

Abahlali baseMjondolo

Statements and Memoranda

Volume Five

2022–2026





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Volume Five 2022–2026

4 October 2005 – 4 October 2026 · Twenty-one years of struggle

This is one of eight volumes that together collect the statements, memoranda, speeches and writings of Abahlali baseMjondolo, from the struggles that led to its founding on 4 October 2005 to its twenty-first anniversary on 4 October 2026.

This volume collects the press statements and memoranda of Abahlali baseMjondolo, together with a small number of letters and other documents issued by the movement, compiled from the archive at abahlali.org. They are reproduced as they were issued, in the order of their dates.

Telephone numbers and email addresses given for contact have been omitted, as has material added when the documents were posted online, such as links, updates and picture captions.

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19 JANUARY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The elections are over and the politicians have already forgotten about the poor

Our movement was formed on the basis of living politics. A politic that speaks about the fact that the poor still live under very inhuman conditions, the fact that we still do not have land, that we do not have even basic services such as water, sanitation and refuse collection in the shacks, the fact that the fires come year after year. Ipolitiki ephilayo has been our way of living. It is the politic of Land, Housing and Dignity, the politic of solidarity the politic of building the democratic power of the oppressed from below.

Dignity has been central to our struggle. We believe that the poor in shack settlements and in the rural areas must be recognised as people with dignity, in the same way that the dignity of the middle class and the elites is recognised.

Our country continues to be the most unequal country in the world. Poverty is growing. Unemployment is growing. Almost 75% of young people are now unemployed. Those in NGOs and government who were advising 'a politics of patience' at the time when our movement was formed were advising the poor to accept a system of oppression in which we become poorer over time.

This situation is a result of colonial oppression, the system of capitalism, neoliberal policies and the massive corruption of the political elites who are only interested to enrich themselves and their families.

We have been saying for years that the ANC has been gangsterised from the bottom to the top. The State Capture Report has shown the truth of this to the whole world. Billions were stolen by greedy individuals whose aspirations are to drive fancy cars and live in luxury houses while we live in shacks of indignity. We welcome the report.

However, we note that it focuses on the looting by the elites. We also need a focus on ANC gangsterism at local level. In Durban there is a 'business forum' in every party branch. These are violent mafia organisations that use intimidation to capture government tenders and extort money from private businesses.

The ANC led government never cared about the poor. When the people say, as Frantz Fanon said we must, “Stop thief!”, the ANC claim that they are stealing for the people when in fact as everyone can see they are stealing from the people. These people are liars as well as thieves.

While the elites grow rich and fat on the people’s money we continue to live like pigs in the mud in shacks. It is no surprise that millions of people refused to vote for them in the elections in November last year.

They have no shame. During the elections they were up and down making promises. Now they are walking away from shacks and rural areas and drive in their fancy cars and live with the elites. When the poor speak they are shot and killed by law enforcement and SAPS. We are faced with evictions and are relocated to places that are far from the places of work and opportunities.

As we speak the eThekweni municipality has filed papers to continue with the destruction of the eKhenana Occupation. They want to ‘relocate’ a well-established community that has developed a commune that has sustained many families to a place that is 40 km away from the city, away from opportunities, schools and hospitals. They also want to ‘relocate’ the community of Matlock to a place that is far from opportunities. These are forced removals. This is the way a government that is anti-black and anti-poor operates. We do not forget that the apartheid government did exactly what the ANC is doing, forcefully remove people away from the cities and to places that are far from opportunities.

The ANC embrace the continued impoverishment of the majority of black people. They do not want to see the lives of the poor improved. We will continue to fight for the marginalised in the face of oppression. Steve Biko once said “It is better to die for an idea that is going to live than to live for an idea that is going to die”. The living politics that we speak about in our General Assemblies, Community Meetings and Politic Education is an idea that is going to live for the next generation.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Thabile Makhoba

3 FEBRUARY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Msunduzi Municipality engages the ANC, not the people

On the 28th of January residents of the Jika Joe settlement in Pietermaritzburg took to the streets after a long history of state abandonment going back to 1994. For more than a quarter of a century the Msunduzi Municipality had failed to address the inhumane conditions in the settlement, and had failed completely to address the issue of housing despite numerous promises. At the same time the taxi mafia and local politicians were supporting the landlords who were extracting rent from the residents.

As a result of the road blockades organised on 28 January, which shut down the city, the municipal Speaker, Eunice Majola, was forced to come and address the community. She promised to come back to the community with a response after meeting with the officials in the Human Settlements department. She spoke like a leader that was not biased and as leader that was prepared to solve the issue with the community. Her good faith was noted and appreciated. However yesterday it was a different story. Firstly we were told that the meeting was in Alice. When we arrived there was no meeting. Later we were told that the meeting would be held outside the Brookside Mall. When we got there we waited until we heard from other people that in fact the meeting was being held at Jika Joe. When we went back to the settlement we were made to wait while ANC members were brought in.

When the meeting eventually started it was called and chaired by the Mayor of the Msunduzi Municipality, Cllr Mzimkhulu Thebollo. It was immediately clear that it was an ANC meeting and not a community meeting. It was also clear that there was a well-funded campaign by the ANC, including the Mayor and the Speaker to only have ANC people in support of the 'transit camp' (i.e. government controlled shacks to which people are confined forever) present. ANC members were mobilised to attend the meeting by City officials acting on the mandate that they must support these inhuman 'transit camps'.

Municipal officials became ANC officials in the meeting. The Mayor was arrogant and forced people to accept the 'transit camps', which come to us from colonialism and apartheid. Who would have thought that the ANC would still force poor black people into transit camps after 26 years of democracy?

Voices that were against the 'transit camp' were crushed by the Mayor and the Speaker.

It was clear that the Mayor and the Speaker were adamant in their goal to divide the community. The divide and rule tactic is always used by the ANC to weaken the oppressed.

It is unfortunate that there are people in the ANC who have no moral values, whose only interests is to loot more while the poor continue to live under such inhuman conditions in the shack settlements. Our lives and our dignity mean nothing to them. We are just ladders for them to climb up as they amass wealth and power.

The ANC is corrupt to the core. This corruption is so entrenched that it cannot and will not be fixed. The meeting in Jika Joe proved this one again. The ANC have no regard for the people. All they do is to drive around in fancy cars with armed bodyguards. This is not leadership. It is domination. A true leader takes their mandate from the people. But when genuine leaders emerge in a community the ANC will do whatever it takes to deal with that person even if it means assassinating them. These people are not just criminals. They are oppressors. As the song says "Amabhunu amnyama asenzela i-worry".

The meeting in Jika Joe was not a community meeting. It was an ANC meeting that was well funded to persuade people to accept the 'transit camps', to accept that their oppression must be permanent. This is because there are people who are already being paid for this project and the ANC always put tenders before anything else.

Because the meeting was undemocratic and City officials had suddenly became ANC representatives we decided to walk out of the meeting as Abahlali baseMjondolo. We saw that the ANC was ready to fight against us and the Mayor was instigating this. However we are not violent and so we walked out in protest.

The ANC of today is great disgrace to our democracy and the struggles of millions of people, mostly poor and working class people, that brought it into power.

We have repeatedly defeated the ANC on the ground and in the courts, and now they are losing elections too. We will not give up the struggle for democratic and participatory planning in Jika Joe. We will not give up the struggle for decent housing in Jika Joe. We will never accept that we should be sent to 'transit camps', as if we were animals. Our humanity is non-negotiable.

Inkani izovula indlela.

Isithunzi asithengiswa.

Zodwa Kweyama
Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

9 FEBRUARY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Repression continues in eKhenana. Another court victory for the women of eKhenana

The alliance between the local ANC, the eThekweni municipality and the Cato Manor police continues to terrorise the community of the eKhenana Commune. All the cases, which are ten, opened by Abahlali members remain ignored and not investigated. These crimes against our members include attempted murders, assault, burning of property (including two homes), theft and lying in court. The police have refused to act against the perpetrators on the instruction of the local ANC chief, Mr NS Ngubane. However, each time the local ANC members report lies the police jump to arrest our members without any evidence being brought before a court of law. Our members have repeatedly been arrested on trumped up charges and then often denied bail and detained in prison, sometimes for up to six months.

On the 8 October 2021 Nokuthula Mabaso, Sindiswa Ngcobo, Thozama Mazwi, Phumelele Mkhize Maphiwe Gasela, who are all women, as well as Landu Tshazi, were arrested and charged with an assault case. The state alleged that the crime was committed in 2020. The complainant has lied in court. Bail was refused several times. When the state witness was finally put into the witness box the evidence showed that the state witness was lying, and as a result the accused were granted bail of R500 each.

On Friday, 4 February the Durban magistrate withdrawn all the charges against the accused.

This has been the consistent method of repression against our members. All of the arrested comrades are leaders in eKhenana. The state has constantly targeted them in an attempt to destroy the well-established commune that has been built there, a commune that is now also an important node in national and international networks of organisation and struggle. The women of eKhenana have been in the forefront of resistance against evictions and repression. They have

paid and continue to pay a huge price for defending the land and the commune. We say: “Halala! The women of eKhenana niyimbokodo egayayo!”.

However the repression continues and we still have leaders of the commune in prison. For too long the justice system has been misused to score political goals. Our lives continue to be vandalized and to count for nothing. We have not heard back from the Director of Public Prosecutions. We have not heard from the Minister of Police and we have not heard from the South African Human Rights Commission. These institutions have shown no will to do justice to our movement.

Our movement will do all we can to defend the commune and oppose the abuse of criminal justice system by the ANC.

Umzabalazo uyaqhubeka

S'bu. Zikode
Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

24 FEBRUARY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Our lives continue to count for nothing as the Vusimuzi community loses everything in floods

This year marks twenty-eight years since the evil system of apartheid was abolished after a long and very hard fight by black South Africans who resisted oppression with great courage. However, that struggle has been betrayed by the ANC.

One of the many consequences of that betrayal is that millions of people continue to have to live in shacks, under very difficult and dangerous conditions.

Recently the residents of Vusimuzi in Tembisa were hit by heavy floods that came as a result of the heavy rains in parts of Johannesburg. When the floods subsided, it was like the aftermath of a war zone.

Many people were left destitute and have nowhere to go. There has not been any practical response from government officials even though there has been a visit by the mayor and the MEC in the province. People have lost everything including very important documents that were taken by the floods.

More than fifty households have been affected by these floods, including those who live along the river bank. Some people were saved by residents after they were almost washed away by the floods. An old woman who is living with disability was saved by residents as water was in her home and she was unable to move. She has been waiting for a house since 1999. She believes that her house was built and then sold to someone who has money. This has become a norm in this country as many people who were supposed to be relocated to their houses continue to live under very difficult and risky conditions in shack settlements because their houses have been sold to people with money.

Public housing is being commodified via the corruption of the ruling party.

Instead of addressing the housing crisis the ward councillor Selwana just blames the people for building their houses along the river banks. The visit by the officials from the City and the province has not yielded any results. One of the women who was saved by some community members when she almost

drowned with her baby in her hand thanked a young man who was nearby and saw them fighting the heavy floods in their home: “I have never seen a government that does not care about its people like this government”. She said that during the December holidays when they go home their families expect them to come back with something in their hands, but they don’t know the conditions that they live under in the big city.

The lives of people living in shack settlement continue to count for nothing. We continue to live under these inhuman conditions twenty-eight years later after apartheid. The greedy politicians do not care about us. They only care about enriching themselves and their families.

In addressing the residents Melita Ngcobo, the chairperson of Vusimuzi, told the people that they must realise that they are the government. They must wake up and rebuild their lives. They must build their power from below. She said that she has been trying to engage with the municipality on the issues that the community is facing for many years. No one from government has listened to the plight of the people. Instead there have been empty promises that has not been fulfilled. This is why the residents have occupied their own land, build and managed their own creche, and occupied land for farming and built a thriving urban agriculture project.

The situation right now in Vusimuzi is in a very terrible state. The community only has itself to look after itself. There is no help from the state. We are calling for people with the means to be in solidarity with the self-organisation of the residents to offer what support they can. The residents need building materials in a form of congregated iron, poles, clothing and blankets.

The people of Vusimuzi in Tembisa need us as the poor and the working class to put whatever help we have to assist in this very devastating situation.

Melita Ngcobo
Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

8 MARCH 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Violent ANC attack on the eKhenana Commune on Sunday night – activists hospitalised.

The eKhenana Commune in Cato Manor, Durban, has come under sustained violent assault from both the state and the ANC, with the local ANC working closely with the local police.

In recent months there have been more than forty arrests of Abahlali activists on trumped up charges as the local ANC and the police have sought to crush the Commune. These cases range from public violence – which has been the standard bogus charge brought against activists since our movement was formed in 2005 – to more serious charges such as attempted murder, conspiracy to kill state witnesses and murder. Activists have been denied bail and kept in jail for as long as six months before the spurious charges against them are dropped. Some activists have swiftly been arrested on a second bogus charge soon after being released from prison after a first bogus charge is dropped.

Not one of the charges brought during more than forty arrests have come to trial. In every case the charges have been thrown out of court before any trial. State witnesses – who are often directly associated with the local ANC led by NS Ngubane have admitted to having lied in court without any consequences. One police officer has noted this in an affidavit. The local ANC and the police continue to arrest our members, with a focus on our leaders in the Commune, on false charges.

The police have often brazenly taken instructions on who to arrest and who not to arrest from Ngubane. This man enjoys the support of the Chief Magistrate too. At least twelve criminal charges have been opened against local ANC thugs by our members but as a result of the power that Ngubane has over the local police not one of the ANC thugs have been arrested. We are sitting with case numbers and yet the police simply refuse to arrest the perpetrators of serious crimes like assault and arson. If our members are reported on any allegation,

not matter how spurious, they are sent straight to jail without any evidence of any wrongdoing.

When Abahlali activists run to the police for protection the police refuse to help or to open criminal charges against ANC thugs. The local ANC thugs have complete impunity to openly attack our members, and to burn their homes. The criminal justice system in Durban has been completely captured by the ANC and is being used as a tool to try and destroy the Commune.

On Sunday Abahlali convened at the eKhenana Commune for our monthly General Assembly. The meeting was attended by about 500 Abahlali members. It was a wonderful meeting.

Lindokuhle Mnguni introduced a new song which he composed in prison, where he also ran a radical reading group with books by writers such as Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon which we were able to get into the prison. The homes of Maphiwe Gasela and Phumelele that were burnt down by the ANC thugs were rebuilt by the movement and were opened during the Assembly.

However, the Ngubane family and their ANC friends gathered nearby with alcohol. They drank and opened loud music to provoke the meeting and shouted at the meeting. Abahlali tolerated and avoided this silly and unnecessary confrontation.

