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## POLICE BRUTALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Police brutality in South Africa is a common trend. Numerous cases have existed in South Africa's history of police brutality where the police have severely injured or even killed people that they have perceived as questioning their authority, including protestors.

In recent years, high profile cases involving police brutality have become more common. Notable examples have included the killing of a community activist, Andries Tatane, in a service delivery protest at Ficksburg; the brutal murder of taxi driver Mido Macia; and the massacre of Marikana mine workers.

In cases of the Marikana massacre and the killing of Andries Tatane there was huge media attention. Footage of these events was broadcast on national television. Yet, no members of the police were successfully prosecuted.

Despite all of the footage of police force members hitting and firing rubber bullets at Andries Tatane, all of the policemen who took part were acquitted. The justification for the acquittal was that it was supposedly impossible to identify any of the accused in the video of events because they were wearing helmets.

With regards to Marikana, the state and police have deliberately avoided taking any responsibility for the massacre: not a single member of the police force involved has even been charged. The National Police Commissioner, Riah Phiyega, defended this position by stating that the police were only doing their

job. At the Farlam Commission when questioned whether the police had killed the protesting mine workers, she went as far as absurdly saying that "I understand 34 miners were killed, but by whom? To say who killed them, I cannot comment on that".

The question arising is why is police brutality so widespread and why do state officials and politicians seem to be so reluctant to deal with such blatant cases of police brutality?

### The police investigate police brutality

Notably, the police themselves are in charge of recording and investigating instances of police brutality. This has several consequences. Many people wanting to lay charges of police brutality are often discouraged from doing so or they are often disregarded. This means many instances of police brutality are not recorded and when they are

investigated the police often cover for one another. Therefore, police have a sense that if they act brutally, it is unlikely they will be charged and even less likely that they will be convicted.

While many cases of police brutality are recorded by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID), another problem is that the details of these incidents are also never released as public information. It is in this context that some police feel they can act brutally.

### Police militarisation

The Marikana tragedy and other high profile instances of police brutality should also be understood partly as a consequence of the militarisation of SAPS. One of the features of SAPS's militarisation has been the change from civilian to military-style ranks.

**Continues on page 3...**

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The site will allow viewers to find out more about ILRIG, its history, staff and board. It provides an interactive space for interested people to engage with ILRIG's work on globalisation – read articles, contribute to discussion, and order publications. Website members will receive regular updates on issues of interest.

**ILRIG website – [www.ilrig.org](http://www.ilrig.org)**



Cartoon by JAS



Photo by Milos Bicanski

## THE CYPRUS CRISIS

After almost five years, the drive of the ruling class, especially in Germany, to get the working class in Europe to pay for the crisis is deepening. This class war from above has seen some corporations once again reaping record profits due to state assistance; while the working class has been forced into poverty. Welfare has been slashed and unemployment has reached record levels: in Spain and Greece more than 25% of people are now unemployed.

### Cyprus feels the brunt

The latest country to feel the brunt of the crisis, and accompanying class war and imperialist power plays, has been Cyprus. Since the 1970s, Cyprus's economy has become dominated by its financial sector. The state played a key role in this, as it passed laws to make Cyprus a tax haven, which saw deposits flooding into the country's banking system. Most notably, members of the Russian ruling class used Cypriot banks to stash away their fortunes. This led to a massive expansion of Cyprus's financial sector and it came to, in some ways, rival the financial sectors of larger states such as Germany.

As Cypriot banks grew, to benefit of the local ruling class, they too began lending and speculating in debt across Europe; but especially in Greece. Banks in Cyprus held billions in Greek debt, including state and private debt. When the crisis erupted in Europe, with the initial epicentre being Greece, there was a danger the Cypriot banks would be hard hit. Due to numerous bailouts for the banks that held Greece's debt this did not develop into a reality until 2012.

In 2012, due to the German ruling class's own imperialist interests, it was announced that the debt that the Greek state owed to selected banks, including Cypriot banks, would be reduced. This was not done to help the Greek people. Rather it was done by

the German ruling class to prevent the Greek state defaulting and leaving the European Union (EU), which would have undermined Germany's economic interests. The German ruling class control the EU and benefit from the unequal trade relations that are at the heart of it, and therefore don't want any of the states in the EU to leave it.

