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# "Cops witnessed hanging"

## Police dispute residents' claims

By **Boitumelo Tshelile**  
North West Correspondent

A North West police station commander and his officers were apparently at the scene when a man suspected of murdering and robbing an old woman was forced to kill himself by hanging.

The residents of Gopane village near Zeerust, who witnessed or took part in the mob attack on March 16, do not understand why some of them were arrested.

"We don't know why they charged members of the community with murder because the police and the station com-

mander were there when the man was asked to hang himself. They could have stopped it," said a woman, who was part of the mob and who did not want to be named.

Another man at the village also confirmed that the police and the station commander were there when the group of angry villagers beat up and told the man accused of killing the granny to hang himself.

Three other people from the same community confirmed the commander and officers were at the scene.

However, police spokesman Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone said he could not confirm if the commander was at the scene.

He said Keitumetse Nkgothwe, 75, was found with a wound to the head inside her

house at about 6am and [was] taken to the clinic in a private vehicle. He said the police had been summoned to the clinic.

The man suspected of the attack was forced to kill himself by the community at 1pm while the officers were at the clinic.

A family member of the deceased woman said the officers were present when the suspect died.

"They were here from 6am until 7pm. When the community found the suspect and brought him to our house, police were here.

"He was beaten and told to hang himself in the police officers' presence."

The woman, who was upset about the arrests and was part of the mob, said they found the man at his home after they

received information he was involved.

After asking him questions he admitted he was present when Nkgothwe was killed. She said they then took him to Nkgothwe's home where they beat him up, asking him to give names of others involved.

After the man refused to give more information, they walked with him to a nearby field where they asked him to either hang himself or let them beat him to death.

Mokgwabone said six men were arrested for the murder of the man and were expected to appear in court on Wednesday for a bail application.

He said they were not aware of the allegations the police failed to act, but the cluster commander would investigate once it was reported.

26/03/18 THA Pg 7 NWSAPS Pos

# Three held for an unlicensed firearm to appear in court

ELFAS TORERAI

THREE people aged 37, 44 and 46 will appear in the Vryburg Magistrate's Court today after they were arrested for the possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition and conspiracy to

commit crime.

The trio was nabbed after police in Vryburg responded to a tip-off.

North West police spokesperson, Lt-Col Amanda Funani said: "The Vryburg K9 unit arrested the three suspects in an operation conducted along the Vry-

burg-Schweizer-Reneke road.

According to information available at this stage, reports suggest that the K9 unit and tracking team received information about the suspects who were driving from Gauteng to Morokweng. The police followed up on the infor-

mation and stopped the suspects' car with Gauteng province registration numbers," she said. During the search, Funani said, police discovered and confiscated 10 live rounds of ammunition, a hunting rifle, silencer, an axe and a hunting knife as well as two vehicles, a

Nissan Hardbody and a Mazda Drifter. Provincial police commissioner Lt-Gen Baile Motswenyane applauded the Vryburg K9 unit and tracking team for the quick response that led to the arrest of the three.

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# Drugs rife in urban areas

## RUSTENBURG, POTCHEFSTROOM AND KLERKSDORP TOP THE NARCOTICS LIST

ELFAS TORERAI

LAW enforcement agencies in the province continue to battle the scourge of drugs that threatens to run down many communities.

A profiling by the police together with the show that Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom are the worst hit areas.

In Mahikeng, a number of residences expressed the view that the problem is bigger than projected in the media.

At the beginning of the year, police had their hands full trying to contain violence, targeting mostly Nigerian nationals in Rustenburg East and the platinum city's central business district.

A number of properties and vehicles were set alight in what people said was a way against drugs, brothels and prostitution.

Chairperson of the Tlhabane community policing forum cluster, Izzy Mainane, who headed campaigns against drugs and human trafficking in Rustenburg Noord, said the torching of properties was because residents have had enough of illegal drug peddling.