At about 16:00 pm, after the meeting at eKhenana had ended, the Ngubane led local ANC group began to swear and assault members of Abahlali baseKhenana. Maphiwe Gasela who, as well as having her home burnt down, has twice been arrested on trumped up charges and spent many months in prison, was sworn and intimidated by Ntokozo Ngubane's brother, Khaya Ngubane, and others. Siniko Miya, who has spent six months in prison on trumped up charges, and Langa Mbunguzane, were assaulted and chopped with an axe. They had to be rushed to hospital. The ANC thugs also vandalised the entrance sign to the Commune and broke the windows in the communal kitchen. Once again, the police refused to attend to the scene while the assault was taking place.

A senior Abahlali leader had to phone Colonel Mkhize who has been deployed to look into the eKhenana matter. Mkhize was not helpful and referred our leader to Colonel Mdlalose who sounded very drunk and refused to help too. At first the police refused to open up a case, as they usually do, but after sustained pressure that eventually allowed the victims of the attack to open charges after

they were released from hospital. The following message was received from the SAPS: Case registered on 2022-03-07 at CATO MANOR Station. ref nr CAS 58/3/2022 – contact details:. Do NOT reply to this SMS.

The Abahlali president has spoken directly with Minister of Police since November last year in an attempt to get the Cato Manor police, who have been fully captured by the local ANC, to abide by the law and to act in a politically impartial manner. It seemed as though the Minister was either taking sides or that he had been advised by the ANC that it was ok to attack Abahlali. However, the Minister has made no effort to intervene or to even bother to delegate this matter to the Provincial Police Commissioner. The Director of Public Prosecutions and the South African Human Rights Commission have also failed to act on complaints that were reported to them.

The silence of the Police Minister and these institutions has legitimised these sustained, violent and unlawful attacks on Abahlali.

We call upon progressive organisations and concerned individuals to call upon the Minister to stop supporting this violence and the relentless arrests of our members on fake charges. Our country is already outraged with high level of violence and crime, yet law enforcement agencies are used to crush and criminalise impoverished activists who are trying to build a just and peaceful society.

Siniko Miya and Langa Mbunguzane are seriously injured because they could not fight back. If they did try and fight back they would have been arrested by now. Local ANC people are allowed to assault our members with impunity as they enjoy the protection of the police and ANC leadership.

Once again, we thank our comrades from across Africa and from around the world for their solidarity with the Commune and our movement.

S'bu. Zikode
Nokuthula Mabaso
Mqapheli Bonono
Thapelo Mohapi

8 MARCH 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Ayanda Ngila has been murdered at eKhenana

Ayanda Ngila, a leader in the eKhenana Commune, a brave, brilliant and committed young man, a visionary leader, a shining inspiration, was murdered at eKhenana just before 3 this afternoon. Four men entered the commune from the river side, where the communal garden is, and started shooting at Ayanda as he was working on the irrigation pipping.

The attack was led Khaya Ngubane, brother to Ntokozo Ngubane and son to NS Ngubane. This is the ANC group that has constantly borne false witness against our members, directed the police who to arrest and not to arrest, moved in and out of the office of the Chief Magistrate when our comrades appear in court, burnt homes, vandalised the infrastructure on the Commune and acted with total impunity against our members.

The Commune has come under relentlessly violent attack from the ANC, the police and the anti-land invasion unit. Its leaders have regularly been arrested on bogus charges, denied bail and detained in prison. Ayanda recently did six months in prison, was released when the charges were dropped and then sent back to prison on more bogus charges.

On Sunday he, and others, were welcomed back to the Commune from the second period in prison in a beautiful celebration of solidarity. That night the ANC attacked people with axes. Now Ayanda is dead. Another principled and committed activist has been murdered by the ANC. Another young life has been squandered by our oppressors, another family left in pain.

Ayanda is a martyr in the struggle for land, dignity, freedom and socialism. His name will be celebrated around the world. We will ensure that his life is honoured, and that his spirit lives on in our movement.

We express our deepest condolences to his family, the residents of the Commune and all who enjoyed his warm heart.

The ANC in Durban are violent criminals. We have found ourselves in a war. This is the time for solidarity and a collective refusal to bow to oppression.

No retreat, no surrender.

Mqapheli Bonono
S'bu Zikode

11 MARCH 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We honour our leader Ayanda Ngila this Sunday

This Sunday, 13th March 2022 at 10 am, we will be holding a memorial service for our fallen hero, Ayanda Ngila, whose blood has nourished our struggle for land, housing, dignity and socialism. The memorial service will take place in eKhenana, where his life was finally taken.

When he was assassinated Ayanda was wearing a Steve Biko T-shirt with the writing “It’s better to die for an idea that is going to live than to live for an idea that is going to die”. He looked up to Biko’s ideal. After the assassination Ayanda’s uncle told us that well before the killers came for him the family had accepted that Ayanda would have to give his life to the struggle, and that they understood and respected his decision to commit to the struggle.

Ayanda was clear that he believed that it was either his life or victory in the occupation. Outside the Frantz Fanon School in eKhenana the writing speaks for itself, “Steve Biko Lives!” This writing on the wall of the school speaks for itself that dying for the struggle for Land, Decent Housing, Dignity, Freedom and Socialism is what the militants in eKhenana Occupation prepared themselves for. Everyone who accepts a position of leadership in our movement has to accept the possibility of death.

The ANC thugs continue to walk around with guns after the assassination of our leader. The corrupt police from the KwaKwito Police station continue to take orders from the local ANC. We lost trust in the police system in this country many, many years ago. The police are not independent and impartial. They are told what to do by politicians in Cato Manor. They are serving the interests of the ANC. They are captured, and function as an instrument of repression and oppression.

Our occupation in eKhenana is a symbol of what a living communism can be. The ANC, which is alliance with the SACP, are destroying this commune because our autonomy is a threat to their power. They hate communism. The ANC is a corrupt party that promotes capitalism and political gangsterism. It has

never been a socialist party. It is always important to remember that communism is a living movement, a living practice, and not just some ideas in books.

How do you kill people with such ideals as those held by Ayanda?

After the assassination the ANC went to the home of Ayanda's uncle with some groceries. Of course he refused the groceries. The ANC tries to make a joke of poverty, to treat us with contempt. It is a party that will kill you and then offer to bury you.

We continue to mourn and to give hope to each other during these trying times. Solidarity will carry us through. Noba kukubi kunje phambili yilapho siya khona.

We continue to resist, we continue to build a strong movement with the ideals of Steve Biko, Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah – and our own fallen heroes like Thuli Ndlovu, Nqobile Nzuza, Nkululeko Gwala, Sifiso Ngcobo and many others. We will not give in to capitalism or political gangsterism, not now, not ever. Even if they kill all of us our ideas will remain.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to all our comrades across the country, across Africa and around the world who have moved so quickly to express their solidarity.

We know that we are not alone.

The struggle continues.

Mqapheli Bonono
Thapelo Mohapi
Maphiwe Gasela

12 MARCH 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Masked police officers murder resident of the eNkanini Occupation

Last night, at around 11pm, a large number of police officers arrived at the eNkanini Occupation in Cato Crest, not far from the eKhenana Commune. The number plates had been removed from their cars, and their faces were masked. They had someone with them, also masked, who took them to particular homes. The residents report that they thought that the police officers were not local, and that they heard them saying that they had a list of ten people to arrest. They first went straight to Vusi Mazula's home, broke through the gate and kicked in the door to gain entry. They kicked him demanding that he give them an unlicensed firearm which they claimed he had. When he told them that he did not have an unlicensed firearm they continued to assault him, and then arrested him and dragged him with them as they went to Mmiseli Khondlo's home. They also demanded an unlicensed firearm from Mmiseli, beat him and then arrested him. The next person to be beaten and arrested was Paul Msibi. They then went to Thandeka Sithunsa's home, beat her, dragged her in front of her three children and arrested her.

Thandeka's husband, Siyabonga Manqele was not in the house at the time of the assault and the arrest, however when he rushed home the police shot him to death with a big firearm. Siyabonga was unarmed when the masked police officers shot and killed him. The police then used stun grenades and tear gas to disperse the residents who rushed to the scene. The community sat with the body until 4:00 am when it was removed.

The police then took Vusi, Mmiseli, Paul and Thandeka to the Durban Central Police Station where they remain in custody. The police have given no reason for the arrests, and the four have not yet been charged. Because Thandeka is in custody we do not yet have the full details of the shooting of her husband.

This morning roads leading to Mayville, eNkanini, Ashwerwood and eKhenana were blocked in protest.

S'bu Zikode
Mqapheli Bonono

18 MARCH 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

This weekend we lay two comrades to rest

On Saturday Siyabonga Manqele, a member of our movement, will be laid to rest in eMasundwini, eShowe. He was murdered during an attack on the eNkanini Occupation by masked police officers on Friday last week. He shot in the back of the head. He was unarmed at the time of the shooting.

On Sunday we will lay Ayanda Ngila, a leader in our movement, to rest in eMthalala Village in Port St Johns. He was assassinated in broad daylight on Tuesday last week by a group of hitmen who didn't even try to hide their faces. They were led by Khaya Ngubane, who is the son of the local ANC chief in the area.

The murder of Ayanda in the eKhenana Commune that he did so much to build has left us with a deep wound in the struggle for land, decent housing, dignity, freedom and socialism.

We have lost a committed activist, a gentle and thoughtful person. We have lost a selfless leader who has not compromised in the refusal to accept the vandalization of our humanity.

But the commune that Ayanda helped to build remains, even though it is encircled by its enemies. The residents of eKhenana can take pride in the fact that they have land, that they held that land through more than 30 armed attempts at eviction, that they have homes, a communal kitchen, a garden, a poultry farm and the Frantz Fanon Political School. Importantly they also have a system of democratic self-management, shared work and shared meals. Ayanda strongly encouraged full and equal participation in democratic decision in the community.

He was assassinated because he worked to build the democratic power of the poor from below. The ANC does not like to see the poor working together to liberate themselves from poverty. They want to see us plunge further into poverty so that they can keep making money from our suffering. Local leaders see land and housing as opportunities to make money, not as questions of justice. Those who encourage communities to work together are killed like dogs. This is done to send a clear message that anyone who tries to challenge the status quo will face the barrel of the gun.

We are ruled by the gun.

The ANC has no interest in improving the lives of the poor. The leaders in branches and regions of the ANC are thugs who are not worthy to lead our communities. Some of them are hypocrites who also serve in churches like NS Ngubane. Ngubane is nothing but a thug who uses his house to do criminal activities with the Cato Manor Police. He is untouchable since he works with the police. This is something that happens across the ANC branches, local party thugs have captured the police everywhere.

We will ensure that Ayanda is accorded full dignity in death and that he joins our heroes –fallen leaders like Thuli Ndlovu, Nqobile Nzuza, Sifiso Ngcobo, Nkululeko Gwala and many others – who are always honoured in our movement and in our struggle.

At the memorial for Ayanda held at the eKhenana Commune last Sunday the former Constitutional Court Judge, Justice Zack Yacoob said that Ayanda will now join the likes of Chris Hani in heaven. We will make sure that he takes his place among the long line of people who have given their lives for the liberation of this land its people.

Ngila died at an early age of 30. But he has done what many at the age of 60 have not been able to do with their lives. He lived well and fully and bravely.

He stood against those who wanted the land to be used for profit and not for the benefit of the community. He stood for the truth. He did not compromised in the struggle for land.

The murders of Ayanda and Siyabonga have shown, once again, that if you are poor and living in shack settlement your life and dignity are not taken seriously. Your life can be taken with impunity whether it is by an assassin, the police, private security or the land invasion unit. You are not seen as human.

We will leave no stones unturned in opposing this sense of impunity. We will do all that we can to get justice for Ayanda and Siyabonga. The men who killed Ayanda must be brought to book just as, as a result of organisation and struggle, the ANC councillors who murdered Thuli Ndlovu were eventually convicted and jailed. The police who killed Siyabonga must be brought to book just as, against as a result of organisation and struggle, the police officer who murdered Nqobile Nzuza was eventually convicted and jailed.

We are mourning and we will continue to mourn.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

21 MARCH 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Human rights only exist on paper for the poor

Yesterday we buried Ayanda Ngila in Port St. Johns. The day before we buried Siyabonga Manqele in eShowe. Ayanda was murdered by ANC thugs and Siyabonga was murdered by the police. This is the reality of how the ruling party and the state respond when the oppressed insist on the recognition of our human dignity and yet today they tell us that we must celebrate our human rights, and that these rights were brought to us by the ANC.

The protest against the pass laws led by the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania on 21 March 1960 was met with a massacre that took 69 lives. It was one of the turning points in our history. The Sharpeville massacre led to what was called Sharpeville Day. This day was then hijacked by the ANC who decided to rename it Human Rights Day, to turn something radical into something liberal. This is, as usual, a tactic to wipe out the history of all organisations and people who resisted apartheid outside of the ANC.

It was not just the ANC that fought against apartheid. In fact the most powerful resistance against apartheid was the resistance of ordinary people in grass-roots formations in communities and in the trade unions in the factories and the mines.

Today we continue to be murdered by the police when we stand up for our human dignity. The whole world knows about the Marikana massacre, but there is also the slow Marikana of people being constantly killed by the police during evictions, protests and militarised raids on land occupations.

Today, 62 years after the Sharpeville massacre, most black people remain impoverished. We can vote but we are not invited to participate in decision making. When we build our own democratic power from below we are brutally repressed. The vision of real democracy that was carried during the struggle against apartheid – The people shall govern! – has been turned into liberal democracy on election days and violent repression the rest of the time.

The blood of those who sacrificed their lives for us to be free in Sharpeville 62 years ago has been betrayed by the ANC. They have betrayed the past and

they have betrayed the present. More than a quarter of a century after the end of apartheid blood continues to run into the streets.

The thieves in the ANC have even robbed us of the right to the most basic services. We are still without water in the rural areas and in shack settlements. We are still denied electricity and left to burn in shack fires.

Many families still live below the breadline. The unemployment rate continues to increase under the ANC government. Very few young people have jobs. Very few young people will ever have a job under the ANC.

When we raise these issues we are tear gassed and shot by the police. Sometimes it looks like we are living in a dictatorship with a state that is militarised to deal with the poor. When the state comes to us it comes with guns. It comes to intimidate and to maim and kill. It does not come to talk.

We are treated as if we are people with no right to dignity, no right to participate in decision making and no right to our share of the land and wealth of the country.

Nobody is fooled by politicians who are only in government to enrich themselves and their families anymore.

There is no hope for the poor under the ANC. When we are not abandoned by the state we are attacked by the state. We were promised land and instead we get violent evictions. The ANC uses thugs and assassins to murder our leaders.

We have lost 21 members at the hands of the state and the ANC. The ANC murdered Ayanda Ngila and the state murdered Siyabonga Manqele. They were murdered because they were part of a movement of the oppressed, a movement committed to defending our dignity and making sure that the world is humanised.

