

# Mines must do more for all

Their objective, apart from making profits, must be to alleviate the inequality in the communities that provide their labour



Analysis

YURI RAMKISSOON

FOR more than a century, mining has been an extremely lucrative sector in South Africa, contributing significantly to economic growth and development of the country and indeed, the continent.

Despite its vast mineral endowment, South Africa has a troubled mining history and has not enjoyed the full benefits that should have come with its immense mineral wealth.

Historically, many mines took full advantage of apartheid and profited from cheap black labour and nonexistent social and environmental laws to maximise profits, ignoring the great social and environmental impacts of their activities.

In addition to the deplorable and unregulated working conditions of mineworkers, the devastating impact of these practices was felt by the broader communities in the breakdown of family structures, segregation, poverty, a lack of growth in rural areas and health impacts, such as the spread of HIV and Aids, among other issues.

Following the first democratic election in 1994, myriad laws and policies were enacted to promote transformation in the mining sector to ensure the occurrence of local and rural development and the social upliftment of communities affected by mining, most notably through the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act and the broad-based socio-economic charter for the South African mining industry (Mining Charter).

In line with the objective of sustainable development, prior to obtaining a licence, mining companies are required to conduct an environmental impact assessment (EIA), which should identify potential social, environmental and other impacts.

In addition to this, mining companies must develop and implement a social and labour plan (SLP), which is designed to ensure mining companies are able to address the historical socioeconomic imbalances of the past by contributing to the socio-economic development of the communities in which they operate, as well as for labour-sending communities.

Despite these requirements, the adverse socio-economic realities in mining communities prevail, and concerns around the rights of indigenous communities and original landowners remain to be fully engaged.

The state's regulatory framework therefore warrants closer consideration if it is to have a meaningful role to play in responding to the objective of alleviating poverty and inequality in mining communities.

When violence erupted in Marikana between miners and the police, the media, by and large, described the incident as a wage-related battle.

However, Marikana was a consequence of a systemic issue that is much larger than wage negotiations and union representation.



**UNDER DEVELOPMENT:** Owners of mines are urged to do much more to improve the living conditions and lives of communities where their mines are located, to address the quest for greater equality and for more people to benefit from the mineral wealth. PICTURE: AP/PHOTO

Workers and communities continue to derive limited benefit from the country's mineral wealth, while bearing environmental and social costs.

Many miners and surrounding communities live in housing made up predominantly of shacks, with no lighting or electricity, no refuse collection and often no water connection or adequate sanitation facilities.

Food vouchers provided to some miners are not enough to last them the month and many miners are unable to afford or to access adequately nutritious food, seriously jeopardising their health.

Mining companies do promise employment for local communities and, in some cases, community members do benefit from mining through employment. However, security of tenure is often limited to terms of contracted posts. Relief from poverty is limited in such circumstances.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) continues to receive innumerable complaints relating to mining including cases of water contamination, noise and air pollution, lack of promised employment, relocation issues and a lack of access to promised services, among others.

In some instances, mining companies do not rehabilitate the mine once closed and abandon the mine without proper decommissioning.

The SAHRC has previously received cases which reveal that children from surrounding

### Key points

- » For over a century, mining has been an extremely lucrative sector in South Africa
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communities play on abandoned mines, amid toxic waste, contaminated water and harmful debris.

Despite an extensive regulatory framework, a number of instances of non-compliance with legal obligations and licence conditions have been widely documented. The effects of reported non-compliance with legal obligations appear to have been exacerbated by insufficient levels of enforcement.

Ultimately, communities face poverty and rising levels of inequality, with inadequate access to basic services, persistent social issues, marked by processes which do not sufficiently allow for meaningful participation or

access to information.

A system that allows a mining company to enter a community, relocate people without sufficient compensation, mine the land without developing that community or allowing the community a stake to ensure the sufficient accrual of wealth, makes millions in profits and then exits the area, is not sustainable.