He said that the area had been hard hit by drug abuse that has led to a series of crimes including housebreaking.

Mainane accused the police of turning a blind eye despite being given information about the crimes.

"We have identified lot of houses that are being used as drug dens and for prostitution, we have given that to the police but we suspect that they are in collusion with the criminals.

"Rustenburg Noord is a hub of illegal drugs but as a forum we are saying the community should not take the law into their own hands, we understand its frustrations but they should act within the law," he said.

The department of social development has established two substance abuse centres to help fight the problem of drug and substance abuse in the province.

"JB Marks inpatient treatment centre has a bed capacity of 40. The centre was established after the department renovated an unused building at the Witrand Hospital complex.

The other centre, Tsamung inpatient treatment centre, with a 20-bed capacity is situated at the Tsamung Hospital

premises in Tsamung.

"Presently the department is in the process of operationalising the two centres and they will be officially launched in the new financial year," department spokesperson Pétrus Siko said.

Concerned residents of Mahikeng tried to follow the example of Rustenburg with mixed results.

A number of people were attacked, businesses looted and for days, shops in the central business district had to shut down amid threats of arson and violence.

One of those attacked, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said: "These people just accused me as I was walking out of a grocery store. They physically attacked me, took my cellphone and the groceries I had bought. Fortunately, they did not take my car keys and I managed to drive myself to hospital where I was admitted overnight."

Mahikeng mayor Betty Diakanyo called a meeting with local and foreign entrepreneurs where both sides pledged to fight crime and work together for the good of the provincial capital.

A considerable number of people have been arrested after they were found in possession of drugs that are causing havoc, particularly among the young people.

Recently, police arrested two people after they found them inside a flat near Protea Road in Vryburg packaging drugs.

The drugs, with an estimated street value of R360 000 included ecstasy tablets, cocaine, cocaine rocks, crystal meth and cat. The drugs were all confiscated together with other items such as a scale and cellphones.

North West police spokesperson Lt-Col Ardle Myburgh said a 38-year-old man was also arrested along the N12 near Potchefstroom after he was found in possession of Maudrax pills worth R45 000.

"It was during the operation that the suspect's vehicle was stopped and searched. During the search, Maudrax pills to the estimated street value of R45 700 were found," she said.

Linda Mhama said her team conducted raids almost on a weekly basis to try to stop drug dealers in their tracks.

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**WEEKLY RAID:** Maj-Gen Linda Mbana led from the front as her team seized an assortment of drugs and ARVs when they raided this drug den.  
PICTURE: HAWKS

26/03/18 TNA P91 Hawks POS

## Two appear for possession of drugs arrested

ELFAS TORERAI

TWO people, a man and a woman, were arrested in Pienaarsdorp, Klerksdorp, after they were found in possession of drugs worth R200 000.

The Hawks swooped on the two after receiving complaints that drug dealers had shifted their operations from a closed brothel to a neighbouring block of flats.

The 21-year-old man and a 34-year-old woman will appear in the Klerksdorp Magistrate's Court today to face charges of possession and dealing in drugs. A third person was also apprehended after he was found to be in the country without any documents.

Hawks provincial spokesperson Tlangelani Rikhotso said: "The flats on no 7 Viljoen Street were raided by the Hawks following reported allegations of

continued drug dealing in and around the property.

"During the search, different drugs were found in different rooms within the property while others were hidden outside the property."

Rikhotso said at the end of the raid, an assortment of drugs had been seized.

"The drugs consisted of cocaine, crystal meth, CAT, dagga, nyaope and ecstasy. Also found with the drugs were

syringes, blood collection tubes and more than 2 000 ARV tablets," she said.

North West Hawks head Maj-Gen Linda Mbana said her team would be ruthless in uprooting the drugs scourge in Klerksdorp and other areas in the province.

"We will continue to fight the scourge of drugs in Klerksdorp and throughout the province," she said.

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