The ANC is the party of theft and death. It is the party of Marikana and Life Esidemeni. It is the party of constant killing during evictions and protests. The ANC rule the poor with the gun. Our lives count for nothing. We can be killed with impunity.

It is obscene to say we are free while we live under the oppression of the ANC.

Today we salute the martyrs of Sharpeville, the martyrs of Marikana, the martyrs in our movement and all the others who died for standing up for dignity and justice, whether under apartheid or under the ANC.

Today we look forward to real freedom, to a time when we as black people are no longer murdered for insisting on our human dignity.

Phansi ngeANC! Phansi amabhunu amnyama!

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Busi Diko

12 APRIL 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The floods have affected the poorest of the poor the most

Every disaster in Durban – from the hard lockdown to the riots, fires and floods – hits the poor the hardest. Natural disasters become entwined with political disasters, often resulting in devastation for the poor.

Since 2005 we have been saying that the conditions under which we are forced to live in a repressive society are dangerous as well as undignified.

The floods in KwaZulu-Natal have devastated many shack settlements, and some rural areas too. Some people were rescued as the rivers burst their banks but many lives have been lost.

The number of people who have lost their lives has yet to be confirmed but our members witnessed people, including at least two babies, being taken by the water and many people are missing.

Huge numbers of people have lost their homes and all their possessions and are now entirely destitute. People living near rivers were worst affected. The communal garden at the eKhenana Occupation has been hit hard. Many people have been unable to go to work.

As we speak emergency services are rescuing people who have been affected by these heavy rains. We salute all the men and women who undertake this dangerous work in the interests of society.

However across our branches people are bitterly disappointed by the lack of support from the eThekweni Municipality. The ANC in Durban are happy to elect gangster politicians, to rob the state and murder activists but they seem to have no interest in supporting the most vulnerable people in this time of disaster.

The focus is on support for business rather than on the poor and working class. The ANC does not care about the poor. All they do is to steal from the poor and then murder our leaders when we stand up for truth, justice and dignity.

We have no one but ourselves as we rebuild our lives. All our settlements are affected but the most affected at the moment are eNkanini, Cato Crest, eKhenana, Ekukhanyeni, Zamokuhle, Foreman Road, Kennedy Road, Briardene, eKuphumeleleni, KwaMamsuthu, Lindelani, Barcelona2 and eKhenana. In all these settlements people's homes were washed away.

We are calling for progressive organisations to assist those who are affected at this time when politicians are only interested in tenders and t factional battles. We urgently need food, clothing, school uniforms and building materials and blankets.

This is moment in which we all need to stand together in solidarity. We need to build structures of solidarity and support across the city. We need what S'bu Zikode calls true leadership, leadership with real integrity, leadership committed to the safety, dignity and flourishing of all people everywhere.

In this crisis no one can be left behind.

When the waters have subsided we need to pick up the conversation about land and housing with much more urgency. We cannot continue to move from one disaster to the next while remaining in such undignified and dangerous conditions.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Busisiwe Diko
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

24 APRIL 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo to hold a Prayer Vigil at the eNkanini Occupation

In honouring and remembering those we have lost in the devastating floods this month Abahlali baseMjondolo will, responding to a call from our members, hold a multi-faith Prayer Vigil.

Many people from the shacks and townships around Durban have been hit hard by these floods which have taken more than 400 lives. Many people are still missing. Many are homeless and desperate. People are traumatized and in despair. They do not know who to turn to.

Many families are still waiting hopelessly for their loved ones to be discovered under the ground or in rivers. They have come to accept that they will never find them alive but they need to find closure by being able to bury their remains. In the Arnett Drive settlement in Reservoir Hills an 8 year old has still has not been found after her family's home was washed away.

Many have no hope that they will ever get assistance from government. Already there are people who are side-lined because they are not members of the ANC.

Instead of helping those who are destitute the ANC is only giving support to its members. In Briardene the chairperson of the ANC has openly made it clear that he will not be giving to Abahlali members. This is not unusual.

We need one another at this difficult time. This is no time for party politics to destroy the possibility of universal solidarity. People are homeless and hungry right now. People need support right now. We need real leaders who are accountable to the people and will provide direction and build real solidarity, solidarity for everyone who is in need.

We need to grieve together, to be in community together and to build hope and solidarity together.

We love our country and we are working to improve the lives of those who live under inhuman conditions.

The multi-faith Prayer Vigil, rooted in the theology of liberation, will be held in the eNkanini Occupation at 9 am on 26 April 2022.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Busisiwe Diko

6 MAY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Nokuthula Mabaso was assassinated in eKhenana last night

Nokuthula Mabaso, a powerful leader in the eKhenana Commune and the Women's League, was assassinated in eKhenana last night.

The eKhenana Commune has been under ruthless attack for years. There have been more than thirty illegal and violent evictions, including evictions in violation of court orders. People have been assaulted, had their homes burnt, been arrested on trumped up charges and jailed for long periods.

On 8 March 2022 Ayanda Ngila, a young leader in the Commune who had twice been jailed on ridiculous charges, was assassinated. Last night, 5 April 2022, at around 7:30 pm, another leader in the Commune, Nokuthula Mabaso, was assassinated. She was forty years old. A soldier in our movement who ensured that more than a hundred families have land and roof over their heads is no more.

As well as being a powerful leader in eKhenana and the Women's League Nokuthula was also a key figure in the establishment and management of the chicken farm that was part of the very successful food sovereignty project at the Commune. She spent time in prison with Maphiwe Gasela and Thozama Mazwi on fabricated charges.

Yesterday during the afternoon she was part of the team that was processing food received as part of the movement's food solidarity programme after the floods. In the early evening she was in a meeting of comrades who were making plans to attend a court case today. Khaya Ngubane, the son of NS Ngubane, the local ANC chief who has been driving the attack on the Commune, is scheduled to appear in court today. Nokuthula was attacked when she left the meeting to go to her house and attend to a pot of rice that she was preparing for her children. She was shot five times, four at the back in front of her children. The other women rushed to her when they heard the gun shots. She was still alive when they found her. She died in their hands.

Witnesses saw Khaya Ngubane murder Ayanda Ngila on 8 March but today's court appearance is about the time that he attacked Siniko Miya with an axe on 6 March. The investigating officer for the this case is saying that he cannot find any evidence to implicate Ngubane in the attack on Siniko, but he has not spoken to the witnesses. The same officer has been involved in arresting our members on trumped up charges and recommending that they be denied bail.

Previously NS Ngubane clearly said in the court building that 'there will be bloodshed in eKhenana'.

Nokuthula had prepared an affidavit that was going to be used in court today at the bail hearing of Ngubane. Her affidavit explains that it would not be safe for the community, and especially for witnesses to the axe attack and the murder, if Ngubane was granted bail. Her affidavit, along with an affidavit by Maphiwe Gasela, explains that the witnesses to Ngubane's crimes, who are women, would be at severe risk if Ngubane were to be released and that, in the interests of justice, he should be remanded in custody.

Nokuthula was one of a number of people who witnessed the murder of Ayanda, and could potentially have been a witness if the matter went to trial. She was also the main respondent to the eviction case that was brought by the municipality in eKhenana. She played a key role in fighting for the occupation, and in turning the occupation into a Commune. She was brave in collecting all the information on the various cases that would have led to the arrest of NS Ngubane, and many others who have been behind the destruction of eKhenana.

We have no doubt that the local ANC in the area, led by this unscrupulous pastor NS Ngubane, is behind the assassinations of Ayanda and Nokuthula. As we have reported before NS Ngubane openly instructs the police at KwaKito (Cato Manor police station) who to arrest and who not to arrest and openly advises the prosecuting authority in the Durban Magistrates' Court on how they should proceed with cases relating to our members.

We have built a Commune in which, according to the principles of Abahlal-ism, land is not bought and sold and shacks are not rented. The local ANC want the land in eKhenana to be used for private profit and not for communal purposes. The ANC is threatened by a woman who has led the occupation and continued with the Commune despite the severe repression over the years and when other leaders are in jail, in hiding or have been assassinated.

Whenever a leader emerges, she or he becomes a target of assault, trumped-up charges or assassination. The ANC are cowards. They are murderers. They are thieves. They are our enemy and the enemy of every person who stands for justice.

We have now lost twenty-three comrades to assassination, police murders and killings by the land invasion unit and municipal security since 2009. We have lost three activists in the last two months.

The ANC, the police, the municipality, the prosecuting authority and the magistrates who keep sending innocent people to jail after the police say that they have arrested to investigate (whereas they should be investigating to arrest) all need to be held to account for their role in the long, violent and criminal attack on eKhenana.

We note that the Minister of Police has ignored all our attempts to have him intervene. We note that the Human Rights Commission has not acted despite the fact that they have a report on this matter. We note that the national leadership of the prosecuting authority have not dealt with the crisis in Durban despite communication from us, and protests at their offices.

The Cato Manor police station is around 500 meters away from where Nokuthula was assassinated. The police confirmed that they heard gun shots but it took two hours for them to arrive at the scene. In fact the leadership had to drive to the police station to call them when calls were ignored. However, when Mqapheli Bonono was rushing to the scene police could stop him, harass him, delay him and fine him for a damaged light on the car he was using. They refused his request for them to accompany him to eKhenana.

The struggle for dignity, for land and autonomy, continues to mean death. Our hearts are broken.

Nokuthula was a soldier. We will bury her with all due honour.

Nokuthula leaves her husband, Sibusiso Mhlongo, and four children: Nomfundo (23), Siyanda (19), Kwanele (17) and Junior (5). Kwanele is living with a disability.

Umphakathi uyakhala. Umbutho wabampofu uyakhala. Umhlaba uyakhala.

Mqapheli Bonono
Thapelo Mohapi

11 MAY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Memorial Service for the late Nokuthula Mabaso will be held at eKhenana on Thursday

On Thursday, 12th May 2022, we will be honouring and respecting our leader Nokuthula Mabaso. She was a mother and militant who served the poor and our struggle for land and dignity with courage and humility. She was a brave woman who was instrumental in the establishment of the eKhenana occupation that has ensured that more than 100 families have a place they can call home.

Nokuthula did not only become one of the leaders who led the establishment of the occupation she also was a key figure in the development of the occupation into a commune, and its projects. She played an important role in the communal garden, the poultry project, the communal kitchen and the communal shop. These communal projects have ensured that no family goes to sleep without food and that no child goes to school on an empty stomach.

Nokuthula understood what Ubuhlali means. She understood what socialism is all about. She understood socialism as a living politics, as a collective practice, as something that is built from below. She knew the risks that she was taking as a leader in the commune, and was prepared to die for her principles, her community and her comrades.

Her 'crime' is that she was part of the strong poor, the poor who work to build an autonomous politics from below, the poor who insist that the full and equal recognition of our dignity is non-negotiable, the poor who struggle to occupy land, produce food and build democracy and community from below.

She was assassinated in front of her children.

Nokuthula was humble, softly spoken and peaceful. She always played a role of leadership whenever there were issues and differences in the community. The betterment of the community was at the centre of her heart. She loved children and always ensured that they could eat in the communal kitchen that she established. No child went hungry in eKhenana.

She will be laid to rest at her home in Esidumbini ((25 km from Othongathi, north of Durban) on Saturday, 14th May 2022. She will be brought to her final

peace with honour and dignity, the dignity that this society denied her while she was alive, a dignity that she fought for until her last moments.

Nokuthula will join the roll of honour of all those who have fallen in our movement – Nqobile Nzuza, Thuli Ndlovu, Nkululeko Gwala, Sifiso Ngcobo, Ayanda Ngila and many others. Her name will live in our struggle, and in new songs, new occupations and new communal projects.

We know that the minister of police will not take the killing of Nokuthula and Ayanda Ngila seriously because he serves the interests of the ANC before those of the country. He has vested interests in the ANC in KwaZulu Natal and will not arrest members of the ANC. It is clear and in the open that the eKhenana Commune has been under constant attack from the Ngubane family, and that the municipality, the KwaKito (Cato Manor) police and the prosecuting authority have all been complicit with the severe repression of the commune.

Nokuthula was assassinated on the 5th May 2022 at around 7:30 pm. It has been days since her assassination. She is not a high-profile person and therefore there has been no undertaking from the police or the government to investigating her case with speed. She is a shack dweller who comes from a poor family. Her life does not count in the eyes of the state. This must change and it must change now.

We express our full solidarity with the family of Hillary Gardee and offer all our compassion. We ask the Minister of police to use the same energy and commitment to find the killers of Nokuthula that was used to find those who took the life of Hillary.

Our politics is centred around the commitment to make sure that every life counts as a human life, that the humanity of all is recognised.

We will not rest until those who have taken the life of an innocent person are brought to book.

We thank all those who have expressed solidarity. It is deeply appreciated. Every act of solidarity matters.

All progressive organisations and individuals need to work together to ensure that the assassination of activists stops. We cannot go on like this. It cannot be normal that if you are poor and black and you dare to stand up for your dignity, and the dignity of others, you can be assassinated with impunity. It has to stop.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

16 JUNE 2022

Press statement · Joint statement

State violence against youth has persisted since 1976

Thursday, 16 June 2022 will mark 46 years since the 1976 Soweto youth-led uprisings when police opened fire on protesting students, killing and injuring hundreds. Since the end of apartheid, poor communities, workers, and young people have continued to suffer state and political violence meted out to stifle both dissent and legitimate concerns.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the Marikana massacre for which no one has been held accountable. The events at Marikana left 44 people dead, and of the mineworkers killed 18 were 35 years old or younger. Over the years, the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement has also lost at least eight young people to state and political violence. In 2021, excessive use of force against student protestors culminated in the killing of 35-year old Mthokozisi Ntumba, a bystander. To commemorate Youth Day and reflect on these issues, Abahlali baseMjondolo, family members of the mineworkers killed at Marikana and SERI have partnered to host two activities aimed at drawing attention to the scourge of state and political violence.

On 16 June, we will host a workshop entitled, 'Struggle & Memory: Writing our own stories' at which Dr. Julian Brown will present and facilitate a discussion on his new book, 'Marikana: A People's History' as well as Abahlali baseMjondolo's experiences of state violence. The workshop will further unpack the importance of people and communities writing their own stories and owning the narratives of their struggle that accurately reflect their experiences and present their perspectives.

On 17 June, at 08:00, Abahlali baseMjondolo will lead a picket at the City Hall and at the South African Human Rights Commission in Durban to demand justice for the unwarranted killing of youth in South Africa by the police. The picket seeks to highlight that there has been no accountability for any of the abuses by the police at Marikana, at various student protests, and against

social movements and community-based organisations like Abahlali baseMjondolo who continue to lose activists. Such violence has unfortunately become the norm because of failures to hold perpetrators to account.

