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12 of 18 suspects non sentenced

Two government officials sentenced in landmark abalone case

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Bobby Jordan
Senior reporter

Several former government marine inspectors have now been sentenced in a landmark case. Stock photo.
Image: *123RF/bedo*

Two former government officials have been sentenced for corruption and money laundering linked to the abalone trade, the Hawks confirmed on Saturday.

The officials, Winston Mervin Busch and Nomvuyo Concellia Motloung, were among a group of 18 suspects arrested in a 2018 swoop on an abalone syndicate operating in the Western Cape. The group comprised several marine inspectors from the department of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as several members of an abalone poaching syndicate, the Hawks said. Twelve of the group have now been sentenced.

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The syndicate operated in Gansbaai, Hermanus, Hawston, Bredasdorp, Stanford, Pearly Beach and Kuilsriver.

Busch and Motloung were sentenced to five years' direct imprisonment and a further suspended sentence related to racketeering, corruption, money laundering and illegal possession of abalone charges. The crime involved the sale of poached abalone to abalone poachers, as well as escorting illegal abalone, the Hawks said.

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Three of the original group of suspects died while the matter was on the court roll, while one was killed in a shooting incident in 2019, the Hawks said. Charges against two others were withdrawn.

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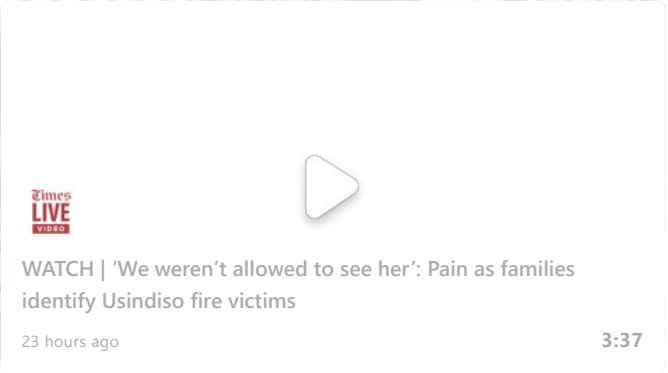

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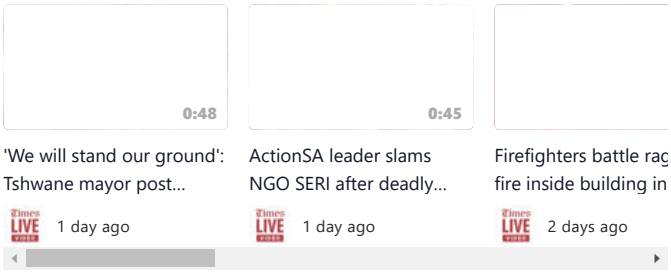

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