



ODPP MEDIA UPDATE

Judge finds all accused guilty as charged in Soko matter

Eight former Police officers and a military officer have been convicted of all charges in relation to the Vilikesa Soko matter by the Lautoka High Court this afternoon (11.11.16).

Manasa Talala, Seruvi Caqusau, Kelevi Sewatu, Penaia Drauna, Filise Vere, Viliame Vereivalu, Jona Davonu, Pita Matairavula and Senitiki Natakasavu were each charged with the rape and sexual assault of Vilikesa Soko and Senijeli Boila.

In addition, Manasa Talala and Viliame Vereivalu were also charged with defeating the course of justice by instructing other police officers to make false statements.

Mr Soko succumbed to his injuries and later died whilst in custody.

The incidents happened in August 2014 at Malevu, in the Western Division.

The assessors earlier this week (8.11.16) found Manasa Talala, Seruvi Caaqusau and Kelevi Sewatu not guilty of the rape and sexual assault charges of Vilikesa Soko. The assessors also found all accused persons not guilty of the rape and sexual assault of Senijeli Boila. Manasa Talala and Viliame Vereivalu were also found not guilty of defeating the course of justice.

However, Justice Aruna Aluthge in his judgment delivered this afternoon disagreed with the opinion of the assessors and found all accused persons guilty of all charges and convicted them accordingly.

The matter has been adjourned to 16 November 2016 for sentencing submissions and final sentencing will be on Friday 18 November 2016.

-Ends-

NB: Copy of the judgment will be uploaded to the ODPP website once released by the Court.