Despite the decline of the mining sector as the major GDP contributor, (averaging approximately 8% since 1990), mining has the potential to contribute substantially to the growth of the country in economic and development terms.

According to the DMR, Citibank estimated in 2010 that South Africa had "R2.5 trillion worth of mineral reserves".

With responsible and substantial investment in mining, real impacts can be felt in communities and investment in sectors such as water, sanitation, education and healthcare can be of great benefit. However, until we begin to fully appreciate the benefits of effective partnerships between private, state and community actors, the animosity between mining companies and communities will grow.

A great deal more needs to be done on all fronts, by all role players to achieve equity, and sustainability for us to bridge the acute socio-economic polarities in our society.

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# Remembering the gallant fighters for freedom



Analysis

LENNOX KLAAS

I BELIEVE you can only tell well the story you know and love. I am Lennox Klaas from one of the many MK detachments, Luthuli to young lions.

Khumbula, which means remember seeks to honour countless cadres of the struggle we know very little about. The ordinary men and women who laid down their lives in a number of skirmishes fighting for the freedom we now enjoy. Some of these gallant fighters used their last breath to ensure a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist country we see today.

I write this article to reflect the need to pay homage to these cadres whose names are not documented in the national or regional walls of remembrance of the contributors to our freedom. This article proposes the establishment of the "community wall of remembrance".

This initiative has the potential to contribute to the knowledge reserves of our institutions and will foster a spirit of appreciation for individual and group contributions during the struggle for freedom.

This article was triggered by a number of informal discussions and motivated by the observation of a sense of disappearance of cadres whose spears have fallen. It is more evident when it comes to some liberation movements, if you telescope some of the work done, you will believe the ANC and its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe exclusively made it possible to corner the previous administration, and this perception is not correct.

Collective machinations by the international community, the internal Mass Democratic Movement, APLA cadres like Neo "Dutch" Khoza, Tshepo Lilile and Sabata Sebea just like the following MK cadres: Livingstone Ntlokwana, Nokuthula Mgibe, Queenie Ntantiso and Mzimazi Gcina were the lions of Kwazakhele and Johannesburg. Please start telling your neighbours stories about their sacrifices.



**FREEDOM FIGHTERS:** South African society should do more to publicly recognise and pay tribute to the many men and women who fought for freedom. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

They gave their lives for us to enjoy the fruits of freedom today.

When going through the national wall of remembrance, books, radio programmes and videos reflecting the history of our struggle, catalogue of stories about the machinations of the tried and tested heroes and heroines you will note that certain names are called. This has to do with the fact that these mediums can only reflect so many names.

In our communities, we know these missing names; let us take the responsibility and pay homage to them during this Heritage month. Today in our country, the arrow is pointing at the South African cultural goals enshrined in our constitution. We see the constitutional South African democracy that these gallant cadres laid down their lives for.

As our nation is about to complete its 22 years of freedom, what can we do as communities to celebrate and rejoice these gallant fighters?

During the community's roll call next week Saturday across the country, let us raise the flag and call their names. Until we acknowledge and deal with this oversight and tell the

people of South Africa about the contributions of their sons and daughters, their absence will remain unexplained and their deaths will always seem in vain.

It is in this spirit that Khumbula wishes to acknowledge the contributions to our freedom made by these cadres, a freedom that some of them were never to enjoy.

In our communities, let us document and reflect the memories of those who were at the forefront of this liberation struggle. Here we must not only honour the known names, let us dip our banners for undocumented cadres. Let us salute and commemorate their sacrifices as a token of our gratitude so that their families know that they did not die in vain.

Cadres who are fortunate in witnessing our freedom are confronted by difficult questions or sentiments expressed by some of the family members of these fallen heroes and heroines.

This was a shocking revelation by one of the family members:

"Sometimes I wonder why my elder brother and sister went into exile, is it because they wanted us to suffer. When I look at the situation of my family I feel pain, hatred and anger.