SERI and Abahlali baseMjondolo commemorate this Youth Day in remembrance of the fearless young people who have lost their lives in the struggle against past and present oppression.

Thapelo Mohapi, Abahlali baseMjondolo general secretary
Thato Masiangoako, SERI researcher

18 JUNE 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

KwaDukuza Municipality embarrassed in court

The KwaDukuza Municipality is persisting in trying to render people from our settlement in Salt Rock homeless. They have filed to evict the poor, who have nowhere to go.

Yesterday they filed against the community again, on a urgent basis, to have the electricity in the Salt Rock settlement disconnected. We contested the application in the Durban High Court and it was dismissed with costs. In delivering the judgment the judge said that there was no urgency in the application and that the electricity crisis is a national crisis. The judge raised concerns about the way that the municipality filed their papers.

This is a victory for the people of Salt Rock who have been facing constant harassment from the municipality that often disconnects water or electricity for the poor.

The municipality is planning to evict our members in the area yet they say they are planning to build houses in the area. The question we are having is who is this development is for?

The ANC hardly builds any houses any more but we know, for sure, that when the ANC does build houses they are allocated to those who belong to the ANC.

The residents of the Salt Rock settlement will continue to resist the attempt at eviction, and the harassment in the form of armed disconnections of water and electricity. One of the residents said that “We can longer equate ourselves to animals because the capitalists love their animals more than us”.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

27 JUNE 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo condemns the killing of NUMSA shop steward Mahlomola Hlothoane

The National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa is the largest union in the country, with more than 300 000 members. The union is in continual struggles and has won major battles for the working class. It is independent of the ANC.

The union faces the same onslaught that is being directed against all progressive mass based organisations. It has become a norm for those who stand against the ANC, capitalism and exploitation to be attacked and assassinated with impunity.

On Friday night Mahlomola Hlothoane was murdered at his home in Rustenburg on the platinum belt. Last year Malibongwe Mdazo, a Numsa official, was murdered in Rustenburg in similar circumstances. Mdazo and Hlothoane were both organising workers at Implats, where many workers are leaving other unions to join NUMSA.

The continuous killing of local leaders in the workers' struggle is condemned by our movement and we call for the speedy investigation of this killing so that those who have committed this crime are brought to book. We note that there have been no arrests for the murder of Mdazo.

When we have faced repression, including assassinations, NUMSA is the only union that has been in solidarity with us. Some other union leaders only contact us when they want us to swell support for their marches with our numbers but don't even send a message of support when we face repression.

NUMSA is rooted to issues of the people on the ground. It has refused to be captured by the ruling party or capitalists. It's shop stewards do not sell out to the employers.

We express our condolences to the families of Mdazo and Hlothoane and our solidarity with their comrades.

The politic of blood is no longer just a problem in KwaZulu-Natal. It is a national problem and a national crisis and we call for the broadest possible alliance against political repression in general and assassinations in particular.

We also express our solidarity with PUDEMO in Swaziland, who recently lost comrade Mzamo Sikhondize, the Deputy Secretary of PUDEMO. Lindokuhle Mnguni and Landu Tshazi represented our movement at the funeral.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

5 JULY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The pain of living with the bullet that killed Nokuthula Mabaso

Today it is exactly two months since Comrade Nokuthula Mabaso was murdered in the evening in the eKhenana Commune. Nokuthula was attending a community meeting in a community hall just a few meters away from her house when she was shot and killed.

Nokuthula was a state witness to the killing of Ayanda Ngila who was murdered in broad daylight on the 8 March. The following day Khaya Ngubane the alleged killer was due to appear in court and fight for his bail application after he had been arrested for an attack on a resident of the commune. On 11 March Siyabonga Manqele was shot and killed by the police in the nearby eNkanini settlement, during a police raid.

The police refused to come to eKhenana when Nokuthula's body was lying on the ground, despite confessing that they had heard a gunshot. Comrade Bonono had to drive and physically fetch the police. As they did not bother to thoroughly examine the crime scene one bullet remained on the crime scene and was picked up by a community member the following morning. The bullet was brought into Abahlali offices so that it could be safely handed over to the Investigating Officer. It is very concerning that since the day of the murder the police have not investigated this murder. Up until today there is no Investigating Officer allocated to this case. Up until today there is no case number for that matter. Our attorney has been told that the police are taking leave and up until then there can be no investigation of this matter. This is the price of being a poor black woman in this country. Your life does not count to the state.

We continue to mourn Nokuthula, Manqele, Ngila and the lives of many more comrades who have fallen in struggle. Each time we see the bullet that killed Nokuthula in our midst we are reminded of how we are taught violence and how we are governed with violence. Since the murder of Nokuthula the

gunmen have continued to threaten the community because they still enjoy the support of the police and that of the local warlord Mr NS Ngubane.

Over the years in that area of uMkhumbane several Abahlali activists have been shot and killed. These activists include Nkululeko Gwala, Thembinkosi Qumbela, Nqobile Nzuza (who was 17 years old), Nkosinathi Mngomezulu and others. Last month an ANC Councillor, Mzimunye Ngiba, who is a known warlord was arrested and charged with a murder of an ANC Candidate for Councillor during the local government election late last year. Ngiba has been a primary suspect to all the above murders except for Nqobile Nzuza who was shot from the back by the Cato Manor police. Constable Ndlovu was later sentenced to ten years in prison by Durban regional court. It is unfortunate that the ANC has kept and protected such a well-known warlord until he allegedly killed one of their own.

We call upon the Minister of Police, Mr Cele to come and fetch the bullet that killed Nokuthula Mabaso himself. We call upon the Minister to appoint an Investigating Officer from the Provincial level himself to avoid the appointment of officers that take instruction from Mr NS Ngubane. If Investigating Officer in the Ayanda Ngila matter is an Officer that works with Mr NS Ngubane justice will never be served.

S'bu Zikode
Thapelo Mohapi

30 JULY 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Finally, there is a breakthrough in the Mabaso case

Samson Mhlanganyelwa Ngubane, a priest who has been the leading force behind the violent attempts to destroy our eKhenana Commune, has been arrested for the assassination of our leader Comrade Nokuthula Mabaso. His brother has also been arrested for the assassination. His son, the notorious Khaya Ngubane, were previously arrested for the assassination of Comrade Ayanda Ngila Samson Ngubane is also a businessman whose interest is for the use of the land in eKhenana for profit. Initially Ngubane and the local ANC wanted to use that piece of public land to build flats that were going to be sold for private profit.

The arrest of Samson Ngubane has finally taken place after we have made many attempts to get justice for our two comrades that were killed in a space of two months in the commune. We are still waiting for full details surrounding the arrest of Samson Ngubane, but we can confirm that he has been arrested for the murder of Nokuthula Mabaso.

The leadership in eKhenana has been facing constant repression from the local ANC since the land was first occupied. There has been a mafia approach that was organised by the ward councillor Mzi Ngiba to sell houses that are meant for the poorest of the poor. He has also has been imprisoned for murder. We continue to face the oppression from the ANC led government in KwaZulu Natal. We are being killed for organizing outside of the ruling party. We are killed for refusing to be controlled by the ANC. Over the years we have been a target of the ANC for organising autonomy for food sovereignty.

We welcome the arrests, and note that they came as a result of sustained and tenacious struggle.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

1 AUGUST 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali condemns the attacks on SERI

The important Human Rights organisation, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI), is under attack from vicious right-wing forces incited by the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the City of Johannesburg.

These threats come after SERI successfully prevented the unlawful removal of street traders in the De Villiers precinct in the Johannesburg Central Business District. The threats have been extremely serious.

The attack started as a result of an extremely irresponsible and reckless tweet by the City's MMC for Economic Development, Nkululeko Mbundu, from the right-wing and extremely xenophobic party ActionSA. Mbundu said that the City had been interdicted after 'locals were usedas a front' to bring a court application and suggested that De Villiers would be invaded in the morning as a result of the litigation. The tweet included SERI's press release with the cell phone numbers of the two lawyers who were part of the successful court application. This was deeply irresponsible and misleading and ran a real risk of inciting violence. Mbundu is threat to society and to democratic values and cannot remain as a leader. He must be removed from his position with immediate effect.

As SERI noted in their press release, the threats that followed Mbundu's tweets included threats to follow SERI staff members home from the office and take pictures of where they live, and to burn down the SERI offices. A screenshot with the address of the offices was circulated.

Some people asked "why SERI should live to see the victory of patriotic South Africans?". SERI staff were reminded that "Babita died" because "some people have a tendency to test the depth of rivers with both feet." Someone said "abanqakwe", a reference to kidnapping or lynching. Another person said that SERI staff members should be taken to shoot a video at a disused mine in Krugersdorp – a reference to the recent rapes there.

This is deeply sickening.

SERI is led by a black woman and many committed and brilliant black women work there. The attacks on the organisation have been grossly sexist and many of the threats that have been made include horrific threats against women. We offer our full support for all the women at SERI who are now being threatened by men following Mbundu's incitement. We are ready to offer our support in anyway required.

We will not allow SERI to be threatened like this. SERI has worked closely with our movement for more than fifteen years. Many NGOs and pro-bono law firms are unable to work with the poor with respect. They often assume that we can't think for ourselves and that their role is to tell us what to do. They often want to depoliticise movements and the issues that they confront. SERI have always engaged us with deep respect. Our relationship with SERI has always been dignified. As lawyers SERI they take their instruction from the poor while others are giving instruction to the poor. They are our comrades, and we never stand by when a comrade is under attack.

An attack on SERI is an attack on us, the poor and marginalised.

These threats reek of fascism and cannot be tolerated.

We call on all progressive organisations and individuals to condemn and oppose this attack on what is a glorious organisation of truly progressive lawyers and researchers, an organisation that has stood by our movement in the darkest times. We all need to be in solidarity with SERI.

No to xenophobia!

No to attacks on progressive lawyers!

No to inciting violence against women!

Full solidarity with SERI!

Remove Mbundu from his position now!

Thapelo Mohapi
Sbu Zikode
Mqapheli Bonono

5 AUGUST 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

We Gather in a Time of Deep Crisis on Women's Day

On Women's Day we are reminded of the 20 000 women who marched on the Union Buildings in 1956. They showed us that Unity is the Power.

We celebrate these women and all the women whose names are not remembered in the official celebrations who struggled in community organisations and trade unions and held families together under a brutal system of oppression.

We will celebrate women like Florence Mkhize, Dorothy Nyembe, Sophie de Bruin, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Victoria Mxenge, Jabu Ndlovu and many, many others, including our own mothers and grandmothers.

We will also celebrating the women in our own movement who have given their lives in the struggle. In 2013 Nqobile Nzuza who was murdered by the Cato Manor Police. She was only 17yrs old. In 2014 Thuli Ndlovu who was murdered in KwaNdengezi by a hitman paid by two ANC councillors. Nokuthula Mabaso who was murdered by a hitman at the eKhenana Commune in May 2022.

We will be having our Women's Day event at the Dennis Hurley Centre on 9 and 10 August. The programme will start from 10 and run to 15h00 on both days. Our theme for the event is "Let's Break the Silence and Support Each Other".

On 09 August we will be discussing about parenting, gender based violence and femicide. On 10August we will be discussing women in leadership, women and livelihoods and women and land.

Abahlali acknowledges and encourages all women participating in the living politics of fighting for their rights and to fulfil the vision and mission of our movement. Our Women's League wants to create awareness about issues that affect women on daily basis, e.g. patriarchy, impoverishment, unemployment, parenting challenges, the addiction epidemic that is hurting our children, gender based violence, femicide, evictions, state violence, ANC repression and

financial autonomy. Most of all we want to support the work to build women's power in struggle.

Like the whole country we are very distressed at the news that keeps coming in of more women being raped and murdered. We need to build a strong women's movement, centrally including poor and working class women who the majority, and including all women without regard for where they were born, to bring this crisis to an end. The government is failing us, the police are failing us, the courts are failing us, the political parties are failing us and the media is failing us. The only way out of this crisis is to build women's power in a mass democratic movement.

We have our stokvels and other livelihood projects that we share, but we also need access to land so that we can build food sovereignty. Land and wealth must be fairly shared.

We will welcome guests from a number of organisations at the event.

We also wish to express our solidarity with Nomzamo Zondo and all our comrades at SERI who have come under attack by the growing fascist forces that are organising around xenophobia. SERI has always stood with the struggles of the oppressed and we stand with them. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Women have faced patriarchy for so long. Now is the time to show the world that the place of a woman is not in the kitchen, it is in the struggle. Women's power is the foundation of the living politics.

Womandla!

Khunjuzwa Nomtebe
Zipho Maphela
Bongiwe Nkabinde

12 AUGUST 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The alleged killers of Nokuthula Mabaso are due to appear in court this morning

The alleged killers of Comrade Nokuthula Mabaso are due to appear this morning in the Durban Magistrate's Court Samson Mhlanganyelwa Ngubane, a local ANC chief who is also a pastor in the Mayville area, his brother, and his son Khaya Ngubane have all been arrested and charged with murder.

Khaya Ngubane was charged with murder of Comrade Ayanda Ngila and he remains in custody. Ayanda Ngila was shot and killed in broad-day light while working in the community garden at the eKhenana Commune on 8 March 2022.

On 5 May 2022 Comrade Nokuthula Mabaso, a very strong and respected leader of our movement, was also murdered in the eKhenana Commune. Mabaso was one of the key witnesses in the murder case of Ayanda Ngila. Samson Ngubane, who controlled the Cato Manor police, was charged with Mabaso's murder.

The two Ngubanes, Samson and Kaya, are expected to file their bail application this morning.

Abahlali and our Coalition comrades and partners will go out in our numbers to picket outside court and oppose bail. This family is a disgrace to our democracy and to human kind. We want them to rot in prison so that a clear message can be sent to all those who wage war against activists and women in this country. Such a "pastor" is a disgrace to society and should never be allowed in society.

Justice for Ayanda Ngila!

Justice for Nokuthula Mabaso!

Justice for the eKhenana Commune!

S'bu Zikode
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

20 AUGUST 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Lindokuhle Mnguni has been assassinated

In the early hours of this morning Lindokuhle Mnguni, the chairperson of the eKhenana Commune and the Youth League, was assassinated at the Commune.

Mnguni was a powerful intellectual with a mind like a razor. He was a young man with real vision and commitment, a brave man whose will to struggle was not broken by six months in prison, long periods in hiding and having to bury two close comrades this year. He was already interested in radical ideas while in high school and he read Biko, Fanon, Malcom X and Marx. Mnguni ran a reading group in prison with books such as *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and various pamphlets that we were able to smuggle into the prison at his request. He was a communist and an internationalist. Meetings at the Commune always started with the Internationale. The Communist Manifesto was studied line by line in the Frantz Fanon school along with writers like Fanon and Freire. Even while living under constant threat Lindokuhle was in solidarity with the struggle against the monarchy in Swaziland. In fact he led a delegation to Swaziland when PUDEMO lost a comrade.

