



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KENYA AT KITALE**

**CRIMINAL PETITION NO. 77 OF 2018**

**BENEDICT WANJALA BIKETL.....PETITIONER**

**VERSUS**

**REPUBLIC.....RESPONDENT**

**RULING**

1. The Petitioner herein has filed this petition requesting this court to consider resentencing him pursuant to the decision of the Supreme Court in **Francis Karioko Muruatetu & Another =Vs= Republic [2017] eKLR** where the court held that:

**“(69) Consequently, we find that section 204 of the Penal Code is inconsistent with the constitution and invalid to the extent that it provides for the mandatory death sentence for murder.”**

2. The petitioner was charged, convicted and sentenced to death for the offence of murder contrary to **section 202** as read with **section 203** of the **Penal Code (Chapter 63 of the Laws of Kenya)** at a trial before the High Court at Kitale in **Criminal Case No. 6 of 1998**.

3. The Petitioner now wishes to take advantage of the Supreme Court decision in Francis Karioko Muruatetu (Supra) for a re-sentencing. He attached certificates to his petition showing that he has a reformed having undertaken biblical classes as well as passing a carpenter/joiner Grade 1 test. There are also recommendation letters from the incharge of Kamiti Prison and the Chaplain in charge, which letters indicates that the petitioner has indeed reformed. It is said that he has been promoted to the special trustee stage.

4. The learned Counsel for the State, Mr Omooria in his submissions dated 14/01/2020 urged this court to find that a life was lost and the sentence provided then and now is the most appropriate.

5. It is worth noting that the Supreme Court in the Muruatetu case, considered that in re-sentencing in a case of murder, the following mitigating factors would be applicable as a guide namely:-

***(a) age of the offender***

***(b) being a first offender***

***(c) whether the offender pleaded guilty***

***(d) Character and record of the offender***

***(e) Commission of the offence in relation to gender-based violence.***

***(f) remorsefulness of the offender***

***(g) the possibility of reform and social-re adaptation of the offender***

***(h) any other factor that the court considers relevant.***

6. Under the **Sentencing Policy Guidelines, 2016** (“the **Guidelines**”) published by the Kenya Judiciary state (at para. 4.1), the courts are urged to consider that the sentence imposed must meet the following objectives;

- **Retribution;** To punish the offender for his/her criminal conduct in a just manner.
- **Deterrence;** To deter the offender from committing a similar offence subsequently as well as discourage other people from committing similar offences.
- **Rehabilitation:** To enable the offender reform from his criminal disposition and become a law abiding person.
- **Restorative justice:** To address the needs arising from criminal conduct such as loss and damages.
- **Community protection:** To protect the community by incapacitating the offender.
- **Denunciation:** To communicate the community's condemnation of the criminal conduct.

7. In determining this petition, it is imperative to look at the sentences which have been imposed by other Courts following the decision in the Muruatetu case in offences of this nature. The Court of Appeal decision post the Muruatetu Case provide some guidance on the appropriate sentence. In *Jonathan Lemiso Ole Keni v Republic NRB Criminal Appeal No.51 of 2016 (2018) eKLR* where the petitioner shot a person without any provocation, the court imposed a sentence of 30 years' imprisonment. In *John Ndede Ochodho alias Obago v Republic KSM CA Criminal Appeal No. 120 of 2014 (2018) eKLR*, the Court of Appeal upheld a sentence of 25 years in a case of murder where the petitioner assaulted the deceased several times causing his death.

8. Taking into consideration the above circumstances and the gravity of the matter, the Life sentence imposed against the Appellant is hereby set aside and is substituted with the sentence of 25 years imprisonment from 27/2/2002.

**Signed, dated and delivered at Kitale on this 4th day of March, 2020.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**H.K. CHEMITEI**

**JUDGE**

**4/03/2020**

**In the presence of:-**

**Ms Kagali for the Respondent**

**Applicant – present**

**Court Assistant – Kirong**

**Ruling read in open court**