

# FOUR INJURED IN FOILED CASH IN TRANSIT HEIST



The scene where the shootout occurred.



The vehicle after it was shot at and bombed.

**Rustenburg** – Approximately 18:00 on the evening of Thursday 9 May, three police officers, one security official, and a bystander were injured during a cash in transit (CIT) heist.

According to captain Tlanelani Rikhotso, spokesperson for the Hawks, the incident started in Watsonia Avenue. It is alleged that the armoured vehicle was rammed off the road by a blue Peugeot and subsequently laced with explosives while the security officers were still inside. At that stage, police members on patrol responded to the scene and a shootout with the heavily armed gunmen ensued which led to the suspects abandoning the robbery and fleeing the scene empty-handed in three vehicles: two bakkies and a sedan.

While fleeing the scene, the heist men came across a marked police vehicle in Bethlehem street and opened fire at the vehicle, which resulted in three police members sustaining injuries.

Two of the members are reported to be in a stable condition, while the third member had to be airlifted to a hospital in Johannesburg, and is in a critical condition. The three injured members are attached to the Division Operational Response Services in Pretoria.

It was discovered that a member of the community, a 62-year old woman, was struck by a stray bullet. One of the security officers on scene also sustained injuries during the heist.

In an interview with *Platinum Weekly*, a bystander who was at the action-netball courts at Rustenburg Action Sports, located close to the crime scene, said: "When I heard the first

shots, I thought that it was someone playing with a paintball gun. After the first bomb blast and the second barrage of heavy gunfire I realised that something is terribly wrong... My first thought was to make sure that the children were safe, so I immediately got all of them flocked together. I sheltered them in a safe spot behind a counter. Other people in the area rushed to our arena to get to a place of safety. It was terrifying, I tried to remain calm but hearing the gunshots over and over again was an awful experience. My heart goes out to those who were injured during the shootout."

A representative of Rustenburg Action Sports, who was also at the arena during the shootout, said: "We heard the shots and the moment we realised what was going on, the safety of the people on the premises was our number one priority. We immediately locked all the doors and ushered everyone away from all the windows and doors. Luckily there were no injuries or damages reported at the Rustenburg Action Sports. Thank you to all our players who assisted and our staff who kept calm."

National commissioner of the South African Police Service, general Khehla John Sitole said: "The attack on police and law-abiding citizens of this country has to be strongly condemned. These members, the security officer and a community member were ambushed by criminals who have no regard for human life. We as the police, together with the community, have to continue working together to combat lawlessness and crimes that serve to instil fear in our country." He went on to commend the bravery of the security officers and police that managed to stand their ground and foil the robbery.

## BRUTAL ATTACK IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

**Rustenburg** – "I struggle to sleep at night. I keep hearing the screams," said Maria Englezakis in an interview with *Platinum Weekly*. She, her mother and a friend were brutally attacked on Thursday 2 May.

Maria is an estate agent and was under the impression that she will be showing her brother's house to prospective buyers when they attacked her. She invited the five 'buyers' into the house to have a look around when one of them went to fetch something from the car – presumably a firearm. The next moment Maria and her friend had a gun pointed at them and were forced to a bedroom where they were tied up.

They attackers then went to fetch Maria's mother, Sofia Phieros, who was bustling about in the garden at the time. They brutally assaulted the 84-year old woman, tied her up and left her on the floor.

The culprits plundered the house until they found a safe, which they dismantled from the wall and fled the scene in a white Toyota Fortuner.

According to police spokesperson colonel Adéle Myburgh, no arrests have been made and a case of armed robbery is being investigated. "Please be vigilant at all times. In some cases, attackers are well-dressed and versed, disguised and ready to pounce."

Maria managed to untie herself and phone her husband who rushed to the scene.

Sophia is currently still in hospital and fighting for her life – in a critical condition. We pray that she gets better soon.

## DOING THEIR PART FOR A FAIR ELECTION

**Rustenburg** – Rustenburg Police and members from the Public Safety unit assisted the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa on Tuesday 7 May by escorting the ballot papers for the election to their respective voting stations, to be used the next day.



Police vehicles that escorted the ballot papers.



Rustenburg Police and Public Safety members.

## R6.5 MILLION STORAGE BUST IN RUSTENBURG

**Rustenburg** – An intelligence-led operation by Rustenburg Police on Thursday 2 May resulted in the confiscation of illegal goods, estimated to over R6.5 million.

Illegal face and body lotions worth R5.2 million and illegal cigarettes worth R1.3 million was confiscated in a storage unit in Rustenburg.

According to police spokesperson colonel Adéle Myburgh, the case regarding the lotion has been postponed for further investigations. One of the suspects arrested for the illegal cigarettes, Farook Patel, appeared before the Rustenburg Magistrates' Court on 6 and 13 May. On the 13th, he was released on R6,000 bail. His next court appearance is on 14 June.



North West provincial commissioner lieutenant general Baile Motswenyane congratulated the task team for their hard work.



Illegal cigarettes were confiscated during the raid.



Lotions that were confiscated.

## ALLEGED SERIAL RAPISTS IN COURT

**Brits** – The Brits Magistrates' Court has denied bail to two suspects, Sello Molefe (37) and Sello Sidile (40), who were arrested on Monday 6 May on multiple charges of rape.

"Molefe and Sidile's court appearance came after they were arrested for the alleged rape of multiple women in Modikwe and Barseba in Bethanie near Brits," said captain Sam Tselanyane, police spokesperson.

The suspects' modus operandi was to target women walking home alone after spending time at the local taverns. They would allegedly attack and overpower the women from behind, and threaten them with a knife – and in some instances, with a firearm.

According to reports, the suspects would then force the women into nearby bushes and take turns raping them. An armed robbery case was added to the multiple rape cases.

The suspects first appeared before court on 9 May and were remanded in custody until Tuesday 14 May for bail application. The investigation continues.



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