### Cypriot banks hit the wall

With the reduction of the Greek state's debt, Cypriot banks saw the value of the debt they held reduced. This caused a massive crisis. Because the Russian ruling class had large deposits in Cypriot banks, they tried to ensure these banks and the Cypriot state did not go bankrupt. This saw the Russian state in early 2012 provide a loan to keep them afloat. This, however, proved to be insufficient and it was clear that many banks in Cyprus were bankrupt.

The Cypriot state then approached the EU, and hence the German state that controls it, for a 10 billion Euro loan to keep its financial sector afloat. Negotiations around the loan dragged on for months, but eventually an agreement was reached.

### German ruling class attack

The German state, however, wanted its pound of flesh. Through the EU it agreed to a loan, but severe conditions were attached. It was stipulated that

as a condition of the loan, 4.2 billion Euros must be taken from depositors in Cypriot banks – essentially to pay back part of the loan immediately. This was to be mainly taken from accounts with deposits over 100 000 Euros. The aim of this was to largely target the accounts that members of the Russian ruling class have in Cyprus.

As part of the loan conditions, the German state also forced the Cypriot state to pass laws to end its status as a tax haven, and to allow the second largest bank to go bankrupt.

In demanding and getting all of this, the German ruling class were looking out for their own interests. The German ruling class wanted to punish the Russian ruling class for what it saw as meddling in Cyprus, due to the earlier loan the Russian state gave to the Cypriot state. The move to have part of the deposits of members of the Russian ruling class seized was, therefore, explicitly aimed at undermining the influence they have in Cyprus.

Taking money from depositors and allowing the second biggest bank to go bankrupt was also aimed at undermining trust in Cypriot banks. German banks stand to benefit from this, as rival Cypriot banks are bound, as a result, to lose market share. In fact, it is likely more investors will move money to German banks as a result of what happened in Cyprus. German

banks have come to be seen as safe havens and have been recording massive profits during the crisis. Undermining Cypriote banks will aid this further.

## Attacks on the working class

As part of the conditions of the EU loan, the German state has also required the Cypriote state to embark on wholesale privatisation to partly use the funds raised to pay back the EU loan. This will see services, including education and healthcare slashed, and is a way of getting the Cypriote working class to pay for the loan. Other conditions of the loan include cutting state employees' salaries and an increase in Value Added Tax (VAT), which is a tax aimed at the working class. The Cypriote ruling class has been most willing to impose this. They may have seen some of their wealth taken by the EU and German state, but imposing measures that ensure the working class mainly carries the brunt of the crisis, through social service cuts and raising VAT, is in their interest.

## Resistance

The Cypriote working class have resisted the cuts on welfare, education, and healthcare and an earlier attempt to seize money from their accounts. Numerous mass protests have occurred. Teachers, who stand to lose their jobs, at one point stormed the parliament during a session in which parliamentarians were discussing the plans to cut education spending. Out of such actions and organising, it seems a movement is being built. The challenge now is to try and sustain this movement, reverse the attacks of the German and local ruling class, and ultimately link up with movements in other countries - especially those in neighbouring Greece where a huge battle is being fought by the working class against the ruling class.

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Coupled with this, state officials have also called on police to be far tougher. At one point the police were even given a general instruction to "shoot to kill". It is in this atmosphere of militarisation and a call to be 'tough' that instances of police brutality have climbed.

## The political role of the state and the police

Within a class and capitalist society it is, however, important to note that the state is an organ of class rule. The state has to suppress its class opponent, the working class, whenever there is anything that undermines its power. The police obviously play a major role in this as one arm of the state. Thus, the state has got special bodies of armed men, prisons and other coercive institutions to maintain class rule.

It is out of this analysis that one can conclude that police brutality is in line with the nature of the state. Therefore, it is clear that the South African state will continue to act violently when dealing with political protests and other working class activities. Events like the Marikana massacre and Andries Tatane's murder should be looked at as the state's intervention in defense of bourgeois class rule.

The ANC as the management team of the ruling class has to make sure that the properties of the big bosses and monopoly capital are secured and protected at all costs. Thus, the brutality of the state has to do with the ANC as the ruling party continuing to defend the properties of the ruling elite.

The corruption, financial scandals in government circles, the killing of Marikana workers and the killing of service delivery protesters are the

cruel displays of the state protecting the ruling elite. It seems that the state itself too is gearing towards possibly becoming a police state, led by the ruling party, due to increasing challenges by the working class to its capitalist policies.

