

# FAMILIES OF MURDER VICTIMS SEEK CLOSURE

**Mogwase/ Mooinooi/ Rustenburg** – One of the men implicated in the murder of Joey and Anisha van Niekerk fell ill in court while the judgement related to another killing, in which he is also a suspect, was being read out. Proceedings at the Mogwase Magistrates' Court had to be delayed for two successive days in June after James Aaron Sithole, who is also due to stand trial for the murder of Joey and Anisha on 11 August, became ill. National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) spokesperson for the North West Henry Mamothame told *Platinum Weekly* that Sithole became ill as the magistrate was reading out the judgement of the 2014 murder of Amanda 'Mandie' Mey. "On Monday 29 June, the court had to be adjourned at approximately 15:30 when the accused indicated he was not feeling well," Mamothame said. "The following day, judgement proceeded but was thrice interrupted after the accused fell ill again and vomited. The matter will be finalised on 20 July." Sithole allegedly murdered Mey in Rustenburg in 2014.

In 2017, Sithole was allegedly also involved in an incident in which Joey and Anisha were kidnapped, raped and killed before their bodies were soaked in acid and burned beyond recognition. Joey and Anisha had initially been reported missing on 10 December 2017. However, the gruesome crime only came to light six days later after the burned-out shell of the couple's vehicle was found in the Magaliesburg area. Initially, eight individuals were arrested in connection with the murder of Joey and Anisha but three have since turned state witnesses. One state witness, Wilhelm Loubser, died in a motorcycle accident on 3 November 2018. During September 2019, Koos Strydom, the alleged 'mastermind' behind the murder of the three women, was found unconscious in his cell and was transported to hospital where he was declared braindead. A dispute about the properties belonging to the three victims was reportedly at the centre of the killings. The families of all the victims have been following the two court proceedings and are hoping for closure.



The late Joey and Anisha van Niekerk

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## THANDI MODISE'S ANIMAL CRUELTY CASE ON THE COURT ROLL AGAIN



**Potchefstroom** – The Speaker of the House of Parliament, Thandi Modise, failed to appear before the Potchefstroom Regional Court in March where her trial was expected to begin following the gruesome discovery of starving animals on her farm in 2014. On 1 July 2020, the Potchefstroom Magistrates' Court held an inquiry to establish whether or not the accused should be held in contempt of court. Thandi Modise appeared before the Potchefstroom Magistrates' Court on 1 July 2020 to explain her failure to appear for her trial set down for 23-26 March 2020. The COVID-19 disaster and impending lockdown was the reason for her failure to appear stating that she could not delegate her duties to her deputy as the law did not permit this. AfriForum's advocate Gerrie Nel, acting on behalf of the National Council of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA), argued that this was not the first time that Modise failed to appear before court and she had failed to appear in court in June 2019, also due to important work commitments, however, the court accepted Modise's justification. Although the court accepted this due to the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic – the inquiry, which was initiated by the court itself, established that no one is above the law and that the accused needs to act responsibly going forward. The trial date has been set for 1-3 December 2020. The NSPCA hopes that there will be no further delays as it took the prosecuting authority more than two years to decline to prosecute this case. Fortunately, the NSPCA was granted the powers to prosecute by the Constitutional Court as no person is above the law. We thank the AfriForum legal team.

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**HISTORY**  
The NSPCA was approached by Advocate Gerrie Nel to privately prosecute this case after the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) declined to prosecute the case in 2017 – claiming that there was insufficient evidence. In July 2014 the NSPCA obtained a warrant to inspect the animals on a farm in the North West province belonging to Thandi Modise - this was after receiving a tip-off that the animals on the property had been abandoned. Modise's farm was littered with the carcasses of more than 50 pigs and other dead animals, such as geese, ducks, sheep and goats. More than 100 pigs, sheep, chickens and goats were found without food and water and the animals were found dead and dying. The animals were so desperately hungry, they were feeding off carcasses, cannibalising, and eating their newborn. It was one of the cruellest cases of animal abuse that the NSPCA had come across. These animals were denied basic minimum care and suffered neglect and starvation. Sincere appreciation for Advocate Gerrie Nel, and AfriForum for pursuing this case with us.

NSPCA press release