

Lengthy sentences for Newcastle crude oil thieves

[Durban, 09 April 2024] Transnet Pipelines welcomes the conviction of two fuel theft perpetrators by the Newcastle Regional Court on Monday.

This outcome follows an operation conducted by The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), in collaboration with local law enforcement, resulting in the apprehension of four suspects involved in crude oil theft at a Transnet pipeline near the Karbochem factory in Newcastle.

The arrests were made during a coordinated operation on the evening of 19 July 2021 and the morning of 20 July 2021, during which 39,000 litres of stolen crude oil were recovered from the scene.

The conviction and sentencing underscore the commitment of Transnet Pipelines and law enforcement agencies to combat theft and vandalism of essential infrastructure.

"This conviction continues to send a strong message to all criminals and crime syndicates that tampering with our critical and essential infrastructure will not be tolerated, and that the full might of the law will be enforced against anyone caught doing so," said Sibongiseni Khathi, TPL Acting Chief Executive.

The accused individuals were sentenced as follows:

- Accused No. 1, McDonald Ndlovu:
 - Charge 1: 15 years for tampering with essential infrastructure.
 - Charge 2: 15 years for Fuel Theft.

- Accused No. 2, Boy Tumelo Matabatha:
 - Charge 1: 12 years for tampering with essential infrastructure.
 - Charge 2: 12 years for Fuel Theft.

An arrest warrant has been issued for a third suspect, who is currently evading authorities. Law enforcement agencies are actively pursuing him. One of the suspects cooperated with the state and turned witness.

Transnet Pipelines, along with its partners, remains dedicated to strengthening all security measures aimed at enhancing the safety and protection of critical and essential infrastructure.

We continue to urge members of the public to report any suspicious activities along the Transnet pipeline to **Tip-Offs Anonymous Hotline details below: 0800 003 056**

Ends

Issued on behalf of Transnet Pipelines Acting Chief Executive, Mr Sibongiseni Khathi

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