthy certificates for his eleven vehicles without the vehicles being present or tested at a testing station. He paid Abrahams R18 000 for the road worthy certificates that were fraudulently issued. He was sentenced to five years direct imprisonment wholly suspended for five years on condition that he is not

convicted of corruption during the period of the suspended sentence. Dollie is part of 27 cases that have been finalised. Many other accused persons entered into plea and sentencing agreements with the state and received various sentences.

Three more accused persons linked to this scam are still to appear at the Bellville Magistrates Court after their trials were separated from yesterday's proceedings. Still to appear are; Thembile Diyamane Daphula, Grant Grobler and Sumaya Kassim.

More than 1 371 vehicles were entered into the eNatis system to obtain these fraudulent road worthy certificates. The incidents happened between 2013 and 2017 and targeted the Korsten Vehicle Testing Station in Port Elizabeth and the Emthanjeni Municipal Vehicle Testing Station in De Aar. The accused working in common purpose, operated a scheme where vehicle owners would contact the accused or be solicited to organise roadworthy certification for vehicles without the vehicles being physically tested or even being present at the vehicle testing stations. These were mostly heavy or passenger carrying vehicles that had to be certified as being roadworthy annually or bi-annually. The vehicle owner would pay a fee directly to Abrahams or into a bank account or via money market to Abrahams or his girlfriend.

Owners were only required to provide the register or licence number and the details of the owner. False entries would be made on the eNatis system either at the Korsten Vehicle Testing Station in Port Elizabeth or the Emthanjeni Municipal Vehicle Testing Station in De Aar.

The accused also assisted vehicle owners with their arrear licence fees where the vehicles would be placed in vehicle dealerships names as 'dealer stock' on the system. In this way no license are payable. The vehicles would be placed back into the names of the owners and those owners would not have arrears in their names resulting in a money loss for the Western Cape Department of Transport. The owners were duped into thinking that reduced licence fees were arranged but none of that happened.

The third scheme involved was the temporary reduction in the tare weight for heavy vehicles. This resulted in a substantial decrease in license fees. This scheme also involved Richards who would receive details of the truck and details of the owner via a cell phone or email. She would then temporarily reduce the vehicles tare on the eNatis system resulting in a lower licence fee. Once the fee has been paid, she would change the weight back to its original numbers and the department lost some money again.

The NPA welcomes the sentences imposed as the accused were involved in a scheme that allows unroadworthy vehicles to operate on South African roads putting thousands of lives at risk.

Kind Regards,

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