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REMEMBERING THE MARIKANA MASSACRE

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION NETWORK PRESS STATEMENT ANTI-REPRESSION DAY: 16 AUGUST (Remembering Marikana)

The Freedom of Expression Network will be joining fellow South Africans on 16 August 2015 to commemorate what has come to be known as the Marikana Massacre. On 16 August 2012, at the Lonmin mine in Marikana, Rustenberg, the South African Police Service (SAPS), brutally massacred 34 mine workers striking for better pay. It is important to note that the massacre was not a spontaneous eruption, but was the result of years of unchecked violent state actions in various parts of the country.

Since the advent of the democratic state in 1994, dozens of protesters, including striking workers, have been killed at the hands of police. The SAPS is tasked with ensuring the safety of the public, and should remain ethical and impartial in doing so. This, however, was not the case during the strike in Lonmin. It is highly speculated that government and mining bosses colluded to ensure that the striking Lonmin workers were silenced, resulting into the massacre. Moreover, the Farlam Commission of Inquiry instituted to investigate the massacre did not sufficiently address the very many questions about the occurrences of 16 August 2012. The inquiry failed in bringing closure to the affected families. Several civil society organisations and voices, as well as opposition parties, have also widely criticised the Commission's report as a whitewash.

This unchecked culture of impunity has become the order of the day as witnessed in several other related cases: Andries Tatane, for example, was murdered by the police during a service delivery protest a year before the Marikana Massacre. Tebogo Mkhonza was also killed by the police during a service delivery protest in August 2004. In all the above (and other unmentioned) incidents, the culprits responsible are freely roaming the streets of a supposedly democratic South Africa. They have not accounted for their actions.

The "whitewash" Farlam report strongly questions police conduct leading to the death of 34 mine workers, but not a single police official has been brought to book. Justice must be demanded in action; the right to free expression should be defended. In this year's anniversary of Marikana Massacre, the Freedom of Expression Network (FXN) is, yet again, calling for the strengthening of the movement against all forms of repression.

Defend The Right To Protest!

Unite Against All Forms of Repression!

Join the Freedom of Expression Network!

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