

Publication: Zululand Observer Monday - Main

Title: Witness 'confession' in taxi killing case

Publish date: 14 Apr 2025

Page: 3

Reach: 2766

AVE: R 16369.93

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14 APRIL 2025

Witness 'confession' in taxi killing case

Staff Reporters

THE State pulled some punches against four murder accused who were applying last week for their release on bail.

Zethembe Sibiya (36), Thokozani Sibiya (30), Vikinduku Biyela (45) and Siboniso Biyela (33) appeared again at Empangeni Magistrate's Court on Friday for a formal bail hearing in connection with the July 2022 murder of a taxi boss.

The four face charges of murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and robbery with aggravating circumstances emanating from the killing of Sipho 'Gagasi' Mashiyane, the Emkhandlwini taxi boss who was killed and robbed of his minibus taxi.

Mshiyane was reported missing in July 2022, and his body was found inside a drain by EPWP workers in the KwaMaqina area. There was only one gunshot wound to the body.

During the bail hearing on Wednesday, the State revealed that a licensed firearm belonging to one of the accused was used in the commission of the offence, and was sent for ballistic examination.

On Friday, the controversial taxi boss

Vikinduku Biyela said he knew the deceased, but had nothing to do with his disappearance or murder. He said he was aware that police were under pressure to arrest him due to social media posts saying the police feared him.

He further asserted that he had nothing to do with the murder, but confirmed that in July 2022 he was informed that Mashiyane had gone missing.

He said, while he was preparing to join the search the following day, he was informed that Mashiyane's body had been found.

Buchanana Taxi Association chairperson Vikinduku Biyela revealed that he has only one pending case of attempted murder, in the Eshowe Regional Court, and his next court appearance is May this year.

The State prosecutor told the court that she had a confession statement from the first accused, Phiwayinkosi Xulu, which implicates all four of the accused. Vikinduku denied any knowledge of the first accused.

The matter was postponed to today (Monday) for the finalisation of the bail hearing.