

July unrest 'instigator' Mdumiseni Zuma slapped with 12-year jail sentence

The Pietermaritzburg Regional Court this week sentenced Mdumiseni Khetha Zuma to an effective 12 years imprisonment for instigating the 2021 July unrest in KwaZulu-Natal.



Image source: Kindel Media from [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com/)

According to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the 36-year-old's conviction comes after contravening Sections 17 and 18 of the Riotous Assemblies Act, where he incited people to gather and commit public violence.

“This was done by making an inciteful video, pertaining to the Brookside Mall, and distributing it on the WhatsApp platform. The charges relate to the incidents of looting and public violence, which occurred in July 2021 in parts of the country, especially KwaZulu-Natal.

This, according to the NPA, resulted in the Brookside Mall in Pietermaritzburg being looted and burnt to the ground.

According to the statement, Senior State Advocate Yuri Gangai led the evidence of video footage, audio clips and the testimony of a guard who worked at the mall.

Gangai further led the evidence of two experts who translated the audio clips.

“In aggravation of sentence, Gangai led the testimony of the manager of the mall, at the time it was burned,” said the NPA.



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Lauren Hartzenberg 14 Jul 2021



The manager told the court that the estimated damage caused by the looting and fire was approximately R500m.

“He further stated that the mall serviced five different communities, as well as about 5,000 people who collected their SASSA [South African Social Security Agency] grants there.

“They have all been adversely affected by the burning down of the mall,” the NPA said.

Zuma was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for count one, two years of which are suspended for five years on condition that he is not convicted of the same offences during the period of suspension.

He was also sentenced to six years in prison, of which two years are to run concurrently with count one.

“This results in the effective sentence of 12 years direct imprisonment,” the NPA explained.

While the NPA in KwaZulu-Natal has finalised several cases in respect of the July 2021 unrest, the agency said this was the first conviction where an individual has been convicted and subsequently sentenced for inciting the unrest.

“We hope that this sentence serves as a deterrent to others who intend on engaging in similar offences. We commend the working relationship between the DPCI [Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation] KZN and the prosecution,” the NPA said.

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