



For Immediate Release

Marikana report should have said more

Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation (ESSET) deplores the Marikana report for its inadequacy. It ignores several important issues at the core of justice and our democracy. The key issue of compensation for the families of the victims, especially women, children and the elderly dependents, who have been left without breadwinners is ignored. The pivotal role that the victims were playing in meeting the material and social needs of their families is an issue of fundamental rights. The report dismally failed to address this deprivation.

Lonmin Mine must be held accountable for its role in the massacre. We believe that the intransigence of its management, Board and shareholders failed its employees. The demands to improve employment conditions placed on the table by workers were reasonable and within their labour rights. Lonmin must therefore be forced to pay compensation for the families of victims. We support the pursuit of civil claims by the victims' families as an important step in this regard.

We equally believe that the exoneration of politicians and the executive from any wrongdoing is not consistent with the rule of law enshrined in our Constitution. Former Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa, former Mineral Resources Minister Susan Chabangu and the then politician and Lonmin Board member Cyril Ramaphosa must be brought to justice. Their responsibility in the killing of innocent miners cannot be hidden. Their positions and their actions preceding the massacre indicate that they actively associated with key decisions and activities leading to the massacre. Whilst Police Commissioner Raih Phiyega should be held culpable, she must not be used as a sacrifice and therefore a shield to obstruct the long arm of justice from reaching the executive and politicians.

We therefore call upon the government, especially President Zuma, to relook at the report and urgently ensure that the families of the victims receive appropriate compensation. Further, the President must ensure that those who were involved in the massacre are held accountable for their actions and let appropriate and impartial judicial mechanisms be used to prosecute those responsible for the massacres.

The Marikana massacre points at a grim reality of South Africa's capitalist path whereby natural and labour resources are exploited for the benefit of corporate power and a few elites at the expense of workers and the poor who generate the wealth. No one should be killed or assaulted for expressing their constitutionally protected freedom of expression and labour right to strike for a better living wage. The right to life must be enjoyed by all.

About ESSET

It is an independent ecumenical organisation that works against the systematic exclusion of the poor and marginalised social groups by advocating for social justice.

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