

Group Statement from Families of Victims of the August 2012 Marikana Massacre

**To: Judge Farlam
Marikana Truth and Restoration Commission of Inquiry
16 September 2014**

We as families of victims of the Marikana Massacre which occurred in August 2012, express our appreciation of the establishment of this Commission, and that we have been brought in to listen to statements made by witnesses, commanders, police, employers' representatives (Lonmin) and government.

We were told that the commission would work to reveal the truth and restore peace and dignity. Yet, at the beginning we were in deep pain, not understanding why we were called here, why this commission was established, or how it could help towards healing the wounds in our hearts from the horrific death of our loved ones in August 2012 at Marikana.

In order to stay, listen, speak and watch the video footage shown in this commission, we were helped through workshops with Khulumani Support Group. These healing sessions enabled us to break the silence and pain, by allowing us to learn how to draw, and to use these drawings to express our memories and feelings, and to gain confidence that we could contribute to peace and restoration of our dignity, for future generations. Through these efforts we learned to work together as a group.

Together, we have come to our own understanding and conclusions about the death of our loved ones. We wish to place these before the Commission, as our perspective on these events and the way forward.

First, we are clear that the following are responsible for the deaths of our loved ones:

- Lonmin as a company
- The state/ government officials
- The SA Police

This conviction is based upon our own experiences of the events of August 2012. We know that our loved ones were workers at Lonmin mine who were fighting for better conditions of employment, including a basic wage of R12 500 per month, which they hoped to win within the framework of our country's labour relations law. They informed us of this intent when they first put forward their demands. When they were ignored by their employer Lonmin, they withdrew their labour and decided to stay on the mountain. This was an unprotected strike, not an illegal or criminal act.

During that time we heard from the media that the company was worried about its financial losses. They expressed these losses as millions of rands lost each day. Our government also felt the pain as the rand weakened.

The State we believe is culpable in the subsequent events, because their role as a democratic, elected government was to manage a peaceful and fair resolution of this labour dispute. This they clearly did not do.

Lonmin and government officials together claimed that our loved ones were engaged in criminal acts rather than in a labour dispute, and they determined to end it by any means necessary. They must have been well aware of the potential death and destruction that could result from their actions, yet they went ahead with their decision to end the strike by force.

We maintain that all of the violence and deaths resulted from these decisions by Lonmin and the government.

These decisions, and the violence that followed them, have brought massive harm and pain in our lives, as family members and dependents of those killed.

To date, Lonmin and the Government have put forward several measures that are intended to address our situation:

- Lonmin has offered to pay for school education for our children
- Lonmin has offered employment to an alternative family member whose employment at Lonmin will help families damaged by loss of income when our breadwinner was killed
- Lonmin has assisted with funerals for the deceased
- Lonmin and government departments have provided food parcels and subsistence on a temporary basis during the past 2 years; however, there is no agreement that this will continue.

We welcome these measures as much-needed assistance for families who are desperate. However, these steps do not alone provide sufficient and necessary reparation for the harm we have suffered and are still suffering.

We therefore ask that the Commission put on record our demands for full and just redress. Such redress must be provided to families of all of those who died in the conflict, with no exceptions. These measures should not replace or supercede the assistance that Lonmin and the Government has already undertaken to provide; but rather, will ensure full, fair and just compensation.

We note that not all families of the deceased have received benefits, depending upon decisions made by Lonmin and the Government about the situation of the deceased person (for example, some benefits were not provided to those families who were not resident in SA, or where the deceased worker was not employed at Lonmin at the time of the strike).

From the South African Government:

We realize no money will ever compensate for the loss of our loved ones. We ask for a sum of money to cover the loss of support we incurred when our loved ones were killed by the police, acting under instruction of their superiors. This amount must cover the incomes of which our families are deprived by their

death – a sum comprising the earnings of R12500/ month for 20 years, or the rest of the life of the surviving spouse (which ever is longer).

From Lonmin:

We ask Lonmin to institute measures to redress the damage inflicted on us by the mines and the migrant labour system as these realities played out at Marikana. We recognize that the Commission has not had the time to examine the problems embedded in the mining system and the system of migrant labour, which led to the tragic events at Marikana.

However, we as a group, drawing upon the experiences of our families and communities, propose that Lonmin begin to redress these issues by investing resources in our own areas (which are the labour catchment areas for the mines), to create processes to enable us to earn our own incomes. We are not asking here for temporary or short-term assistance that perpetuates the damage done to our families and our lives by mining and migrant labour.

Rather we ask that Lonmin invests in a victim-centered process which will work to replace the human and financial resources drained from our homes. This process should provide us, as victims and survivors of the Massacre, with the means to develop our own projects and programmes, within our own communities. This process must be established and funded by Lonmin, as those culpable for the damage; but it must be conceived and structured in full consultation with, and under the control of, victims and survivors, and our representatives.

We ask the Commission to take note of these as remedies proposed by those of us whose lives have been most damaged by these events, as a way forward towards justice and restoration.