### Key points

- » I believe you can only tell well the story you know and love
- » I am Lennox Klaas from one of the many MK detachments, Luthuli to young lions
- » "Khumbula, which means "remember" seeks to honour countless cadres of the struggle we know very little about
- » The ordinary man and women who laid down their lives in a number of skirmishes fighting for the freedom we now enjoy
- » Some of these gallant fighters used their last breath to ensure a democratic, non-racial and non-sexists country we see today

I hate them I hate politics because today we have no one, nothing I am nobody."

This was an SMS by my late colleague's younger sister, yes both of them died in the trenches fighting for our freedom. Their quest is small and all they ask is recognition of their loss and a validation of their sorrow.

These family members would have satisfaction if the names of their fathers, mothers, sisters, sons and daughters can be publicised and capture the history of our country.

Let us restore the dignity of communities who still long for answers, who observe in vain how the nation's celebrations bypass their pain and sorrow and how we continue to forget the forgotten ones. It is not our political parties or government's responsibility only to remember the gallant fighters, as friends, relatives, brothers and sisters; it is our duty as well.

It is in honour of these colleagues and visionaries as they left us behind, that many of us will continue to keep alive the spirit from which our liberation was born. We will stand strong and claim our heritage and with pride continue to confront our challenges as we restore our dignity and theirs and as South Africans continue to claim their place in world history!

*Lennox Klaas is employed by the GCIS and writes in his personal capacity*



THE NEW AGE

Online COMMENTS



LETTER  
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## The EFF needs to get its act together

IT DID not take long for schisms to appear between the EFF and its supporters who, among other things, expostulated against their coalition with the DA in certain municipalities and are now baying for the blood of second-in-command, Floyd Shivambu.

Known for its brand of dyspeptic reliability and political violence orchestrated by its chief, Julius Malema, there is now trouble in the camp.

Can they escape the importuning of party members?

One only has to recall the fate of Cope's Sam Shilowa and Phillip Dexter to know the destruction that dissent can sow.

Is Shivambu's verisimilitude being questioned? He finds himself in a political dance of sorts which he could never take a break from for fear that when the music stops the chair will be taken by someone else.

The duo of Malema and Shivambu has been a powder keg in Parliament, muskets always loaded with one taking over when the other went to reload, an explosive symbiosis of sorts.

Such a dichotomy would be disastrous. The resultant mud slinging and political bickering is a terrible portent. They are already giving the Joburg mayor, Herman Mashaba, a torrid time with filibusters at every turn.

Just last week, Cope and the EFF staged a walkout after a failed attempt to prevent the president from addressing the house of Parliament.

Implanted in the generic make-up of the EFF is a tendency to always threaten, both inside and outside government, those who are intent on destruction of the status quo, upon the continuous and undesirable interruption of normal activity.

The dominant note of impatience is now soured by a faint note of anxiety.

Political elders, marshals and other parties are getting tired of their almost predictable behaviour. Their patience is now wafer-thin, so it's time for the EFF to readjust their red berets and get a better vision of where they are heading and get their act together.

Kevin Govender  
Shallcross

TWEETS  
@The\_New\_Age

**Rooney conundrum is Mourinho's biggest headache**  
Enrico Louw  
@EnricoLouw: Why? He's a fantastic distributor of the ball!  
Nkululeko Sithole  
@Nkuloooh\_89: Why? Is he playing better than him?

**#Mandoza manager Kevin Ntapanane says; #Mandoza was a giant, he served his purpose through his music. | #DSTV405**  
Reats  
@reatscourses: Rest in peace. Will always remember you Mr Nkalakatha!

**#Mandoza's family addresses the media at the Soweto Theatre | #DSTV405**  
Southern-Africa  
@Sound\_ends: Aids is bad!

**#Fees2017 Nzimande: Govt is aware of the challenges and takes them very seriously. @ANN7tv**  
Mushai Thathana  
@da\_shai\_guy: So serious that we are not prepared to do anything about it!

**All academic activities have been suspended at the University of Cape Town (UCT). | #FeesMustFall2016**  
Ryder  
@davidryder1950: What's left to burn?