It is partly for this reason that no one in the state is likely to condemn the police brutality that has been directed at protests, such as Marikana. Instead, the ruling party and its alliance partners were quick to point fingers and blame the miners who got killed and the hundreds arrested in the crackdown that followed. The response from the state president became clear testimony that the Zuma regime in nothing more than the representative of the ruling class and big business. In fact, none of the alliance partners (COSATU, SACP and ANC) came out strongly against or condemned the killings of mine workers, farm workers and other community activists we have seen in the country.

Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that such police brutality will stop, especially in the light of state's anti-working class policies and nature. As such, it is likely therefore that the state will try to continue to react violently against the ongoing service delivery protests, the ongoing strike wave in the mining belt and against the farm workers who show an eagerness to wage battle in the near future.

It is, however, only the working class in its struggles, in solidarity with each other's struggles, and the consolidation of the existing fighting battalions in the mines, the farms combined with the existing community revolts that will pose a strong challenge to the current state violence.

# IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA TODAY



- Imperialism is a situation where the ruling classes of powerful countries politically, militarily and economically dominate other less powerful territories and states
- Imperialist powers use their dominance to exploit the people and resources of such territories and states
- As part of imperialism, huge corporations from imperialist countries also expand into new markets
- Imperialism has gone through different phases though
- In the late 1800s and early 1900s the world was divided into blocks which were dominated by imperial powers such as Britain, France, Germany and the United States (US)
- In this phase of imperialism, imperialist powers directly colonised territories in Africa to exploit people and resources
- There was also a major rivalry between imperialist powers, especially Britain, Germany, the US and France
- This rivalry led to two world wars (1914-18 and 1939-45)

## IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA TODAY

### The capitalist crisis and imperialist rivalry

- Although still powerful, today the US is on the decline as an imperialist super-power
- The US and EU countries have been worst hit by the capitalist crisis
- China has become economically powerful and has developed into an imperialist power
- In the context of today's capitalist crisis, there is more intense competition between imperialist powers for resources and markets
- There is also the threat of a currency war between the US and China
- Western imperialism, especially the US, in the context of an increased rivalry has become more politically and militarily aggressive

### Africa: the legacy of imperialism

- The legacy of imperialism in Africa has been colonialism, neocolonialism, neoliberalism
- Imperialism has continued to cause political instability; poverty; hunger;

social misery; extreme inequality; mass displacement of people; genocide; military coups; rampant state corruption; and war

### New imperialist scramble for Africa

- Due to increased imperialist rivalry, today there is a new scramble for Africa
- This has seen a dramatic surge in US and Chinese economic intervention in the continent
- There has also been a rapid military build up, especially by the US, in Africa
- This rivalry is intense - western imperialist 'regime change' in Libya cost China \$20 billion of its investments
- The major imperialist powers in Africa today are the US, EU, and China
- It has also been argued South Africa is a junior imperialist in Africa

### Chinese imperialism

- Trade between China and Africa jumped from \$8.9 bn in 2000 to

\$200 bn in 2012

- In 2011, about 62% of African exports to China consisted of oil
- Direct Chinese investment in Africa increased from under \$100 million in 2003 to more than \$12 billion in 2011
- China is also a major arms supplier to countries in Africa it has imperialist links to like Zimbabwe

### French imperialism in Africa

- In 2009 France announced plans for a 250m Euro Investment Fund for Africa
- During colonial times France was called 'Africa's policeman'
- It has intervened militarily 60 times in its former colonies in Africa since independence
- In the last few years, it has intervened in Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Libya and Chad
- In 2007, then French president, Sarkozy, said: "America and China have already begun the conquest of Africa. How long will Europe wait to build the Africa of tomorrow? While Europe hesitates, others advance."

## Imperialism today

- Today, a handful of imperialist countries, such as the US and powerful ones in the European Union (EU), like Germany, continue to dominate world politics and economics
- These countries no longer directly physically colonise other countries, but they do still politically, militarily and economically dominate and exploit peoples and resources of less powerful states
- But they mostly do this indirectly, often using local allies
- Nonetheless, these imperialist countries still resort to military power if a state they dominate steps out of line
- Corporations from imperialist countries have also become extremely large and powerful
- According to a 2012 research report: 737 companies own or control 80% of the world's assets

## United States imperialism in Africa

- In 2000 the US Congress passed a new piece of trade and investment legislation called the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)
- Under this, there has been a dramatic expansion of US trade and investment in Africa
- By 2009, US trade with Africa jumped to \$62 billion
- Over 80% of US imports from the continent are oil or other minerals
- In 2008, the US-Africa Command (AFRICOM) was set up to block China's advance in Africa
- The US has recently expanded and opened new land, air and naval bases in Africa