Mnguni's vision and commitment was central to the achievements of the Commune including the struggle to occupy and hold the land, the model of democratic self-organisation developed in the Commune, its militant commitment to oppose patriarchy, the successful urban farming projects, the collectively managed shop and kitchen, the creche, the poetry project and, of course, the Frantz Fanon School, which attracted militants from around the country and beyond. It was his vision that the school would become a place of learning and building solidarity for the international left. The next step in his vision was to build accommodation for visitors to the school.

The land on which the eKhenana Commune was developed was first occupied in 2018. From there democratic self-organisation was developed from below, confronting many challenges along the way including repeated illegal and violent attempts by the municipality to crush the Commune and intimidation and violence from local ANC structures. The Commune then developed

all kinds of collective projects including the successful food sovereignty project, started with seeds donated by the MST in Brazil.

The Commune faced severe repression. There were regular arrests and periods of imprisonment on fake charges, people's homes were burnt and there were two assassinations. Ayanda Ngila, another leader of the Commune who spent six months in prison with Mnguni on bogus charges, was assassinated on 8 March. Nokuthula Mabaso was assassinated on 5 May. Mnguni knew that he had chosen to live and struggle in the shadow of death. He made it very clear, in his calm and gentle way, that he had chosen socialism or death. This is how he gave meaning to his life in a world of oppression that gave no value to his life, and how he enriched all of our lives.

Mnguni was a brilliant young man with a great future in leadership. He was a fearless leader and stood for his community. He was always humble yet strong. He always dedicated his time to the people. Mnguni was well known on the left and in Pan Africanist circles. He believed that we are the Biko of today, that we must understand that we are on our own and stand up for ourselves and our humanity. His passion for the people of eKhenana showed when he spoke. We lost a real cadre of the left, of the movement of the people, of the real struggles of the oppressed.

This assassination comes at a time when the movement is facing serious repression from the Local ANC in ward 101, Cato Manor. At the same time there is new development – night time raids on occupations by extremely violent masked police officers. One person has already been killed in these raids.

Mnguni is 24th leader of our movement who has died at the hands of the police and the izinkabi hired by the ruling party. We have no doubts that the killers of Mnguni are the same killers of Ngila and Mabaso.

We are in mourning. Our hearts are heavy. We have lost a real leader with a very bright future. We have lost someone who was prepared to lay down his life for the Commune, the movement and the struggle for a world where land, wealth and power are shared and the humanity of all is recognised. He has been in and out of prison as a result of fighting for the people of eKhenana. He was a selfless leader who believed that we must fight without compromise against capitalism, imperialism, racism and the thieves and thugs in the ANC.

A lion has fallen.

We have no trust in the police.

This morning when the sun came up the garden in the eKhenana Commune was green. The chickens were thriving. And once again the residents were devastated, standing in small groups and talking quietly.

They need maximum solidarity. We need maximum solidarity. The residents need to know that they are not alone as they face the possibility of death and the destruction of all that they have worked for.

We are Mnguni and we are socialists. We will continue the struggle.

We sing the Internationale because it is a song for the world and we are internationalists who take our place in the world as comrades among other comrades. But from today we will also sing the Internationale for Mnguni. It is a song for the world, it is our song and it is also his song.

Hamba kahle qhawe lamaqhawe

Uyibekile induku ebandla

Thapelo Mohapi
S'bu Zikode
Mqapheli Bonono

23 AUGUST 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Picket outside court tomorrow, memorial and funeral dates for Mnguni announced

Tomorrow the killers of Nokuthula Mabaso will be appearing in court for a bail hearing. Pastor Samson Ngubane and his brother who are in custody for the murder of Mabaso, will appear in court. Mabaso was leader of the Women's League in eKhenana, and also played a very instrumental role in the eKhenana Commune.

There will be a picket outside the Durban Magistrates Court to demand that justice is undertaken in a serious and genuinely impartial manner.

Mabaso was murdered when Samson Ngubane's son was about to appear in court for the murder of Ayanda Ngila. Now that Samson Ngubane is about to appear in court for the murder of Mabaso there has been another murder.

The Memorial Service for the late Comrade Lindokuhle Mnguni will take place this Thursday, 25th August 2022, at the eKhenana Commune. This will be followed by the funeral which will take place on Sunday 28th August 2022.

We will give our leader a dignified memorial and a dignified funeral. We will ensure that in death Mnguni is given the dignity he and the people of eKhenana did not receive in life from the ANC government.

The last few days have been difficult and straining for Abahlali baseMjondolo. The repression and the attacks at gunpoint have led to four of our members, including three leaders, being killed in a space of six months. Three of the killings were assassinations. The killings of Ayanda Ngila, Lindokuhle Mnguni and Nokuthula Mabaso at the eKhenana Commune were well planned and well financed by those who have vested private interests in the land that the community is using as a communal space. Siyabonga Manqele was murdered by masked police officers during a raid on the nearby eNkanini occupation.

The revival of eKhenana continues despite these attacks in the occupation. The garden and the poultry have already been kick started.

Many of our comrades from around the world have sent their support for the late comrade Mnguni, the eKhenana Commune and our movement. We really appreciate the solidarity that we have received from all over the world. We have always been committed to building a global movement of movements.

Lindokuhle Mnguni will not only be missed by the community of eKhenana. He will be missed by the more than 100 000 members of Abahlali baseMjondolo, and especially those who have interacted with him in various ways. He was well known in the movement for his courage, his kindness and his progressive politics.

He is leaving us with a legacy, the strategy of building communes from below as a space for survival, autonomy and democracy for those who are marginalised. He understood that in order for people to survive and build an autonomous and democratic politics they need to create their own communes. He saw the movement becoming a movement of communes, and this being the basis for a practice of living socialism. He fought for living socialism until his last days.

In a talk organised by The Forge he made it clear that he had committed himself to socialism or death.

His life was sacrificed for the people of eKhenana, for Abahlali baseMjondolo, and for the struggle for a just world.

We will continue with the struggle in his name.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Bathabile Makhoba

7 SEPTEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Bail denied for the killers of Mabaso

Yesterday, 6 September 2022, the bail application of Samson Ngubane and his brother Mhlanganyelwa John Ngubane, the two priests accused of killing Nokuthula Mabaso, was denied at the Durban Magistrates Court. The magistrate also denied an application to appeal the judgement in the bail application.

In the context of systemic impunity for the assassination of activists this is a major step forward. It is an important step towards what we hope will be a larger victory for justice and for all activists across the country who are facing repression and attacks from the ruling party and the state.

Mabaso was killed in May this year when she was due to be a witness in the bail hearing of the person arrested for the murderer of Ayanda Ngila who was killed in March. Ngila was the deputy chairperson of eKhenana Commune. Lindokuhle Mnguni the chairperson of the commune was killed in the early hours of the morning on 20 August.

The reason for the killing of activists in eKhenana is clear. The murders come from those who want to destroy the commune so that the land can be used for the benefit of the local elite in the ANC. They want to sell land, rent shacks and get tenders to build flats and other infrastructure.

As we have noted in previous statements the KwaKito (Cato Manor) police have acted as an armed wing of the local ANC thugs, and there have been clear signs of the capture of the wider criminal justice system too, including in the prosecuting authority.

Many police officers act as if they work for the ANC. We have seen this once more in the case of the murder of our leader Lindokuhle Mnguni. We have irrefutable evidence about this murder, evidence that should lead to arrests and successful prosecution. However, the police have not come to collect that evidence. The police that we have dealt with are just not interested in investigating the case.

Along with the silence of Cyril Ramaphosa and Bheki Cele, as well as many other leaders and forces in society, this is further proof that for many the impoverished and marginalised can be killed with impunity under this government.

We have concluded that we do not have a police minister in this country and that the current minister is the minister of the elite not the poor. Those who are politically connected, their cases are investigated and prosecuted. Those who are organised outside of the ANC, and who struggle against the ANC for the full recognition of human dignity – for land, housing, decent education and health care, for the full equality of women, for an end to xenophobia and for real democracy – can be killed like animals.

However, there are a few good and brave people left in the criminal justice system, people who work for justice rather than the ANC. With sustained pressure on the system generated from organising these people can be supported and empowered to make break throughs. This is how a conviction was eventually secured for the police murder of Nqobile Nzuza in Cato Manor in 2013. It is also how conviction of two ANC councillors for the 2014 murder of our leader Thuli Ndlovu in KwaNdengezi was secured.

With sustained pressure from organising, and solidarity from our comrades in South Africa and around the world, as well as the tireless work of our brave and excellent lawyer Mbali Khubheka, arrests have been secured for the murders of Ayanda Ngila and Nokuthula Mabaso. We will keep pushing for arrests to be secured for the murder of Lindokuhle Mnguni.

It is very worrying that the killer of Ayanda Ngila continues to communicate with people outside of the prison via video calls. There is a video that shows Khaya Ngubane, who is awaiting trial after being arrested for the assassination of Ayanda Ngila, in a conversation with his sister Ntokozo Ngubane.

This is a real concern as there are witnesses that will be before court, testifying against this person. One of the witnesses of this murder was Nokuthula Mabaso who was killed the day before the appearance of the accused in court.

The leadership of the movement, as well as our lawyer Mbali Khubheka, have been receiving threats from the Ngubane family.

It is worrying that those who kill activists continue to have access to video calls from prison when they could be ordering further killings. This says something about our justice system. It is rotten to the core.

We will continue to struggle to ensure that there is justice for every member of our movement who is murdered by the police or the izinkabi. We thank all our comrades for their solidarity.

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Mqapheli Bonono

20 SEPTEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali condemns the attack on the family home of the PUDEMO president

The movement for democracy in Swaziland continues to be under attack from the dictatorship of the monarch, Mswati. Mswati continues to repress those who are fighting for freedom in the country.

In the early hours of this morning the home of the president of PUDEMO, Lungisa Mkhanya, was petrol bombed and burnt to the ground. This is a clear indication that the regime is attacking any democratic formation that wants to see the people of Swaziland liberated from the monarchy.

The beating, torturing, jailing and killing of those who are fighting for freedom in Swaziland continues while the king continues to enrich himself and his family. The burning of Lungisa Mkhanya's home by the regime is a clear indication that the Mswati dictatorship is feeling the pressure from the growing power and confidence of the movement for democracy in Swaziland.

It is our political duty to support that movement, including all struggles for democracy in the country, and to stand in solidarity with everyone facing repression at the hands of Mswati's police, army and intelligence.

PUDEMO support us whenever we face repression and we will now support them. The attack on the PUDEMO is an attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo and is an attack on our freedom. We are PUDEMO. We cannot just watch while a movement for democracy is under attack from a dictator who is serving his own selfish interests.

We therefore are calling for the condemnation of this attack on the house of the president of PUDEMO by all progressive formations of the poor and the working class. At the same time we need to move towards concrete and collective forms of solidarity with all our comrades who are bravely struggling against the Mswati dictatorship.

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Mqapheli Bonono

27 SEPTEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Despite Repression our Movement Continues to Grow

Our movement successfully held two events in two different provinces on Heritage Day. The Thuli Ndlovu Lecture took place in both Durban in KwaZulu-Natal and in Tembisa in Gauteng. The events were well attended.

This keynote lecture in Gauteng was delivered at the Zikode Village Occupation by Bathabile Makhoba, and in KwaZulu-Natal the lecture was delivered at the YMCA Hall in Durban by Thapelo Mohapi.

The Thuli Ndlovu lecture takes place every year to honour those who have fallen at the hands of the ANC. Thuli Ndlovu was assassinated in 2014 by two ANC ward councillors who hired a hitman to carry out their dirty work.

Thuli Ndlovu was assassinated for opposing the corruption that took place in Ward 12, in Kwandengezi in Durban. The two ANC ward councillors who are now serving life imprisonment were involved in corruption in the allocation of houses. Houses that were meant to be allocated for the poor were sold by these councillors.

The killing did not stop with Thuli Ndlovu and this year's lectures focused on the murders that took place this year. We have lost four activists and leaders this year. One was murdered by a masked police officer and the other three was murdered by assassins. They were all activists who fought for the access for land for the poor in this country. Their lives were cut short and their families were robbed of their parents, siblings and children because there are who are out there who do not want to see the poor liberated.

We continue the struggle for liberation.

Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Bathabile Makhoba

4 OCTOBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Building International Pressure Against Repression

We have lost four comrades this year. One was murdered by a masked police officer and the other three were murdered by the izinkabi. We have lost a total of twenty-four comrades since our movement was founded on 4 October 2005.

The attack on our movement has moved the world.

We have received solidarity from movements and organisations across the Global South, and across Africa. Last week our president, S’bu Zikode, our Deputy President, Mqapheli Bonono, and our General Secretary, Thapelo Mohapi, undertook a mission to Europe to build solidarity.

Zikode held meetings with progressive MPs and others in Sweden and Norway where he also spoke at the annual bookfair in Gothenburg. Bonono addressed two meetings of human rights structures at the United Nations in Geneva and Mohapi addressed the European Parliament on the issues of Human rights and met with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Brussels.

Bonono’s mission to Geneva ran from 26 – 30 September 2022 where he participated at the 51st Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. Part of the objective of the mission was to engage with various organisations ahead of South Africa’s Universal Periodic Review, which is scheduled to take place in November 2022. He met with diplomats from across Latin America, Asia and Europe to address the dire situation of the increasing repression against our movement. Among other recommendations a request was made for the South African government to prioritise extending official invitations to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders.

A parallel side event to the 51st HRC session was also held under the theme “Defending Land and Protecting Rights: Opportunities for South Africa UPR”.

The event focused on the heightened repression against Human Rights Defenders, in particular those working in the field of housing, spatial justice and equitable land distribution. It also presented an opportunity for recommendations that South Africa should consider in its upcoming UPR session. During the session, Bonono spoke on the repression and targeted assassinations the movement has endured as advocates for the rights of people living in shacks, including access to decent housing, services and education.

On Friday, 30 September Bonono delivered an oral statement before the Human Rights Council during the general debate on Item 6, which focused on South Africa's upcoming UPR session. In the statement, he informed the Council of the unfortunate murder of Lindokuhle Mnguni, who was initially nominated to represent the movement in Geneva. Abahlali baseMjondolo called "on states to submit strong recommendations for South Africa to address historically unresolved issues of land, security of tenure and adequate housing; to adopt legislation that ensures the protection and promotion of HRDs and to allow Special Rapporteurs on housing and HRDs to visit the country." A further oral statement on the general debate on item 8, under the Vienna Declaration was delivered virtually on 3 October 2022. While in Geneva Bonono was also able to meet with activists from elsewhere in the world, including Palestine.

