



COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
4110 CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD, ROOM 114
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030-4047

STEVE DESCANO
COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

June 16, 2023

Contact: Laura Birnbaum, PIO
571-396-1179

**COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY STEVE DESCANO ANNOUNCES
YOHANNES NESSIBU SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR 2016 KILLINGS**

Fairfax County, VA — Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano announced today that Yohannes Nessibu, 29, was sentenced to life in prison for the 2016 killings of Kedest Simeneh and Henok Yohannes. Both victims were 22 at the time of their deaths.

A jury convicted Nessibu of first-degree murder for killing Simeneh in an August 2022 trial, and a separate jury convicted Nessibu of voluntary manslaughter for killing Yohannes in a February 2023 trial. Each jury also convicted Nessibu of using a firearm in commission of a felony.

Nessibu, an Alexandria resident, was sentenced to the maximum penalty for each of the charges he faced: a life sentence for the murder charge; 10 years for manslaughter; and 8 years for the two felony firearms charges, which carry mandatory minimums.

On the night of Dec 22, 2016, Nessibu and a few others, including Simeneh, went to buy marijuana from Henok Yohannes, a mutual acquaintance. Prosecutors showed during trial that after a dispute over payment, Nessibu shot Yohannes twice in the back of the head, killing him. He then fled the scene with the same group and shot Kedest Simeneh later that night, leaving her body outside a Burke residence. Evading investigators, Nessibu flew to Ethiopia the next morning, where he remained until he was extradited in 2019.

"The families of Kedest and Henok have faced a great tragedy with the loss of their children and siblings at a young age. Their trauma has only been exacerbated by the unusual length of this case, which progressed for seven years due to the need for international extradition, separate trials, and the pandemic," CA Descano said. "Throughout this process, my office has never wavered in our commitment to hold the defendant accountable and seek a just outcome for the community. With the sentence that was handed down today, I can say we have finally achieved that outcome. Now that this case has come to a close, I hope that the families are able to begin the path towards healing."

###