

Farm manager shot 3 times

'Criminals robbed me of a brother,' says employer after body of manager is found after aerial search

MHLABUNZIMA MEMELA

THE community is in shock after the murder of a farm manager in Ixopo in southern KwaZulu-Natal with locals expressing concern about violent crime.

Mehlo Mngoma, 51, from Springvale was murdered hit-style while placing feed for bush pigs at Lockwood sugarcane farm on Saturday.

His body with two gunshot wounds in the left shoulder and one in the back of his head was discovered by his employer, Mark Lister, on Sunday after an aerial search.

Lister was yesterday still trying to come to terms with the murder of his right-hand man.

He said Mngoma was not just an employee but more like a brother to him.

"I trusted him with a lot of things, even personal stuff. We worked hand in hand with him for seven years on this farm. We had a solid relationship. Criminals have robbed me of a brother," he said.

Lister said Mngoma was murdered when he went to place food for bush pigs that are a menace to

farms in the area. "It was our norm to feed these animals so that we can catch them when they return to destroy our crops," Lister said.

He said it was clear that Mngoma's attackers had knowledge of his movements. Lister also noted that the area is plagued by crime.

Some community members said the collapse of traditional structures after the death of inkosi Zenzozakhe Dlamini a few years ago had contributed to increased crime.

Ubuhlebezwe municipal Ward 9 councillor Nicholas Mdunge agreed that increased crime in the area was partly caused by the lack of traditional structures even though on the side of the government much was being done to combat criminal activity.

"The death of Mngoma opens wounds of the community. In 2014 the remains of a farm dweller Maya Dlamini were discovered after he disappeared for four years. His killers are still unknown. We are facing serious challenges," he said.

Police spokesperson Maj Thulani Zwane said the motive for the killing was unknown. He said the case was



GUNNED DOWN: Farm manager Mehlo Mngoma, 51, from Springvale was murdered hit-style while placing feed for bush pigs at Lockwood sugar cane farm on Saturday.

being investigated.

A report released by the South African Human Rights Commission

last week cited that there had been 33 farm murders in 148 attacks this year but indications were that

they were largely criminal and not racially motivated.

mhlabunzimam@thenewage.co.za