

## **Transnet welcomes lengthy jail time for infrastructure thieves**

**[Johannesburg, 22 August 2024]:** Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) welcomes the conviction and sentencing of four people arrested in connection with the theft and damage of essential Transnet infrastructure that seriously impacted the rail operations. On Monday, 19 August 2024, the Nxuba Magistrate's Court in the Eastern Cape sentenced the perpetrators to a collective 50 years in prison.

Charlie van Dyk, 43, Elandre Senekal, 29, Michelle van Straaten, 23, and Kwakhanya Bolowana, 28 were convicted on charges of housebreaking, damaging essential infrastructure and theft. This relates to an incident which took place at the Scalen Rail Station on Mortimer Road in Nxuba in March 2023, in which four batteries, transformers, and cables, valued at R57,000 were stolen.

The four men received five years for housebreaking and 15 years for damage to essential infrastructure, and 15 years for theft. Senekal and Van Straaten were jailed for an effective 20 years, while van Dyk and Bolowana will serve 30 years.

TFR Acting General Manager Security and Forensic, Shawn Johnson said: "Security-related incidents on our rail network continue to have a crippling impact on our operations, leading to train delays, cancellations, and tonnage losses. Criminal syndicates attack the rail network, targeting essential rail infrastructure by damaging, tempering, vandalising, and disrupting rail operations. In July this year, we had 481 criminal-related incidents on our rail network, including cable theft and vandalism.

"The TFR security department continues to collaborate with law enforcement agencies, customers, and other state-owned companies to address the ongoing criminal attacks on the rail networks," Johnson added.

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**Issued on behalf of Transnet Freight Rail**

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