## CAR: French vs Chinese imperialism

- The CAR is known to have rich reserves of diamonds, gold and uranium
- The Bozize regime favoured Chinese investments
- China replaced France and the US as the main military trainer in the country
- Bozize was ousted in a coup in 2013 by a coalition of rebel groups led by Michel Djotodia
- Djotodia has announced he would review the CAR's mining and oil contracts with China

## South Africa: a junior imperialist power?

- Through giant corporations, South Africa dominates the economies of southern Africa
- South Africa makes up about 60% of SADC's overall trade and 70% of its gross domestic product
- South African investment in Africa grew 10 times between 1995 and 2008
- Most investments are in mining but financial services, telecommunications, media, and retail are also important.

- For example, President Zuma's nephew is a DIG Oil board member - an oil prospecting company operating in the CAR

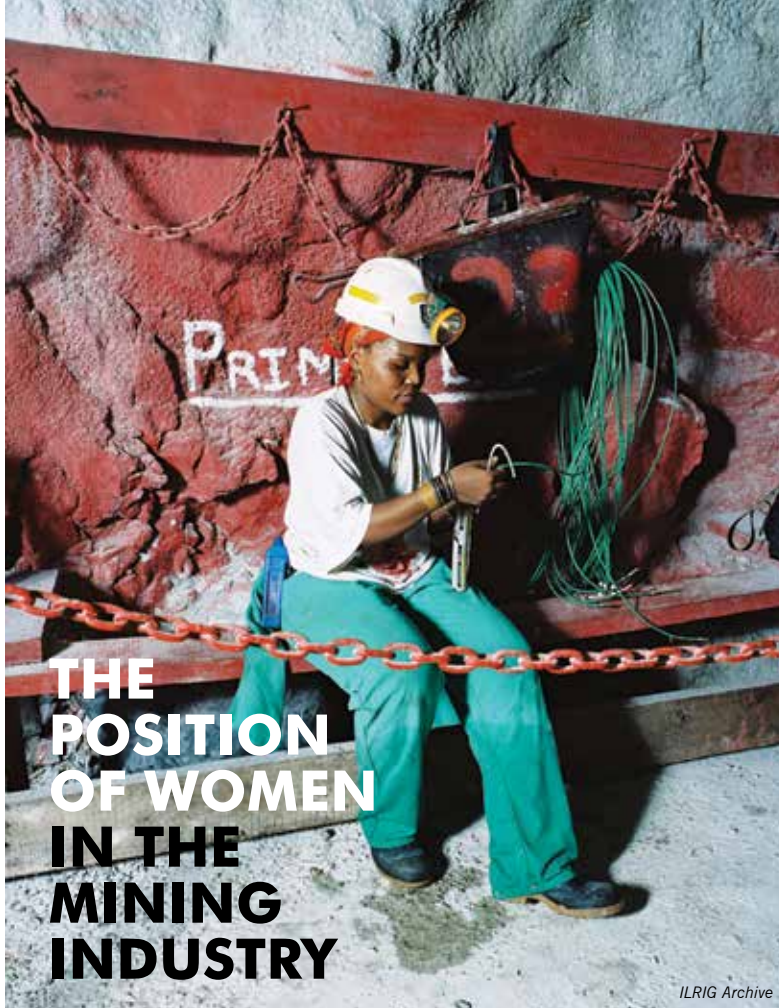
## ...and now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

- President Zuma announced more SANDF soldiers will go to the DRC
- They are part of UN-approved joint regional force
- However, is this not another example of South African imperialism flexing its 'military' muscles to protect the extensive mining, oil and other business interests?
- It is estimated that the DRC has \$24 trillion dollars worth of valuable minerals
- The 'resource curse' has been at the heart of the bloody conflict that has claimed as many as 5,4 million lives
- It seems that the latest stepping up of the imperialist scramble for Africa will lead to more wars, bloodshed and ruin

## SANDF in the CAR

- 13 South African soldiers returned home in body bags
- Zuma originally claimed that SANDF troops were sent to the CAR to provide training to Bozize's army
- South Africa companies, like Uramin Inc and De Beers, have interests in the CAR
- Some interests are also said to be linked to the ANC





## THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE MINING INDUSTRY

ILRIG Archive

**Women in South Africa's mining areas often face discrimination, economic deprivation and violence at the hands of the state, mining bosses, traditional leaders and their partners. Women in mining areas also continue to be marginalised in terms of employment. For example, in 2010 only 6,8% of Lonmin's workforce were women.**

### Living conditions today

Many women from the rural areas of the former Bantustans, Lesotho and Zimbabwe moved to the mining areas hoping for greener pastures, but the reality is that they have been forced to live in poverty. The ANC led government's privatisation and cost-recovery programmes have meant that few services exist for people staying around the mines, and when they do they are of poor quality and expensive. South African mining towns are, therefore, characterised sprawling un-serviced informal settlements. The burden of providing services in these communities, where the state does little, falls on the shoulders of working class women – in the process women also reproduce another layer of workers for the capitalists to exploit.

The situation in and around Lonmin's Marikana mine provides an insight into the challenges that women face. Primrose Sonti from the Nkanini informal settlement, near Marikana, had this say "we live in a toxic place, riddled with lung diseases, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, unemployment and poverty, and yet the state and the capitalists are making huge profits at the expense of our families in the mines."

The majority of women in the Nkanini informal settlement have no formal employment. There is a lack of services like schools, health care clinics, recreational facilities, electricity and roads. Women at Nkanini are deprived of water provision, sewerage and refuse removal services. In the absence of toilets these women are forced to defecate in old tins or in the bush where they risk being raped. They are responsible for the disposal of faeces and urine of their families, and other refuse, which is unhealthy.

### Women workers on the mines

Women workers on the mines, when they are employed, also face discrimination, extremely low pay,

and sexual harassment. Most women working on the mines are employed to carry out work as cleaners, clerks, and general workers. They are often employed through labour brokers. Some work underground, but many also work in projects such as hostel renovations and construction of mining roads. At Lonmin, women claim that they work under harsh conditions, long hours, and with paltry salaries and no pay slips or benefits. They earn between R80 to R90 a day and are employed on contractual basis of between six to twelve months. As job seekers they undergo security screening to ascertain if they have criminal records. Women claim that to have one's employment contract renewed, job seekers have to bribe bosses by paying a certain amount and are also expected to trade sex for jobs. Most labour brokers also do not provide them with transport or travel allowances. One women mine worker said "we wake up as early as 3am to prepare for work, and our lives are always at risk from being maimed or raped."

Mining trade unions that are meant to be advocating for women's needs have proved to be the worst custodians of patriarchal, chauvinist and tribal practices. This is even demonstrated by the glaring under-representation of women in trade union leadership positions.

### Not much has changed

The mining industry today still heavily relies on cheap African labour, as it did during the colonial and apartheid eras. Then the industry was characterised by the legal institutionalisation of migrant labour, low wages and lack of worker organisation. An important function of the state was to manage and control the working class through an array of oppressive legislation to ensure cheap labour for production and the accumulation of huge profits.

Sadly not much has changed. The killing and oppression of striking mine workers in 2012 by the former liberation movement government is indicative of an autocratic and capitalist state. The state's brutal response to the striking miners over exploitative wages was aimed at keeping these wages low, maintaining exploitation and

ultimately maintaining the capitalists system. The only reason for these acts of barbarism against the working class by the “struggle icons” (like the Mandelas, Zumas, Moosas, Sisulus, and Ramaphosas) is that they too want to accumulate wealth at any cost. The gendered nature of the migrant labour system continues to affect and destroy family lives of Africans; while the lives of white monopolies and few BEEE magnets improves tremendously.

## The women of Marikana rise up

It is in this context that the women around Marikana have risen up. With the strike, and subsequently the state killing 34 mine workers, the women began to mobilise. This led to the women in and around Marikana organising themselves in support and in solidarity of their striking husbands, brothers and children. They also organised against the lack of provision of basic services and police brutality. As part of this, they have disseminated information about acts of violence, police brutality and the general harsh living and working conditions. As such, the women around Marikana have become the bedrock of the struggle, not only offering striking workers solidarity but also mobilising around broader issues faced by the communities around the mine.

## Conclusion

The working class on the mines and elsewhere in South Africa who are without housing, services and employment need to follow the examples of those already engaged in service delivery protests and the Marikana women. Lessons must also be drawn about the political manipulation by the trade unions in the mining sector. This means mine workers, including women workers, and communities around the mines must control and lead their own struggles – which means outside of the likes of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) as it has preferred to collude with the police and mining bosses. There needs to be continuous rolling mass actions until the capitalist and the state responds to the reasonable demands of the working class.



