

MUNICIPAL THIEVES BUSTED

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The Free State High Court has granted the asset forfeiture unit in the NPA a preservation order to preserve thousands of rands that three men and a municipality security guard stole from the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality.

Mvula Lucas Tshongwe, Nape Motloun, Mzwakhe Mokwayi and Thabang Tsotsotso are the latest money snatchers at the municipality. It is alleged that Tsotsotso, who is a security guard at the municipal offices, helped his co-accused to gain entry into the municipal offices.

It is alleged that the mentioned men broke into the municipal offices on May 31, 2012, and used a grinder to cut a safe which they took the money from.

Unknowingly, they were caught on CCTV camera, which subsequently enabled the police to trace them. They were arrested on June 6 the same year. The police found in their possession R159 100. Tsotsotso was found with R37 400, while Tshongwe kept R72 400 and an amount of R49 300 was retrieved from Motloun.

However, the criminal case against these four men was provisionally withdrawn pending forensic investigations. It will be reinstated once the investigations are complete.

The asset forfeiture unit was granted a preservation order in terms of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act to preserve R159 100 cash that was stolen from Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality.

Once the investigation has established that the money belongs to the municipality, it will be sent back to the municipality, and the case will be reinstated," said NPA Spokesperson, Phaladi Shuping.

This is not the first time thieves got their hand on this municipality's money. In 2010, more than 100 bank accounts with R4.7-million spread across them were shut down at the First National Bank (FNB) by the same court. This was due to alleged internet fraud where the municipality lost over R5-million.

The perpetrator, Funeka Ntombi Maphumulo, was apprehended in Soweto, while trying to withdraw more than R486 000 from the bank. It was further suspected that more people were involved in this scam.

Meanwhile, the arm of law has also extended to those entrusted to enforce it. A detective, Moeketsi Rametsi was granted R5 000 bail at the Bloemfontein Regional Court last week after being charged with corruption and theft amounting to R15 000.

Rametsi was arrested while on duty at Parkweg police station. He was not the only; retired Lieutenant Samule Moeketsi (60) was also arrested on the same charges. He appeared at the Bloemfontein Magistrate last week too and was released on R10 000 bail.

Another police captain and member of crime intelligence unit in Bethlehem, Dibuseng Theletsane, was also arrested last week for fraud. She is also out on bail of R2 000. It is alleged that Theletsane defrauded a medical scheme. She let her sister to be admitted in a private hospital in Bloemfontein under false pretence.

"We condemn acts of corruption especially when they are committed by people who are custodians of the law and mandated to root out such crimes. We will continue to eradicate any type of corruption and criminal activities in the Free State", said the Free State police commissioner, Lieutenant General Khehla Sitole.

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