



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KENYA

AT KITALE

CRIMINAL PETITION NO. 53 OF 2018

ERICK GANGAI CHASIA.....PETITIONER

VERSUS

REPUBLIC.....RESPONDENT

RULING

1. **The Petitioner herein** was convicted and sentenced to death for the offence of robbery with violence contrary to Section 296 (2) of the Penal Code in the *Chief Magistrate Court in Kitale on 24/8/2011*. His first appeal to the High Court was dismissed.

2. **The Petitioner has filed this Petition pursuant to** the Supreme Court decision in *Francis Karioko Muruateru & Another v Republic SCK Pet. No. 15 OF 2015 [2017] eKLR* declaring the mandatory death sentence for the offence of murder unconstitutional. In the case of *William Okungu Kittiny v Republic KSM CA Criminal Appeal No. 56 of 2013 [2018] eKLR*, the Court of Appeal applied the *Muruatetu* decision *mutatis mutandis* to the provisions of section 296(2) of the *Penal Code (Chapter 63 of the Laws of Kenya)* which imposes the mandatory death penalty for the offence of robbery with violence.

3. He has attached certificates to demonstrate that he had reformed and had undergone various rehabilitative programmes including studying biblical studies and masonry.

4. In response to the Petition, Mr Omooria, learned counsel for the state opposed the said petition and urged the court to consider the seriousness of the offence and find that the court was certified in handing the petitioner the death sentence.

5. The Supreme Court decision in *Francis Karioki Muruatetu & Another v Republic & 5 others* declared the mandatory death sentence unconstitutional and therefore I am called upon to resentence the Petitioner.

6. I have considered the *Sentencing Policy Guidelines, 2016* which provided for a four tier methodology for determination of a custodial sentence. The first point is establishing the custodial sentence under the applicable statute. Second, consider the mitigating circumstances or circumstances that would lessen the term of the custodial sentence. Third, aggravating circumstances that will go to increase the sentence. Fourth, weigh both aggravating and mitigating circumstances.

7. Considering the fact that the aforementioned guidelines did not take into account the fact that the death penalty would be declared unconstitutional, the Court in the *Muruatetu Case (Supra, para. 71)*, considered that in re-sentencing in a case of murder, the following mitigating factors would be applicable;

(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 response 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.

8. A look at other sentences that were imposed by courts after the Muruatetu case in cases of this nature implies that courts have considered a minimum of 20 years as sentence for offences of this nature. This Court in **Benjamin Kemboi Kipkone Vs Republic (2018) eKLR**, substituted the death sentence with 20 years' imprisonment with effect from the date of judgment where 3 robbers armed with an Ak 47 rifle robbed the complainants of Kshs. 250,000/= and a mobile phone.

9. In **Paul Ouma Otiemo Vs Republic (2018) eKLR** where the convict was armed with an AK 47 rifle and a kitchen knife and robbed the complainant of cash Kshs. 450,000/= and 3 mobile phones, **Majanja J** substituted the death sentence with 20 years imprisonment commencing on the date of the sentence by the trial court

10. In **Wycliffe Wangugi Mafura –Vs- Republic Eldoret Criminal Appeal No. 22 of 2016 (2018)** the Court of Appeal imposed a sentence of 20 years imprisonment where the appellant was involved in robbing an Mpesa shop agent with the use of firearm.

11. In **Benson Ochieng & France Kibe –Vs- Republic (2018) eKLR**, Joel Ngugi J. re-sentenced the petitioners to 20 years imprisonment upon considering that the offence was aggravated by the use of multiple guns by an organized gang to commit armed robbery.

12. Section 333 (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code requires a sentencing court to consider the period spent in custody awaiting trial.

13. I have considered the above stated principles of sentencing and that the petitioner has been in custody pre and post-trial for 10 years. I have also considered the circumstances in which the offence was committed. The offence in this case was aggravated by infliction of serious injuries on the complainant.

14. Upon considering the sentences in the above cited authorities, I am of the view that the petitioner deserves a sentence of at least 20 years imprisonment.

15. The sentence of death imposed on the petitioner is hereby set aside. I re-sentence the petitioner to serve **Twenty (20) years'** imprisonment commencing from the date of sentence by the trial court that is, 24th **August 2011**.

Signed, Dated and delivered at Kitale on this 3rd day of March, 2020.

H.K. CHEMITEI

JUDGE

3/3/2020

In the presence of:-

M/s Kagai for the Respondent

Applicant – present

Court Assistant – Kirong

Ruling read in open court