

ELFAS TORERA

THREE men accused of killing a North West police officer have been committed for trial and will appear in the high court in February.

The three appeared in the Brits regional court before their case was postponed yesterday.

The accused, Samuel Marothodi

Maphanga, Ndoda Mathibefazi and Jonathan Seloane, will remain in custody until their trial begins. They are accused of killing WO Siphio Sithole in 2015. The Hawks say that the accused shot and wounded Sithole, 48, in Letlhabile near Brits on November 14, 2015, before taking his car.

Sithole was taken to hospital where he later died.

Three to appear after cop's death

Three men accused of killing a North West policeman were expected to appear in the Brits Regional Court yesterday for trial.

Samuel Marothodi Maphanga, Ndoda Mathibefazi and Jonathan Seloane are accused of killing Warrant Officer Siphio Sithole.

They allegedly shot and wounded Sithole, 48, in Letlhabile near Brits on November 14, 2015, before taking his car.

Sithole was taken to hospital where he died of his wounds.

His car was later found in Soshanguve, north of Pretoria. - ANA

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36 hijacked Dutch tourists decide to head home

TEBOGO MONAMA AND KHAYA KOKO

airport by the police. Mbalula said the tour party, which included Dutch police officers, was stopped by six criminals, one of whom was wearing an SAPS uniform.

He said two of the tourists were injured in the attack and valuables worth an undisclosed amount of money were stolen.

Tourism Minister Tokozile Xasa said she hoped the attack would not have a negative impact on local tourism.

"Tourism is a critical sector and tourists come here and leave money that is used to sustain jobs. We hope they find time in the future to come back and enjoy our beautiful country," Xasa said.

Mbalula stressed that the criminals would be tracked down.

"As much as they (the tourists) wanted to stay on, they were faced with a hostage-like situation by criminals who don't want to respect

VISITED GROUP: Minister of Police Fikile Mbalula.



the criminals.

Kingdom of the Netherlands ambassador Marisa Gerards said the tourists understood that crime was not a reflection of South Africa but had to go home because their families were worried.

"There are newspapers abroad that are running with the story and you can understand that their families were traumatised."

This incident caused a major row in the Netherlands, where the biggest newspaper in the country, Binnenland, reported as its front-page lead story that the tourists "received the shock of their lives" when they were robbed.

One of the tourists quoted in the story, identified only as P Bakker, said the alleged thugs had weapons during the robbery, when there were roughly 70 passengers on board.

Bakker confirmed in the story that the tourists were indeed assaulted by the robbers.

Police spokesperson Brigadier Vish Naidoo said they were "extremely concerned" at suspected criminals using SAPS uniforms to conduct crime.

"Therefore, we have assigned this investigation to a group of seasoned detectives from our national investigation unit," Naidoo said.

Asked what other actions the police have adopted to curb what is possibly a spate of airport followings and robberies, Naidoo said: "We have put in a revised strategy and, since July 25, this has been the first incident reported."

He added: "Since this robbery (on Sunday), we have enhanced our capacity and capabilities in strategically identified areas."

Naidoo said no arrests had been made, and he appealed to the public to inform the police by dialling 08600 10111 should anyone have any information that could lead to members of the gang being arrested.

Dutch tourists robbed from OR Tambo

Men posing as police turn pensioners' holiday into hell

A group of 36 elderly Dutch tourists were robbed by men posing as police hours after they landed at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg for a three-week holiday.

The tourists, most of them in their 70s, boarded a bus to a hotel on Sunday evening unaware that they were apparently being followed by armed criminals. The bus was pulled off the road by a fake police car, and one robber was wearing a police uniform.

"The men allegedly demanded their possessions and one of the tourists was injured and taken to hospital," police

said in a statement yesterday.

Several tourists were assaulted during a 20-minute ordeal that one described as "hell".

The bus driver and tour guide were tied up as the robbers ransacked luggage, Dutch media reported. "We are safe now. But we are in shock and want to go back [home]. We just landed for a 22-day trip, but the fun has gone," said one traveller.

Authorities said tourists were seldom targeted, but airport travellers have previously been the victims of criminals following them from the airport.

"More has been done ... in preventing and combating criminal activities at the airport," said Police Minister Fikile Mbalula, who was due to visit the victims. - AFP



Robbed Dutch tourists leave SA

Vicky Abraham

Thirty-six traumatised Dutch tourists packed their bags and left South Africa yesterday after being robbed by a group of men, including one who was dressed as a police officer.

The victims, who were staying at the Zulu Nyala Country Manor in Fourways, had planned to stay in the country for 20 days. But their trip was cut short after a day following the robbery on Sunday.

National police spokesperson Brigadier Vishnu Naidoo said the tourists were offered counselling after the incident.

"A group of 36 tourists were on their way to the lodge in a tour bus when the driver was ordered to stop by a man wearing a police uniform. Together with another group of men, dressed in civilian clothing, they robbed the tourists of their personal belongings. There were no injuries reported," said Naidoo.

Despite the trauma they had undergone, some of the tourists have assured Police Minister Fikile Mbalula, pictured, they will visit the country again.

The Citizen was told yesterday afternoon that the group would not be conducting interviews after one of the tourists allegedly had an argument with a member of the media at the Fourways lodge.

Mbalula, Tourism Minister Tokozile Xasa and Netherlands ambassador to South Africa Marisa Gerards yesterday visited the tourists.

Mbalula's spokesperson, Vuyo Mhaga, said: "The minister sent his apologies to them and pleaded with them to come and visit the country again.

"Some of them said they will come back."

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MAXIBONGWE MAOHINA

TRANSPORT Minister Joe Maswanganyi is under pressure to appoint a board of directors for the Passenger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa).

This, as concerns have been raised about the awarding of a multi-million contract without a public tender by the rail agency at a time it did not have a board of directors.

It was reported earlier this month that Prasa entered into a R57 billion deal with a Chinese bank for the construction of the Moloto Rail

Development Corridor without a public tender or approval from the National Treasury - sparking an outcry.

Yesterday, the Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) was the latest organisation to make calls for the appointment of the board after the term of offices of the previous board, which had five remaining members, expired in July.

Fedusa general secretary Dennis George called on Maswanganyi to appoint a board for the Prasa as a matter of urgency.

"Prasa has been without a board since July when the term of the previous board under the chairmanship of former North West premier Popo Molate came to an end.

"To compound matters, most of executive management positions

including that of the group chief executive of Prasa are all currently held by managers in an acting capacity," George said.

Similar calls were last week by the DA, which wrote to Maswanganyi requesting assurances of a moratorium on all contracts until a new board was appointed.

The DA's Manny de Freitas said the agreement between Prasa and

the Chinese bank was another example of the culture of impunity that has seeped into every corner of the state-owned entity.

"The rule book has been thrown out of the window to allow corrupt individuals to raid the public purse and enrich themselves at the expense of the poor," De Freitas said.

"While the minister has evidently shown that Prasa is not on his prior

Heat on minister to install Prasa board amid R57bn deal

ity list, enough is enough. He must establish a board, within 10 days, as an essential first step towards restoring transparency and accountability at the parastatal," he said.

But, Maswanganyi said, acting chief executive Lindikhaya Zide had assumed the responsibility of the accounting authority of Prasa as an interim measure until the appointment of the new board. "The depart-

finalised. Responding to a parliamentary question from the Brauteseth, Maswanganyi said Public Finance Management provided for the chief executive role of the board.

An advertisement calling for nomination of persons to the board was published in the newspaper. "Members of the board responded positively and a number of nominations were received about the appointment of a new board. The department is in the process of shortlisting candidates."