## METSIMAHOLO CONCERNED RESIDENTS (MCR)

Photo by Lucky Malebo

Metsimaholo Concerned Residents (MCR) is not an organisation or a formal grouping. We are neighbours, five in total, who came together when we noticed an article in a newspaper, The Weekly, where the Free State MEC of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) said our municipality, Metsimaholo Local Municipality, is in the process of being merged with our neighbouring municipality, Ngwathe Local Municipality. This was on a Monday 7th January 2013. We decided to take this information to our local community radio station, Karabo FM, to find out if the community knew about this. The response from our community was overwhelming and the phone lines were clogged.

Immediately, we decided to call a meeting at our local community hall. We announced the meeting on air and scheduled it for 10th January. Meanwhile we did our research about the demarcation process and realised that the closing date for objections had already passed. We immediately got in touch with the CEO of the Demarcation Board, Ms Gabusile Gumbi-Masilela and issued a petition to circulate around our community. The CEO advised us to submit our objection on a formal form, called Form E. On the 10th we had our meeting. The hall was packed and our petition was in circulation. At the meeting we resolved to call the Municipal Council to Zamdela Stadium on the 20th to tell the community why it had been decided

to merge the two municipalities.

On the 11th January we delivered our invitation to the Speaker of our local municipality. We also e-mailed our objection and petition to the Demarcation Board. During this time, we downloaded circulars issued by the Board together with the local government from the internet along with municipal demarcation acts that were relevant to the process. During those few days we familiarised ourselves with the legal process and acts governing municipal demarcations.

On the 20th January, the community was at the stadium, but the council never showed. We then reported back about our new findings, all the time emphasising that no damage to property would be tolerated. The community was enraged with the council's non-appearance. The community dispersed peacefully, but all hell broke loose later with the community barricading all the main roads.

The following morning we were informed that the Minister of COGTA Mr Richard Baloyi, would be coming. We as the MCR met with the Minister and briefed him about the community's dissatisfaction. Our Executive Mayor, Mr Mahlaku, COGTA MEC, Ms Mlamleli, Social Development MEC, Ms Ntombela, Fezile Dabi District Municipality Speaker, Mr Mbalo, and other local and district officials were also in attendance. We informed him that by

MY ORGANISATION

law, before a proposal can be submitted, the communities that would be affected should be consulted, which was never done in our case. Another issue was that both municipalities, for the last couple of years, had been getting disclaimers from the Auditor-General. Also, Sasol and other big business were against the merger. What economic spin-offs would then be gleaned from this merger?

Lastly, the council, which is supposedly elected by the community, failed to come and address the community.

During this meeting we were informed that the community was waiting at our local stadium for the Minister, but the Minister arranged to go and address the community the following day (Tuesday, 22nd January). Again all hell broke loose.

On Tuesday, the community was at the stadium, and again the Minister and all government officials failed to show up and the situation got worse. Late that day we met the Minister and he

promised to visit our local community radio station. At that meeting he informed us that he would be stopping the process. In the evening we all went to the radio station. He informed the community that the process had been stopped. After this he left without giving the community a chance to phone in and ask questions. This led to more violence.

The following day the Chairperson of the Demarcation Board, Mr Mahlangu, was on Morning Live where he said the Minister had no powers to stop the process, and that only the Demarcation Board could do that. This is true because the process is still going on. We have submitted whatever was required for our objection and we are just awaiting for the outcome in July or August. We are in constant contact with the Board.

The community also wants us to continue with regard to community issues. We have been told that phase two will follow. Watch this space!

MCR is:

**Lucky Malebo**, Chairperson  
Mobile: +27 78 838 6437  
Email: [luckymalebo@yahoo.com](mailto:luckymalebo@yahoo.com)

**Seabe Maboe**, Deputy Chairperson  
Mobile: +27 73 459 0190

**Sam Mthembu**, Secretary-General  
Mobile: +27 71 837 0388

**Jabu Twala**, Deputy Secretary General  
Mobile: +27 84 706 9836

**Nti Masisi**, Treasurer  
Mobile: +27 28 366 4420

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All public forums are held every last Thursday night of the month at Community House, 41 Salt River Rd, Woodstock from 6-8:30. Transport home and refreshments are provided.

### TO CONTACT US

Tel: 021 447 6375 Fax: 021 448 2282 Email: [info@ilrig.org.za](mailto:info@ilrig.org.za)