

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: 06 MARCH 2020

RE: TAXI OWNER SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR MURDER OF RIVAL TAXI ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

The Western Cape High Court-sentenced Phindile Velem after he pleaded guilty to two counts of murder, attempted murder, three counts of illegal possession of firearms and three counts of illegal possession of ammunition. Velem is a taxi owner affiliated to the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (CATA).

The 43 year-old father of four confessed that on the evening of 22 February 2018, he was looking for Maliphakame Magxwalisa and Themba Liwani who were members of a rival taxi association, CUTA Taxi Association. He found them chatting on the main road at Hout Bay. He shot Magxwalisa and he died on the scene. Liwani, who was waiting to take home staff members of OK Mini Mark after they finished their shift, ran into the shop. The accused followed him and shot him in full view of everyone in the shop. He then walked out, got into the vehicle Magxwalisa was driving and left the scene. Police discovered the vehicle abandoned on Beach Road, Hout Bay.

On 13 September 2018, the accused chased Nkosithandile Pango through the streets of Delft, caught up with him and fatally shot him. His claim is that Pango was a hitman who had spread rumours that he would kill him on sight.

Police arrested him in Kayamandi, Stellenbosch, on 03 November 2018. They found him in possession of an unlicensed semi-automatic pistol with ammunition.

Velem pleaded for mercy telling the court that there were substantial and compelling circumstances for the court to deviate from the prescribed minimum sentence of life imprisonment for murder.

Advocate Mornay Julius had none of that pointing out that the accused could have ceased his actions after the first incident on 22 February 2018.

“Nonetheless, he proceeded thereafter, some seven months later, to commit the second murder. Thereafter, less than 2 months later, he committed another serious offence of being in possession of an unlicensed semi-automatic pistol that carries a minimum sentence of 15 years (in the absence of substantial and compelling circumstances)”. The court agreed and sentenced him to two life terms, 33 years and 6 months direct imprisonment. All sentences are to run concurrently with the life imprisonment imposed for the murder of a man who was shot on broad day light after being chased on the streets of Delft. He was also declared unfit to possess a firearm.

The NPA welcomes this sentence and hopes that it will send a clear message that violence within the taxi industry will not be tolerated.

Eric Ntabazalila
Regional Communications Manager
Western Cape
Tel: (021) 487 7308 Mobile: 073 062 1222
Email: entabazalila@npa.gov.za