

WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE

Boons – In a joint effort between community members and Boons Police, two suspects were arrested on Saturday 11 January near Boons.

In an interview with *Platinum Weekly* one of the community members who assisted, AJ Twala said: “About four months ago we had a lot of problems with electricity cables being stolen. A month later they cut the wires of our vehicles and all the copper pipes and taps were either damaged or missing. It was becoming a real problem.”

They knew something had to be done to bring these criminals to justice. AJ Twala, together with Johannes Twala, Simon Twala and Thabang Rabi set out to find the suspects.

On a rainy morning on 11 January, AJ Twala noticed an unknown person on the farm. The suspect fled before he could react but thanks to the muddy ground, AJ and the others followed the tracks of a wheelbarrow to the suspects house. They informed the police who reacted swiftly to arrest the suspects.

Police found the following stolen items in the accused’s possession:

- Cutlery sets
- Dinner sets
- Two grass cutting machines
- Paint
- Three wheelbarrows
- Five batteries
- Two gazebos
- Tools
- Solar panels
- Blankets and pillows
- Cattle skin

“I would like to thank constable Peter Masilo and his colleague Innocent Matavele for their quick response to our call. It is through cooperation with the police that we managed to make sure that these criminals were caught,” said AJ.



The police van was filled to the brink with the confiscated stolen items.

FIREARM AMNESTY REMINDER

Rustenburg – Police in Rustenburg have reminded those in possession of unlicensed or unwanted firearms to come clean and take advantage of a nationwide amnesty.

The firearm amnesty commenced on Sunday 1 December 2019 and will run for five months until Sunday 31 May 2020.

Illegal firearms and ammunition are being seized by police during various operations and Rustenburg cluster commander major general Arthur Adams is urging those on the wrong side of the law to make use of the amnesty’s window of opportunity.

“Amnesty creates an opportunity for members of the public to surrender illegally possessed or unwanted firearms, firearm parts and ammunition to the South African Police Service, without fear of prosecution for the unlawful possession,” he said.

Meanwhile, a 37-year old suspect was arrested in Marikana for unlawful possession of ammunition on Sunday 12 January during a crime prevention operation.

During a search, police seized a handgun as well as 43 rounds of ammunition. Police believe the firearm was allegedly stolen in September 2019.

Another 39-year old suspect was taken into police custody after he failed to produce papers for a hunting rifle and 719 live rounds of ammunition that were found in his possession.

Yet another suspect was arrested at his home in Rustenburg after police found him in possession of two hunting rifles, a 303 (with 13 rounds of ammunition) and a 202 (with 49 rounds of ammunition).

The suspect, who could not produce the necessary lawful documentation, was taken into custody and charged with the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.

On Monday 13 January, a further two suspects were arrested in Lethabong after they were found in possession of illegal drugs. A third suspect, known to the two, was arrested after he was spotted by the Phokeng Flying Squad.

“The suspect was spotted driving a red VW golf. A 6.35 pistol with a magazine and two bullets were seized during a stop and search,” police spokesperson captain Elsabé Augoustides said.

“The 26-year old suspect was arrested for the illegal possession of a firearm. All three of them will appear in the Rustenburg Magistrates’ Court on Monday 2 March,” she added.



Rustenburg Crime Intelligence supported by Phokeng K9 and Flying Squad ensured many successful arrests.



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37 ARRESTED IN POLICE BLITZ

Rustenburg – A total of 37 suspects were arrested for various offences in Marikana on Thursday 23 January as police leave no stone unturned in their quest to ensure communities in Rustenburg are safer and free of crime.

The suspects were arrested for possession of suspected stolen goods, liquor-related offences, and possession of copper cable.

All 37 suspects are now appearing before the Rustenburg Magistrates’ Court.

The operation was well planned with crime fighting teams made up of South African Police Services (SAPS) personnel, provincial traffic officers as well as Public Safety, being deployed at various points in Marikana to ensure success.

Additionally, a roadblock was mounted along the D108/Hallmore road, while another team concentrated on firearm and liquor compliance.

The crime-fighting initiative also focused on the detection of narcotics, illegal firearms and ammunition, stop and search initiatives, compliance in terms of second-hand goods as well as maintaining high police visibility at crime hotspots.

Said police spokesperson Elsabé Augoustides: “During the operation, a suspected stolen motor vehicle was recovered as well as stolen batteries in the Marikana central business district. Large amounts of copper cable were recovered while numerous arrests were made.”

Five unlicensed taverns were shut down and a large amount of liquor was confiscated.

“A total of 51 vehicles were stopped and 109 persons were searched,” Augoustides explained.

Rustenburg cluster commander major general Arthur Adams said crime-fighting initiatives will be intensified as part of a wider initiative to ensure the safety of all communities.



Liquor from unlicensed businesses was seized.



Illegal drugs were seized during the searches.



Firearms that are not licensed were confiscated.



Stolen copper cables were recovered.

SEVERAL FATALITIES AT MINING OPERATIONS AS THE NEW YEAR GETS UNDERWAY

South Africa - The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) is saddened by another two fatalities at Harmony Gold's Free State operations and one at Sibanye-Stillwater's Bambanani Shaft.

The Union has been consistently calling for amendments to the Mine Health and Safety Act. But yet again we see another breadwinner killed and yet mining bosses collect their bonuses. Where is the justice?

As the new year opens, Harmony Gold has two fatalities on their hands. In the early hours of Saturday, 11 January a locomotive driver was unfortunately fatally injured in a mud rush incident, whilst working during the night shift. Reportedly, the worker went to inspect the box chute, which conveys ore into locomotive carriers, and for some reason yet unknown the box opened and overwhelmed him with collected ore, killing him. The AMCU comrade was from Lesotho and he leaves behind a wife and four children.

On 13 January, another mineworker was found dead underground at Phakisa mine, after he was absent from the end of the night shift. We await the conclusion of the investigation.

On 17 January, we received a report of another fatality at Sibanye-Stillwater's Bambanani Shaft at their Kroondal operations, near Rustenburg. A rock drill operator (RDO) was tragically killed in a fall of ground incident. He was a Mozambican national, investigations are underway.

This is a tragic start to 2020, and indeed for Harmony Gold, which led the fatalities in 2019 with 10 workers killed, overtaking Sibanye-Stillwater and Village

Main Reef. The last fatality at Harmony Gold was on 17 December 2019 at their Kusasalethu operations. Will Harmony Gold become the leader in 2020? Will Sibanye-Stillwater jockey for a position?

These fatalities show a lack of commitment by senior management towards improving safety at these mines. The employer has the legal duty of continuously monitoring compliance at each mine, and Harmony Gold and Sibanye-Stillwater are again failing in that obligation. What are the board of directors doing but raking in profits at the expense of African workers?

Where is the government's intervention? When will perpetrators of such heinous acts be brought to justice? Are workers just here to make bosses rich, easily replaced if they become sick or injured? Easily replaced if they are killed? No! As AMCU we say no. Where is the justice? Employers must be held to account by a Mine Health and Safety Act with teeth and a government which works to protect people, not profits.

AMCU press release, 17 January 2020.