Mohapi met with numerous people and organisations in Brussels including the European External Action Services, European Union delegates to South Africa and some of the Policy Officers for Human Rights at the EU. As noted above he also had a personal meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Issues of Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor. His address to the EU Parliament stressed the failure of the South African government to act against ongoing political assassinations. Mohapi was also able to take the opportunity to meet with activists in exile from a number of countries.

Just as they always deny that xenophobic violence is xenophobic the ANC continues to deny that the murders of our comrades are political. As is always the case when we travel to build awareness and solidarity South African government officials in Brussels and Geneva said that they were 'shocked' to hear about the killings for the first time.

We thank all of the human rights organisations that worked so hard to make sure that these visits could happen, and that our movement could access the right people and structures during our mission to Europe.

The South African government says that although they are aware of the killings they are not behind them. They said nothing at all about the fact that they are an ANC government and that in almost all cases they have allowed forces within ANC to murder activists with impunity.

We will continue to work with our comrades and human rights organisations around the world to pressurise the South African government to take decisive action to stop political assassinations. We thank all the many people and organisations that worked with our movement to make this international mission possible.

We will continue to work with a broad array of forces to build a united front against political assassinations.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Bathabile Makhoba

31 OCTOBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Today we celebrate with our comrades in the MST!

The people have Brazil have spoken.

Lula da Silva from the Workers Party (PT) has been elected to be the president of Brazil again. The results were announced yesterday, 30 October 2022. This comes after Lula had endured suffering from the far-right government led by Jair Bolsonaro who imprisoned Lula.

Bolsonaro's term was a catastrophe for the poor and the working class, for black and indigenous Brazilians, for LGBTIQ+ people, for the environment and for Latin American solidarity. In fact Brazilians of all classes suffered under Bolsonaro as he, like Trump, referred to Covid as 'just a flu'. Thousands of people died as a result of his ignorance.

During Bolsonaro's term in office our comrades in the MST faced repression from the government. In 2018 Bolsonaro said that wanted to declare the MST a 'terrorist' organisation. The Florestan Fernandes National School outside Sao Paulo was attacked by the police. Repression became the order of the day. We have been in constant solidarity with our comrades in Brazil during these attacks from the Bolsonaro administration.

The people of Brazil have made a choice and they chose to be happy. They have chosen to value life and affirm dignity. They have chosen to care for the world. They chose a democratic president. They chose peace and stability.

They rejected a cruel man who wanted to be a dictator and openly expressed his support for the dictatorship that run Brazil between 1965 and 1985.

The recent years of the Bolsonaro administration have proven that the most powerful capitalist forces in Brazil and internationally do not recognise popular democracy in Brazil. Capitalism is the enemy of the poor and the working class. Because it is destroying the planet it is actually the enemy of all of humanity. It must be abolished by the progressive forces that want to see a just and equal world where the dignity of all human beings is recognised.

The election of Lula as president of Brazil is a victory, not only for the Brazilians but the poor and the working class globally. It is a victory for all who value humanity.

We celebrate because a president who comes from the working class and who understands the plight of the poor and marginalised has been returned to office by the people. We look forward to a recovering economy, declining poverty and more involvement of the poor in government and decision making in everyday life in Brazil. We welcome the results of the election and that the people of Brazil have democratically elected their leader.

We are delighted that Thandeka Thusini, the secretary of our uMhlalane branch, is in Brazil where she is a student at the Florestan Fernandes National School as a guest of the MST and was able to witness this historic moment.

In this moment of joy we also remember Marielle Franco and all the comrades who have fallen in the struggle for a just Brazil. In Brazil, as in South Africa, the price for hope has been paid in blood.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

12 NOVEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Norwegian ambassador will visit eKhenana today

This morning Saturday, 12 November, the Norwegian Ambassador to South Africa will visit the eKhenana Commune. Abahlali will give the Ambassador a warm welcome to the Commune.

We have faced waves of different kinds of repression since our movement was formed, but this year has been the most devastating with four of our leaders being killed in the struggle for land, housing and dignity.

It is almost three months since the murder of Lindokuhle Mnguni and there have been no arrests. Gun cartridges were picked up by the police, CCTV footage showing the murderers was handed over to the police and potential witnesses were interviewed but nobody has been arrested. We have still not heard a word from the police minister or Provincial Police Commissioner.

The three suspects of the Ngubane family remain in custody for the murders of Ayanda Ngila and Nokuthula Mabaso. Nobody has been arrested for the murder of Siyabonga Manqele at the eNkanini Occupation by masked police officers.

The movement has done all we could in terms of exposing the failure of the state to protect our leaders from izinkabi. We have reported these killings to many institutions that are supposed to be guarding our constitutional democracy with little or no action in response. The Director of Public Prosecutions has been informed. The South African Human Rights Commission has been informed. The Minister of Police has been informed but he has never shown any interest when we have reported that the lives of poor black people have been vandalised. The president of the Republic was also informed and never did anything, even after the Archbishop of Cape Town recently made a public appeal to the president.

We have always considered solidarity as our strength when we are faced with repression, and we have always considered solidarity as our duty when

comrades elsewhere in the world are under attack. Internationalism is a key principle of our movement, and grassroots diplomacy is an important tool in our struggle.

We have recently embarked on an international solidarity tour. In this tour we have met a number of ambassadors and diplomats, and addressed meetings at the EU and the UN. We have met an EU delegation in South Africa. We have also met the United Nation Office of the High Commissioner. Our solidarity campaign is beginning to bear fruits.

The visit of the Norwegian Ambassador marks the first visit of such a high profile government official to visit eKhenana Commune. We are expecting more ambassadors from other countries to visit the Commune. Not all ambassadors will remain in silence to protect a fake diplomatic relationship with the government of South Africa while the blood of the poor flows.

Abahlali salutes the courage that has been displayed by the ambassador.

We have built strong connections with comrades across Scandinavia and, of course, we all know how the left in Scandinavia played such an important role in supporting the struggle against apartheid.

The ambassador will also visit our New City branch, to see the work of Abahlali in our effort to build better communities. The ambassador will visit Abahlali offices and meet with the leadership before heading to the two occupations.

We note that Cyril Ramaphosa has never bothered to visit eKhenana, or any of the occupations where our leaders have been assassinated. His silence tells us all we need to know about the ANC.

We hope the South African authorities can come to their senses and protect the lives of people in eKhenana and elsewhere.

We are very encouraged by the perseverance of the community of eKhenana. The communal projects have all been re-established. Yesterday a long held ambition for the commune was realised when we were able to install solar powered electricity, this is electricity that will do less harm to the world and that will be democratically controlled by the community rather than centrally controlled by a violent and corrupt state.

Thapelo Mohapi
Busisiwe Diko
S'bu. Zikode

25 NOVEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

16 Days of Activism

To be in movement means to be in permanent struggle, every day, every week, every year. For us this includes working to build democratic women's power in struggle and in movement. However, it is important for our movement to connect to annual national campaigns when they align with our goals.

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League will hold an event in support of the 16 Days of Activism campaign on 27 November 2022 at Dennis Hurley Centre. The programme is starting at 9:00am and will run to 15:00 pm.

We all know the seriousness of the crisis of systemic violence against women in South Africa. During the national summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) the government promised to be accountable, to prioritise the crisis and to build more shelters for survivors.

However, they are failing to keep these promises, and they continue to illegally and violently destroy the homes of poor women who are living in shacks. Some women have moved to shacks to escape from violence and abuse and are then retraumatised and re-abused when the government destroys their shacks.

The point of the workshop is to build confidence and solidarity among women so that they can break the silence about all forms of abuse. We will also discuss how to build open and supportive relationships between parents and children so that children are able to disclose abuse to their parents.

We will also discuss how the law enforcement system is failing women and share information about how to navigate the legal system when dealing with abuse.

HIV remains a crisis in South Africa and while it no longer gets the attention that it used to we need to keep conscientizing, organising and mobilising on this issue. We will deal with this issue too including sharing the latest medical knowledge, working around reducing stigma and looking at the relationship between HIV and violence against women.

We have invited comrades in other progressive organisations to participate in the event, and have decided to invite men to the event too, as violence against

women and HIV are general social problems that require all of us to act to try and build a safe and just society, one in which everyone's humanity is recognised and affirmed.

Of course all of this has to be understood in the wider struggle to end patriarchy and build real equality.

Housework and commitment to and participation in struggle must be shared equally between men and women.

As Thomas Sankara said:

Comrades, there is no true social revolution without the liberation of women. May my eyes never see and my feet never take me to a society where half the people are held in silence. I hear the roar of women's silence. I sense the rumble of their storm and feel the fury of their revolt.

Zipho Maphela
Sne Mncanyana
Zandile Nsibande

27 NOVEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Political Arrests Continue in eKhenana

On 17 November, just a day after the Universal Periodic Review of South Africa by the United Nations, in which the South African government was directly challenged by a number of countries on the repression of our movement, three of our comrades were arrested on bogus charges.

During the Universal Periodic Review the South African state was called to account for the twenty two members of our movement who have been killed during the course of our struggle. Mary Lawlor, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, has made a number of public statements expressing her profound concern.

We have lost four comrades this year. Siyabonga Manqele was murdered by masked police officers at the eNkanini Occupation and Ayanda Ngila, Nokuthula Mabaso and Lindokuhle Mnguni were assassinated at the eKhenana Commune.

The Commune has endured horrific levels of repression over a number of years, including numerous arrests on fakes charges. Bail has often been denied or delayed with the result that people have spent time in prison – up to six months – before charges are withdrawn. As we have noted before the local ANC, and in particular Samson Ngubane, have been able to direct the police on who to arrest and who not to arrest, and to openly work with the prosecuting authority in the court building.

Now Maphiwe Gasela, Landu Tshazi and Siniko Miya, who have all been previously arrested on bogus charges that were later withdrawn, have been arrested again. Gasela had her home burnt down the last time she came out of prison.

For a very long time the unlawful and violent evictions, the assaults, arrests and imprisonment on bogus charges, and the murders were carried out impunity with the local ANC, the local police and powerful people in the prosecuting authority working together.

However, after consistent resistance from our movement, building international solidarity and committed work from our lawyer, Mbali Khubheka,

there have now been three arrests for the murders of our comrades. Sampson Ngubane Sam, his brother Mhlanganyelwa Ngubane and Samson son Khaya Ngubane are both currently in prison awaiting trial. However the impunity is not fully available. Although video footage that clearly shows one of the men who murdered Mnguni has been given to the police they have failed to make an arrest, and have instead bizarrely and cruelly accused Mnguni's partner, who was herself shot in the attack, of being responsible for the murder.

Before the arrest a police officer called our lawyer and told her that she needed to bring Gasela, Tshazi and Miya in for questioning. The attorney took the three comrades to the Durban Central police stations. The investigating officer then charged three comrades for a murder committed in 2020. Our lawyer argued that there was no need to detain them as they had voluntarily come to the police station but the investigating officer (IO) ignored them and threw them in to the police cells.

We thought that they would be granted in bail when they appeared in the Durban Magistrates' Court the next day, 18 November. However, we discovered that the IO had not done his paper work. The docket was only brought in to court at 10:00am. This meant that the prosecutor had not had a chance to look at the docket. It was only in the late afternoon when the three finally appeared before the magistrate. They were told that the court can only have bail hearing in January 2023.

The attorney argued that another court must be found for their bail hearing. Eventually the matter was adjourned to 13 December. At that time the IO had disappeared. It was clear that the state wanted the activists to spend Christmas in prison.

Samson Ngubane's daughter, Ntokozo Ngubane, was up and down in court openly speaking to different police officers and court officials in our presence, just like her father would do before he was arrested. She was making calls and calls seeing that she was happy and it was going according to her plan.

It is a matter of record that Ntokozo has a history of lying-in court. She confessed in a sworn affidavit that she had lied in a statement that led to the arrest and imprisonment of our Deputy president, Mqapheli Bonono, on the ridiculous charge of forming a conspiracy to kill state witnesses as a public meeting.

She faced no consequences for bearing false witness, for putting an innocent person in prison and wasting the time and resources of the court. Yes despite this

she is still able to openly advise and engage people in the prosecuting authority, something that, of course, we would never be allowed to do.

We will not be surprised if she is a state witness in this particular matter. She vowed to see our three comrades in prison for Christmas, where the two men would be in the same prison as her father and two brothers.

In a normal society one would not need any intelligence to question why the same person is a complainant and a witness in every case brought against Abahlali, cases that have, in every instance, been thrown out of by the court because they are plainly bogus. Her conduct is plainly vexatious and malicious, yet she retains the power to have our members arrested at will.

We also know that in a normal society a person who hands over themselves over to the police is not refused bail. There is no doubt that if the three were politicians or rich people being brought by their lawyer to the police station they would have been charged and released on bail. We have seen many politicians such the former mayor of Durban, the former City Manager and the former MEC for Housing in KwaZulu-Natal being immediately granted bail after being arrested for serious crimes. They have never spent a night in police cells or been taken to prison.

This is yet another price that must be paid for being poor in our city.

S'bu Zikode
Bathabile Makhoba

2 DECEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Celebrating an Award for the eKhenana Commune

Celebrating Award for the eKhenana Commune

The eKhenana Commune continues to receive International recognition. On Sunday we will celebrate with Abahlali baseKhenana.

This year three comrades have given their lives for the eKhenana Commune, for occupying land and building a democratic community organised in accordance with progressive principles on issues like gender, xenophobia, sharing labour and refusing the commodification of land. They have worked to build food sovereignty, a co-operatively managed store, a political school and poetry, theatre and choir projects.

The three comrades who gave their lives for the Commune this year – for the principles that people should be able to govern themselves and that land should not be bought, sold or rented – were assassinated by izinkabi (hitmen) hired by those who want to seize the land and use it for private profit and not for the benefit of the poor and marginalised. They put profit before human life.

The Commune has suffered and survived severe repression including repeated illegal and violent evictions, assaults, beatings, arrests and imprisonment on fake charges, the burning of people's homes and assassinations. Despite all this Commune still stands, and it still stands as a model for organising as we move forward. However people are living with serious trauma and in constant fear.

The Anti Land Invasion Unit and Calvin Security have never been held accountable for their illegal and violent acts including burning people's homes and using live ammunition. The police have never been held accountable for numerous arrests on bogus charges and failing to arrest an assassin when there is video evidence showing him committing a murder. The prosecuting authority has never been held accountable for denying innocent people bail and sending

them to prison. Neither the government nor the ANC nor the SACP have come out publicly to condemn the assassinations.

Earlier on the Commune was able to build solidarity with progressive movements around the world, and the representatives of many organisations – from Swaziland to Brazil – have visited the Commune, often participating in the activities at the Frantz Fanon Political School.

In the wake of the assassinations there has been an outpouring of global solidarity, and many organisations and individuals have visited the Commune, including high level church leaders, representatives of Scandinavian governments and so on.

