

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 02 OCTOBER 2019**

**RE: TRIO SENTENCED FOR DEFRAUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MILLIONS OF RANDS**

Last week Friday, 27 September 2019, the Nelspruit Regional Court sentenced Musawenkosi Sigasa, Thabang Nathaniel Gaakarekoe, Jabulile Gladys Gaakarekoe to various sentences after they were found guilty of defrauding the Mpumalanga Department of Education in 2009.

All accused were co- directors of the Gauwe Waste Management and Projects Clonis, Homes and Maintenance. They hacked into the department's financial system and defrauded it under the guise of being a service provider. Various payments were paid to Nedbank and Absa accounts totalling an amount of R5.5 million. This was after the department discovered that there were certain suspicious transactions that were effected from its financial and supply chain management systems.

The trio was linked to the offences upon application of Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act, by their close corporations registration bank account statements, withdrawal slips and cell phone records including the evidence of a technical expert.

During trial, the trio pleaded not guilty to the allegations levelled against them. The state, led by Senior State Advocate Patrick Nkuna of the Specialised Commercial Crime Unit relied on documentary and expert witnesses to establish the guilt of the accused. He further addressed the court that theft is a continuous offence even if the original thief was not found as there was an indication that the accused persons were assisted by the official from the department to steal and transfer money to their close corporation.

The presiding officer, Magistrate Andre Geldenhuys told the court that: " the money that was stolen from the Department of Education was not recovered and there were other unknown people involved in this crime. This type of crime is prevalent and therefore, it is the duty of the court to impose a suitable sentence to deter other future offenders". He

Justice in our society, so that people can live in freedom and security

then sentenced Sigasa to 12 years direct imprisonment, Thabang Gaarekoe to 10 years direct imprisonment and Jabulile Gladys who is 80 years of age, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment wholly suspended for five years.

The NPA welcomes the conviction and sentence.

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