

MOLOSI MURDER: WIDOW BREAKS DOWN IN COURT

Knysna speaker also testified in state's attempt to prove murder was politically motivated

Journalist Nwabisa Pondoyi | Friday, 08 November 2019, 08:00



The three Victor Molosi murder accused (from left): Mawande Makhala, Velile Waxa and Vela Patrick Dumile. Photo: Nwabisa Pondoyi

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KNYSNA NEWS - Knysna locals attending the ongoing Victor Molosi murder trial in the Knysna Circuit High Court fell silent during a very emotional testimony in camera by his widow Nomonde Molosi when she testified on Tuesday 5 November.

Nomonde tearfully recalled the night of her husband's murder on 23 July last year.

She said when the first gunshot went off, it sounded as though it was right at their doorstep, and that the second one was accompanied by a man's cry. Before she could continue, the mother of four boys broke down, leading to a short adjournment.

'Children not coping well'

After the break, Nomonde, who spoke with difficulty, as if she had a lump in her throat, said she has been depending on pills to deal with her husband's death. "His passing changed all our lives, my children are not coping well, the school is constantly calling to see me. I have since stopped working. Everything has changed."

When cross-examining her, accused Vela Patrick Dumile's lawyer Flip Theron promised to be brief and said he understood it is difficult for her. He questioned her about the ID parade last year, during which both she and her son Dumisani positively identified Dumile as "a suspicious-looking man" who they both have testified had come knocking at their door looking for Molosi around the time of his murder.

Theron concluded his questioning saying his client denies he was at the Molosi residence.

Gombo on the stand

Also testifying this week was Knysna council Speaker Titi Gombo for the state, in its attempt to prove that the murder could have been politically motivated.

To date the only evidence that has linked former councillor and murder accused Velile Waxa to the crime is the R1 000 that he sent to Luzuko Makhala – the brother of his co-accused, former Knysna municipal worker Mawande Makhala.

Luzuko in his original police statement said the money was for him to transport the alleged hitman Dumile to Knysna, but when it came to testifying in court, he changed his story and said he asked for the money to fix his car. The court later declared Luzuko a hostile witness.

'Molosi grew in stature'

Gombo, who worked alongside Molosi – an ANC councillor at the time of his death – told the court on Monday that before she and Molosi became active in politics, Waxa was a key figure in town and that they later became his juniors. But Freeze, as Molosi was fondly known, quickly grew in stature, Gombo said, which she believes is where problems between the two men started.

In her testimony, Gombo recounted events surrounding the 2016 local government elections, wherein Waxa who was expecting to be a candidate for Ward 4, according to her, ended up on the list of proportional-representation (PR) candidates while the party selected Molosi's mother-in-law Vinolia Gungubele as the candidate for that ward. This, she said, did not sit well with Waxa, who left the ANC and contested Ward 4 as an independent candidate instead.

Waxa-Hampton interview

She also mentioned hearing an interview between Waxa and former Knysna activist and blogger Mike Hampton wherein, she said, Waxa fingered Molosi as playing a part in him being made a PR candidate.

The elections resulted in a DA/ANC hung council in Knysna, and Gombo said Molosi was then tasked to negotiate with the smaller parties to form a coalition, and that the feedback they as the ANC received was that Waxa was not willing to work with them as long as Molosi was in the council.

(Waxa ended up in a coalition with the DA twice, the second time becoming a mayoral committee member and chairperson of the housing committee.)

"In December that year [2016] there was a fire in Waxa's and Freeze's wards [Knysna wards 4 and 8 respectively] and when a report came at the Section 80 meeting, Waxa's report wasn't there," Gombo told the court. "Then Freeze questioned the unavailability because now we had information about irregular distribution of building material in the area," she added.

In her testimony, Gombo said there were allegations of Waxa interfering with the municipal supply chain and a disciplinary committee was formed to deal with the matter, which recommended that he be removed as councillor.

'Molosi instigated Bouw-Spies removal'

The Speaker said it was also Molosi who led the motion of no confidence that led to Eleanore Bouw-Spies' removal as mayor (in June last year), which meant the dissolution of the mayoral committee. (Waxa was still part of this committee at the time, and was only removed from council by the local government MEC on 1 November 2018.)

Later on Tuesday this week, Hampton was called to the stand and the court listened to a recording of the interview with Waxa mentioned by Gombo. In it, Hampton asks Waxa if Molosi had anything to do with him being made a PR candidate instead of a ward candidate during the 2016 elections.

Waxa replied, "... Victor had a hand in it ... it's a family thing, because he is family with the current ANC candidate Vinolia Gungubele." Waxa's lawyer did not cross-examine Hampton and the state thereby concluded its case.

Onus on the state

On Wednesday this week, at the time of going to print, the court was hearing arguments relating to hostile witness Luzuko to establish whether his original police statement (as opposed to his testimony in court) could be admitted. Judge RCA Henney told state prosecutor MP Heyns: "Without the evidence, you have no case. If I don't admit the statement, they [the accused] walk. That is the importance of this evidence."

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