In honour of the courage of the residents of the Commune, and in solidarity with them, the Southern Human Rights Defenders Network has presented the eKhenana Commune with the 2022 Human Rights Defender of the Year award. The award was given in Lusaka on Tuesday evening. It was received by Phumelele Mkhize, a leader in the Commune. She gave a very powerful speech.

On Sunday 4 December we will be gathering to celebrate and honour those who have given their lives in defence of the humanity of the oppressed and a clear vision of a just and equal society, a society in which the dignity of all human kind is recognised, a society in which every person is recognised as a person.

We celebrate with the people of eKhenana. The late Comrade Ayanda Ngila said that the struggle is not easy but one day we will reach our destination, which is Khenana. Our aim and hope is to build a movement of communes, and then a society of communes.

We will continue with the struggle regardless of what stands in our way. As the late Comrade Lindokuhle Mnguni said we have now committed ourselves to socialism or death.

UNgila wayeshilo umzabalazo unzima kodwa soze sifike eKhenana. Sizozabalaza.

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Phumelele Mkhize

23 DECEMBER 2022

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Once again justice is delayed and denied for our comrades

The attempt by the local ANC – working with the police, private security, the anti-land invasion unit and forces within the prosecuting authority – to destroy the eKhenana Commune has been relentless. The attacks on the Commune have included assassinations, assaults, illegal and violent evictions, vandalism, arson, repeated arrests on bogus charges and continual online slander from fake Facebook accounts, including two fake Facebook pages.

Three comrades have been assassinated this year: Ayanda Ngila, Nokuthula Mabaso and Lindokuhle Mnguni. The arrests on bogus charges, followed by the denial of bail and then, after as long as six months in prison, the dropping of charges, continue. On 17 November Maphiwe Gasela, Landu Tshazi and Siniko Miya, who have all been previously arrested on bogus charges that were later withdrawn, were arrested again.

Even though they handed themselves over to the police on 17 November they were not given bail the following day. The bail application was set for 13 December but was postponed again. Our three leaders were then supposed to appear in court on 20 December for a bail hearing but the prosecutor and the clerk of the court were not present at court. This led to the bail hearing being postponed for the third time. It was also said that the affidavit from the investigation officer was not clear and that he must come to court to explain it. Once again our comrades were kept in prison and denied their right to request bail.

They appeared again on 21 December and the IO was asked to explain his affidavit. He made wildly untrue, ridiculous and defamatory statements about our movement – statements made, of course, with no evidence. The bail application was then adjourned till 29 December. This is the fourth adjournment. Our comrades have now been in prison on a new set of trumped up charges for more than a month without being able to have a bail hearing.

As the well known saying goes: Justice delayed is justice denied.

We all know that when it comes to the poor the justice system never works. Poor people do not get fair treatment throughout the process that leads from arrests to prison, and the prisons are full of poor people. If you are a poor person in a radical movement, a poor person insisting on your dignity and your right to live a safe, decent and meaningful life the situation is much, much worse. From the police to the prosecuting authority to the judiciary you are very likely to face a wall of contempt. Rights protected on paper will not be given to you in reality.

We all know that when members of the political elite are plainly guilty of real crimes they are seldom arrested. On the rare occasions when they are arrested they always get bail straight away. Yet our comrades must be denied their right to have a bail hearing and kept in prison over Christmas after being arrested on more bogus charges.

They are in one of most dangerous prisons in the country, Westville prison.

While we face attacks and repression from all angles – including the police, the prosecuting authority and the judiciary – we have also received solidarity from many organisations.

The Commune has recently been recognised by the Southern Africa Human Defenders Network as the Human Right Defender of the Year. The award comes with incentives that are going to be used to grow the Commune. This include buying manure for the Communal garden, more chickens that will lay eggs and equipment for the Communal Kitchen.

We continue to receive support from progressive popular organisations like Pudemo, Numsa, the Congolese Solidarity Campaign and the MST. We have also received support from the Kairos Center in New York and the more than 300 organisations around the world who are part of the Economic Social and Cultural Rights Network.

This solidarity has been very important in drawing attention to the ongoing repression and in helping to build pressure on the South African government to act to stop the repression. Solidarity gives us strength.

The ANC government are hypocrites. They present themselves as the leaders of a country that takes human rights seriously while they continue to violate the dignity and lives of the poor. The ANC has never been a party for the poor. It has always suppressed us. The ANC are our oppressors.

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Mqapheli Bonono

1 JANUARY 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Today We Celebrate the Inauguration of Lula da Silva

Today Lula Da Silva will be inaugurated as the president of the Brazil.

New Year's Day is always a time to recommit to the future. For our movement that means renewing our commitment to the universal struggle to defend human dignity against all forms of oppression.

New Year's Day is also a time to remember the struggles of the past. The Haitian Revolution against slavery triumphed on 1 January 1804, and the Cuban Revolution triumphed on 1 January 1959. The Zapatista uprising in Mexico, which led to the creation of rural communes, was announced on 1 January 1994.

Lula's return to the presidency restores hope for the poor and marginalised in Brazil after the terrible years under Jair Bolsonaro. Hope is also restored for the preservation of the Amazon.

Like many of our members Lula was born into a poor rural family and then moved to a shack in a city as a child. After growing up in Sao Paolo he became a factory worker and then emerged as the leader of the metal workers' union, and then the Brazilian working class in general.

It often happens that people who grew up poor go on to betray the oppressed when they get access to power. We know this very well in South Africa.

However, during Lula's first presidency there were huge gains for the oppressed in Brazil. These gains lead to a major right-wing offensive culminating in Bolsonaro taking power. Lula had remained close to the unions and movements while in power. This was one of his 'crimes' in the eyes of the elites. Bolsonaro moved quickly to attack the progressive organisations of the poor and the working class and the MST political school, where a number of our members have studied and taught, was raided by police on several occasions. Sometimes the army was used. Freedom of expression and speech were also curtailed under Bolsonaro's regime. There is evidence that he was involved in the 2018 assassination of Marielle Franco, the left-wing councillor, in Rio de Janeiro. We feel a

deep solidarity with progressive movements under attack, where ever they may be in the world. Bolsonaro is as much our enemy as the ANC.

Our comrades in the MST, the Landless Workers' Movement, worked very hard to oppose Bolsonaro, to support Lula when he was jailed and to support the campaign to remove Bolsonaro from power and have Lula elected. Today we continue to celebrate with our comrades in the MST. Of course it will be necessary for the unions, movements and grassroots organisations across Brazil to continue work to build their power so that democracy and popular power can be built from below.

This is a victory for all of us who want to see a better world, a world where the equality of all human beings will be the order of the day. Today is a new year rich in hope for the poor and working class of the world.

We also mourn with the Brazilian people and the people of the world as we have lost Pele, the greatest footballer of all time. His brilliance in the beautiful game won him admirers around the world. Like Lionel Messi and Diego Maradona he was born into a poor family and his brilliance showed the world that those of us who are excluded, oppressed and disrespected have as much to contribute to humanity as everyone else. Impoverishment and oppression try to turn people into waste. We struggle to defend the dignity of every human being because we know the value of every human being.

We send our condolences to Pele's family who have been with him throughout the time that he spent in hospital.

Last year was a hard year for us. We lost three comrades to assassination and one to a police murder. Maphiwe Gasela, Landu Tshazi and Siniko Miya spent Christmas and New Year's eve in Westville Prison after being arrested, again, on bogus charges. Their bail application has been repeatedly postponed (18 November, 13 December and 20 December) for 'reasons' that are nothing but an expression of contempt for us by the criminal justice system. They were scheduled to finally appear for their bail hearing on 29 December but it was postponed again. This time the reason given was that the court had no water.

The struggle continues.

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Mqapheli Bonono

11 JANUARY 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali condemns the attack on democracy in Brazil

Following the model of the fascists in the United States the Brazilian fascists attacked the presidential palace, the presidential offices, the Supreme Federal Court building and the offices of the National Congress in Brasília on 8 January.

This was a direct attack on democracy, an attack supported by agri-business, mining companies, some actors in the military and the police, and the extremists in the political base of former president Jair Bolsonaro.

Like Trump, Bolsonaro has refused to accept the election that removed him from power as legitimate. He refused to follow tradition and formally hand over power to the new president, Lula da Silva.

Instead, when da Silvia was inaugurated as President on 1 January, the presidential sash was handed to him by Aline Sousa, a black woman who has worked as a waste picker since she was 14 and is a leader in a waste pickers' organisation. She was accompanied by a boy from the favelas (shacks), an indigenous leader, a metalworker and a group of activists including a teacher, a cook, a disabled person and an artisan.

It was made clear that Lula was elected by the people to represent the people.

This has enraged the racists that support Bolsonaro, racists who want the old elites with the origin of their power in the system of slavery to rule Brazil for ever. Bolsonaro, who regarded Covid 19 – a virus that killed millions of people around the world – as 'just a flu', attacked workers' rights, tried to turn society against black, indigenous and LGBTI+ plus people, burnt the Amazon forest, repressed activists, openly proclaimed his support for the military dictatorship that oppressed Brazil from 1964 to 1985 and supported the apartheid state of Israel that continues to oppress and kill innocent Palestinians has encouraged his supporters to refuse to accept that Lula's government has been democratically elected.

The attack on the new government on 8 January is not just an attack on an elected government. It is also an attack on democracy, on the millions of people who elected a progressive government and on all oppressed, exploited and excluded people in Brazil.

In a state, in a movement, union or commune democracy is respecting and abiding by the will of the people. The Brazilians have spoken and the majority have voted against the far right government of Bolsonaro.

Bolsonaro is currently in Florida, a state ruled by a far right politician, and it is rumoured that he will move to Italy which is now also ruled by the far right. No doubt he is frightened that he and his family may face charges in Brazil for various abuses, including the assassination of Marielle Franco in 2018.

Just as the MST always stand with us when we are facing repression we are in solidarity with the MST, with all progressives in Brazil and with all those who stand firm for democracy in Brazil.

Progressive forces have taken to the streets in Brasília and São Paulo and the left in Brazil will be resolute in its defence of democracy.

We wish to express our solidarity to all our comrades in Brazil who are organising to build the democratic power of the oppressed from below and to defend democracy.

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Mqapheli Bonono

1 FEBRUARY 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Maphiwe Gasela, Siniko Miya and Landu Tshazi granted bail. Ntokozo Ngubane arrested.

Yesterday Maphiwe Gasela, Siniko Miya and Landu Tshazi were finally granted bail in the Durban Magistrate's Court.

They have all previously been arrested on bogus charges, been denied bailed and kept in the notorious Westville Prison for more than six months before the charges were dropped.

Late last year they were arrested on a new set of bogus charges. Although they handed themselves over to the police when they were told that new charges had been brought against them they were not given bail. Their right to a bail hearing was repeatedly denied on spurious grounds such as police officers being unavailable, a court administrator being unavailable, there being no water at the court, the electricity being off and so on. This went on for more than two months and they were forced to spend Christmas in prison.

They were denied the right to a bail hearing even though it is now recognised that they have previously been arrested and jailed on bogus charges, and that their accuser is a confirmed liar. They were denied the right to a bail hearing even though Maphiwe has a two-year old child who still needs to be taken care of by the mother, while Landu and Siniko have babies that need their support financially to grow. Even when they have presented before court their physical address they were still denied their right to bail.

Today they were finally able to realise their right to a bail hearing and were granted bail.

Westville Prison is a place built and run with the aim of vandalising people's humanity on an organised basis. Every hour that a person endures in the prison is marked on that person forever. It is outrageous that people can repeatedly be arrested on bogus charges and either denied bail or the right to a bail hearing and then be jailed for months before the charges are dropped. The criminal

justice system – which is already an unfair and abusive system for poor people – is being flagrantly misused for the purposes of political repression.

We are hugely relieved by the release of our comrades but we are still concerned about their safety and the possibility that more trumped up charges will be brought against them and other leaders of the movement.

The justice system in this country is deeply unfair when it comes to the poor. It is organised around the hatred of the poor. Everyone knows that the political elite are quickly given bail without being held in custody when they are arrested. Even when they are facing serious charges of murder and corruption they still receive bail and spend time with their families while attending a trial. But if you are a poor person you are treated with contempt, as if you are not even a person, not even a human being. This does not happen to those who are politically connected or those who can afford expensive lawyers. The justice system in this country only recognises the rights of those who have money and who can access the best lawyers. This is not a system of innocent until proven guilty. It is a system that seeks to diminish and abuse those who are poor. It is a system that is anti-poor. Everybody needs to be clear on this point.

The justice system is even more hostile to the strong poor, the organised poor. We have seen this very clearly with the eKhenana Commune. The criminal justice system is lenient to those who are repressing us, but when it comes to us they will deny us bail even when it is clear that there is no case. This shows that there are those in the criminal justice system who are aligned to those who want to destroy the Commune. As we celebrate the release of the three comrades we remain careful because the enemy is not only capable of creating trumped up charges, they are also capable of killing. We have not received any justice for the murder of Lindokuhle Mnguni, the chairperson of the eKhenana Commune who was assassinated with thirteen bullets. The police have video footage of the attackers but they have not acted.

The attack to the Commune has been consistent as those who want to appropriate land for their own private profit will stop at nothing in order to destroy the Commune which puts land in common and refuses to allow the land to be sold or shacks to be rented. Those who wish to keep society under control of the ANC will stop at nothing in order to destroy our autonomous movement.

There was another important development today. For a very long time our comrades have been beaten, threatened, arrested and jailed on bogus charges,

had their homes destroyed and assassinated with impunity. But, after years of struggle, good legal work and working to build alliances with the good people still in the system this impunity is slowly being rolled back.

Siyabonga Mngadi, who works closely with the Ngubane family, was arrested two weeks ago. Now the police have finally arrested Ntokozo Ngubane. Ntokozo has been in the forefront of creating these trumped up charges against our comrades, and has shown to be a liar in court. She worked alongside her father and her brothers to destroy the Commune. She is the daughter of Samson Ngubane who is the pastor who is in currently in prison for the murder of Nokuthula Mabaso who was the women's league chairperson in the eKhenana Commune. She was arrested for destroying the cooperatively managed shop at the Commune in which the surplus from the garden and poultry projects is sold.

Given the relationship that Ngubane family has with Chief magistrate who is also a Ngubane we are not surprised that the state has not opposed Mngadi's bail. We expect the same dearly treatment with Ntokozo as she appears in court today.

We are still a movement in mourning for the loss of the three comrades that we have lost in the Commune last year. The comrades suffered a lot before they were assassinated. Assassinations happen across Southern Africa and while our three comrades from eKhenana were still in Westville Prison other comrades from the Commune travelled to Swaziland for the memorial for Thulani Maseko, our comrade from Pudemo who was recently assassinated by Mswati's thugs. Our struggle to affirm and defend the dignity of the oppressed – of all people – has no borders. We will keep working to build solidarity across Southern Africa, throughout Africa and whenever people are met with repression when they stand up for justice.

