

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: SIX MEN SENTENCED FOR MURDERING AND KIDNAPPING A 3 YEAR OLD CHILD

Thursday last week, the Nelspruit High Court sentenced Mabeketela Magudwini Louis Sithole (19), Sifiso Mhlolo Mazibe (18), Bongani Frans Sathane Ngomane (27), Themba Jimson Mnyambo (44), Jabulane Ndlovu (27) and Micheal Mandla Mokoena (46) to various sentences for murdering and kidnapping a 3 year old girl for traditional medicine (Muti).

Accused 1, was a cattle herdsman and the deceased Leticia Nkentshane was staying next door to accused number 1's home at Mgobodzi Trust near Malelane.

In February 2015, the accused were attending a ritual ancestral ceremony at Boschfontein village in Nkomazi District. In that ceremony, accused 5 who is a traditional healer in the local dialect, requested his co accused to help him obtain a girl child between 3- 5 years of age for the purpose of killing her to make muti and he promised to pay them some money.

The other accused conspired as they were interested in the human tissue to make muti. Seven months later, Accused 1 took the deceased and two other minor children to the bush together with cattle to graze under the pretext that they were going to pick wild fruit in the bush. Later, the two minor children returned and Leticia was never seen again.

They were subsequently arrested after Accused 1 informed the deceased's family that the deceased got lost in the bush and further investigations took place.

During trial, Advocate Sonja Ntuli led evidence of the relatives of the accused, the evidence of police investigators and the evidence of dog experts. The state further led evidence of admission and confession by some of the accused.

The six were sentenced as follows: In respect of count 1, Accused 3, 4, 5 and 6 were sentenced to life imprisonment each and five years for kidnapping. Accused 1, was sentenced to 19 years direct imprisonment for murder and 5 years for kidnapping. Accused 2, was sentenced to 17 years direct imprisonment for murder and 5 years for kidnapping. The presiding officer ordered the sentences in count 2 to run concurrently with the sentences imposed in count 1.

The NPA applauds Advocate Sonja Ntuli and the investigating team in bringing justice and closure to the family of the deceased.

Kind Regards,

Monica Nyuswa

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