

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: 28 FEBRUARY 2017

RE: 6 LIFE & 26 YEARS IMPRISONMENT

Themba Raphael Mvelase (37) was sentenced to 6 terms of life imprisonment and an additional 26 years in the Durban High Court last week for the murders, attempted murders and malicious injury to property he committed in Ladysmith in October 2014. This relates to a faction fight between two taxi groups in the area.

In October 2014, two families attended a wedding at Ezakheni, near Ladysmith. They were travelling in convoy back to Gauteng when their lead car took a wrong turning and Peme Hlomuka, the driver of the second car, realised the mistake. He pulled off to call the occupants of the front car when his car was suddenly hit by a hail of bullets, which killed his sister and seriously injured his wife, his teenage niece, and his brother-in-law.

Two gunmen emerged from a grey Toyota Verso which had stopped alongside them. The gunmen pointed rifles at them. At this point, the driver of the Verso, who was still inside it, shouted out 'it's not them' and the gunmen got back into the Toyota and sped off. One of the complainants later identified the accused as one of the men who had alighted.

Less than half an hour later, a group of taxi drivers and conductors were relaxing at a roadside carwash in Ezakheni when a grey Toyota Verso appeared. It stopped a few metres away and two men got out. They began shooting at the group. Five of them died on the scene while one was shot in the leg.

Several days later a partially burnt grey Toyota Verso was found in a plantation in the Colenso area. The police were called and a fingerprint expert lifted prints. These prints were checked on the database and a single thumbprint matching prints on record for

Themba Raphael Mvelase, the accused, was found. He was arrested and subsequently pointed out on an ID parade.

The accused was sentenced to 6 terms of life imprisonment for the murder charges and an additional 26 years imprisonment for the other charges. The sentences will run concurrently with that of life.

This matter was successfully prosecuted by Senior State Advocates Wendy Greeff and Makhosi Mthembu.

The Director of Public Prosecutions in KZN, Advocate Moipone Noko, 'The sentence is indeed fitting, given the heinous crimes committed and the blatant disregard for life.'

Kind Regards,

Natasha Kara
Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN
Enquiries: nramkisson@npa.gov.za