Land. Dignity. Freedom.

Every person everywhere must count as a full and equal person.

The struggle continues in Durban, Manzini, Sao Paulo. Everywhere.

Thapelo Mohapi
Bathabile Makhoba
Mqapheli Bonono

3 FEBRUARY 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Amadiba Crisis Committee comrades are under threat – a call for solidarity

Last year our movement lost three leaders to assassination and another comrade to a police murder. On 21 January our comrade Thulani Maseko was assassinated in Swaziland. Political assassinations have often been used to repress dissent in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Across Southern Africa activists are at risk of assassination when they confront powerful forces. Many political activists, as well as LGBTI+ plus comrades, have had to flee their countries.

In South Africa anti-mining activists have been hit hard, with many assassinations receiving little or no public attention. Fikile Ntshangase was assassinated in Ophondweni on 22 October 2020. Sikhosiphi ‘Bazooka’ Radebe from the Amadiba Crisis Committee was assassinated in Mbizana on 22 March 2016. There have been many others.

Now the Amadiba Crisis Committee have sent out a red alert warning that there have been threats against two of its leaders, Nonhle Mbuthuma and Thweshu Silangwe. As usual local ANC politicians are behind the threats.

The Amadiba Crisis Committee have been fighting a mining company from Australia, as well as an attempt to build a major road through their land. They have been fighting against this mining company for more than 20 years, yet our government continues to be on the side of the mining company.

Threats of assassination always have to be taken very seriously. Comrades are almost always aware that their lives are at risks before the moment of death arrives.

On 22 November 2022 Vukile Mhlembana, the mayor of the Alfred Nzo District Municipality gave a public speech, which was recorded. He said:

“Ukuba kuyanyanzeleka ukuba masingevani, nokungevani kwethu kude kwenzeke ntoni komnye, masimxhase uNkosi kwenzeke eyenzakalayo. Kun-gathiwa ngexesha lakhe uNkosi, ngexesha lethu siphethe sikhokele singabal-apha, kukhona izinto ezingazange zenzeke kungenjalo sakuphendula. Xa kunje Premier, zikhona izinto eziye zifune ukumelwa. Ukuba kunyanzelekile ukuba makufumntu ngokumela into eyiyo makafofayo.” [“Eih! Kunya nyiwa!”]. Kuba unobangela wokuba uNkosi basimsapoti asithi abantu abanazinto bazithethayo, bazikhalazelayo, kodwa mazenzeke ngendlela. Into endegayithetha Primer inye. Abantu abanizi abaxhabana apha ayisithi. Sixatyaniswa ngabantu eyingebabo nabokuzalwa, eyingibabo nabanyama balapha. Whether ngumlungu ohamba nobani, nohamba nobani. Kodwa yona into esixabanisayo kule lali. Zenje sibe nezazela zentwenye. Kuba mhla semka sabikho, saseweleka sonke thina bantu balapha. Sithi saba ngamagwala. Kwakuthi ngexesha lethu kwenzeka ezi zinto. Abandelayo babulawa sithi akwenzeka nto intle.”

The politicians do not even try to hide who they are, including their refusal to accept that people have a right to organise autonomously.

We are in full solidarity with Nonhle Mbuthuma and Thwesha Silangwe, with the Amadiba Crisis Committee and with all comrades facing assassination everywhere. We call for all progressive individuals, organisations and move-ments to work together to protect all comrades under threat and put an end to the politics of blood.

If Nonhle or Thwesha are harmed in any way we will all know who is re-sponsible.

Thapelo Mohapi
Bathabile Makhoba
Mqapheli Bonono

10 FEBRUARY 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo is currently hosting an international movement conference

Our movement was founded in a commitment to solidarity with other struggles and movements, wherever they may be in the world. From the beginning we have worked, where possible, to build solidarity with struggles and movements elsewhere in the world, and we have often received amazing solidarity from around the world in times of crises, times when we are facing severe repression.

We have lost 24 activists in our struggle. If we were on our own we would be extremely vulnerable.

Over the years we have built ongoing forms of solidarity with movements in a common struggle, forms of solidarity that are not just active during times of crisis. These include Pudemo in Swaziland, the Poor People's Campaign in the US, the MST in Brazil and many more others.

Our movement is also part of the Economic Social and Cultural Rights Network which is made up of more than 300 organisations and movements around the world. It has been an important vehicle for mobilisation international solidarity during times of crises.

We are currently hosting a gathering of 35 delegates from various movements – including delegates from Kenya, the US, Nigeria, Spain and Swaziland – in Durban. The meeting is being held in partnership with the Economic Social and Cultural Rights Network and will run from 7 to 11 February.

The decision for our movement to host the meeting was taken to show solidarity with us after we lost three comrades to assassination last year and another to a police murder, as well as numerous arrests and assaults, burning of our leaders' homes and the vandalization of our self-built and managed infrastructure.

We are also using this meeting to build solidarity with our comrades in Swaziland and the Democratic Republic of Congo, including specific organisations such as Pudemo and the Congolese Solidarity Campaign, as well as the Amadiba Crisis Committee here in South Africa, along with other comrades

who are organising against giant mining companies that want to appropriate, privatise and mine their land under the pretence of 'job creation'.

During this meeting we are remembering and honouring fallen comrades such as Bazooka Radebe, Fikile Ntshangase and Thulani Maseko.

Our struggle is much broader than the struggle for land and housing. It is also a fight to insist on the inviolable dignity of every human being everywhere, a fight against inequality, a fight against capitalism and imperialism and a fight for socialism from below – for a world in which land, wealth and power are fairly shared, and democratically managed.

On Saturday our visitors will meet with comrades at the eKhenana Commune. We will also be joined by a group of radical trade unionists who are visiting from the US.

The struggle is global and we will not survive or progress without global struggle. In South Africa we are working to build a movement of communes, a movement that is part of a movement of movements across the region, across Africa and around the world.

Thapelo Mohapi
Bathabile Makhoba
Mqapheli Bonono

3 MARCH 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Celebrating Victory and Justice for Abahlali leader Melita Ngcobo

In 2019 the Abahlali baseMjondolo branch in Vusimuzi, Gauteng, resisted an imposed reblocking project by the Ekurhuleni Municipality. During the community resistance all lies and threats against Abahlali activists were masterminded by the local ANC ward councillor, Hendrick Selwana.

Despite the attacks perpetrated by the councillor against Abahlali the project was halted. The halt to the project provided Abahlali with the opportunity to negotiate the sizes of the stands as many residents were complaining about the municipality unilaterally reducing their yard sizes, often making their homes much smaller in the process. Some were facing eviction and denied access to electricity connections as a form of punishment because they were members of Abahlali.

During the resistance people were divided by the ward councillor as some were promised personal benefits from the forced reblocking project and told that those who were opposing the project were in the way of their personal benefits. As a result some people opposing forced development imposed above and demanding participatory development were assaulted, including our branch chairperson Comrade Melita Ngcobo.

Although Melita was the victim of assault our fearless Melita was arrested on the 20 November 2019 and charged with assault. As we know trumped up charges do not stand in courts. The state should have learnt this by now. But we also know that strong women leaders like Melita, Maphiwe Gasela, the late Nokuthula Mabaso and many others are a big threat to the corrupt system. Melita was never intimidated. She continued her leadership until the City compromised on the reblocking.

On the 9th February 2021 Abahlali launched a civil claim for damages against the Minister of Police. The damages claims were for wrongful arrest of Comrade

Melita, for her assault at the hands of the police and for being refused medical attention while in custody.

Yesterday, the Rabasotho Magistrate's Court found that indeed Melita was wrongfully arrested and that the state violated her rights. Abahlali welcomes the judgement and hopes that it will send a clear message to gangster politicians like Councillor Selwana who use state power to suppress popular movements.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to the Socio Economic Rights Institute of South Africa for representing us with honour. Their commitment to social justice is fundamental to the advancement of the rights of the poor.

Melita Ngcobo, Chairperson of Vusimuzi branch
Sizakele Mkhize, Safety and Security representative
Thulani Molefe, Chairperson of Zikode Village branch

25 APRIL 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

UnFreedom Day to be Marked in Three Provinces

Impoverished people are not free, and when the ANC and the government lie to us and tell us that we are free they insult our intelligence and our humanity.

We are not free because we are assassinated and murdered by the izinkabi and the police.

We are not free because our homes are attacked and destroyed by the state.

We are not free because we are denied the right to well-located urban land and thereby our right to a place in the cities.

We are not free because we are forced into government shacks (so called 'transit camps') and left to rot there.

We are not free because our attempts to build autonomous and democratic communities in which access to land and housing is decommodified are repressed with violence from the state and the ruling party, including murder.

We are not free because the food system remains in the hands of capital and our struggle to build food sovereignty from below is met with a denial of access to land and violent repression, including murder.

We are not free because a whole range of elite forces, including the ruling party, the state and some NGOs and academics do not accept our right to think, decide and act for ourselves.

We are not free because the economic system that makes some people to be rich and other people to be poor continues to destroy our lives, and leave millions of us to suffer the fear, pain and indignity of poverty.

We are not free because the demand for radical democracy – for a bottom up system based on worker and community control – made by the trade unions and community organisations in the 1980s was denied.

We are not free because the state is an instrument for capital and the political class to exploit and repress us rather than an instrument of the people to build a just society.

We are not free because people born in other countries live under constant pressure and in constant fear.

We are not free because woman are not respected and safe.

We are not free because LGBTQI+ people are not respected and safe.

We are not free because society is becoming more and more violent.

We are not free because we live in a society that denies our humanity and vandalises our dignity every day, year after year.

We will not be free until land, wealth and power are shared fairly, every person has the right to organise freely and safely and to participate in all decision making that affects them and the humanity and dignity of every person is respected.

Our movement has marked UnFreedom Day since 2006. In the beginning the ANC tried to ban UnFreedom Day and sent out police in armoured vehicles and a helicopter to try and suppress our right to gather in rejection of fake freedom.

Seventeen years later we still live under a fake freedom. Last year four of our comrades were murdered, one by masked police officers and the other three by the izinkabi, while a number of our leaders were jailed on fake charges.

Today the worsening economic crisis, exacerbated by the electricity crisis, is crushing our lives and our hopes. Most young people are without work and most families can't afford to eat healthy food. Many people are going hungry. It is a very painful thing for any parent to put their child to bed on an empty stomach. The ANC has such contempt for us that even in this crisis it is failing to provide nutrition for schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

This economic crisis hits the poor and marginalised the hardest. Our government does not have the political will to solve the issues that the country is facing. It is a government of capital and corruption, not the people. Grants must be defended and extended but a life on grants is not a full life. Land and wealth must be fairly shared among the people, among all the people.

The wealth controlled and regulated by the state was not built by the politicians. It is not their private property. The wealth of the few comes from the dispossession and exploitation of the many. We were made poor so that others could be made rich and we are kept poor so that others can remain rich. The wealth of society belongs to the people. It is public wealth.

Public funds must be used for the public good. Corruption is theft from the public, theft that hits and hurts the poor the hardest. Corruption is always an attack on the people. It always robs our communities of the potential to improve our living conditions and to thrive.

Society is becoming more and more violent and politically connected mafias are taking over more and more institutions and communities. Corruption is the order of the day. The state has become an instrument of accumulation rather than an instrument of the people. We are not safe. We are ruled by violence.

The state does not treat us like other people. We are regularly ignored, insulted, harassed, assaulted and robbed by state officials. The state regularly destroys our homes and our street stalls at gunpoint. Some of our neighbours and comrades have been murdered by the state. Across the country the state regularly abuses and murders poor black people. Bheki Cele has made no effort to deal with the assassinations of our members and must be removed from office with immediate effect.

The councillor system has not only become a system of top down political control. Many councillors see their position as nothing but an opportunity to grow rich from public funds, from the wealth of the people. Some councillors are a danger to our democracy and our communities. In some wards people are terrorised by the councillors and their committees.

This democracy was not won by the politicians and it does not belong to them. It was won by the struggles of the people including organisations like the ICU, Fosatu, the UDF, Cosatu and others, organisations with members who were poor and working class people like us. This democracy belongs to the people, and we are part of the people. Today democracy is defended by the courage and struggles of the people, people like us, and people like Babita Deokaran, Tebogo Mkhonza, Nokuthula Mabaso, Thuli Ndlovu and many, many others who have given their lives in the struggle against fake freedom.

The counter-revolution against the struggles of the people by the ANC has to be faced. The ANC cannot 'self-correct'. Its twenty-nine years of rule have been a disaster for the poor. Incredibly the poor are now both greater in number and poorer than in 1994 while the rich have been getting richer and richer. The ANC has no concern for the people and it cannot be trusted. In fact the ANC is now the enemy of the people.

We are left to live in shacks, including so called government 'transit camps'. We are left to burn in the shacks and to be murdered in the shacks. We are left to die alone. We are in very difficult times. We have no one but ourselves.

Under these circumstances it would be highly irresponsible to accept the lie that we are now free, that the ANC brought freedom to us and that we should obediently celebrate our freedom.

The decision to mark UnFreedom Day 2023 was taken in open general assemblies, in free and public discussions. Events will be held in three provinces. The schedule of events is as follows:

KwaZulu-Natal: On 26 April there will be a march in Durban from Curries Fountain to the City Hall.

Mpumalanga: On 28 April there will be a march from Vukuzakhe Location to the Volksrust townhall.

Gauteng: On 29 April there will be a rally in the Good Hope Settlement in Germiston.

All events are scheduled to start at 9 am.

Land. Dignity. Freedom.

Organise, mobilise and build towards a movement of communes!

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

7 JUNE 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The ANC undermines the poor

Democracy is not just about elections. It is also about everyday practices, and democratic governments engage their people democratically, especially when they are organised in large democratic formations. A progressive government would see popular democracy as something to be supported and engaged.

However, the ANC has repeatedly met popular democracy with contempt, as well as violent repression. On the 26th of April 2023 our movement held the strongest march of any organisation in the country over the so-called 'Freedom Day' and 'Workers' Day' holidays, which are known in struggle as 'UnFreedom Day' and 'May Day'.

More than 7 000 people from impoverished and marginalised communities took to the streets of Durban to defy the celebration of fake freedom by the ANC. We handed over our memorandum of demands, wrote many letters and communicated with government officials. Our memorandum carried the weight of the more than 7 000 people in the streets, and the 115 000 audited members of our movement in good standing (we have more members still to audit), organised into 81 branches in good standing.

A democratic government would have welcomed this as an opportunity to engage the people in whose name it rules. Our memorandum was directed to President Cyril Ramaphosa but he has not replied. We have not received any response from the government.

We have not received any response because the ANC fears rather than supports popular democracy. We have not received any response because the ANC is deeply hostile to autonomous forms of popular organisation. We have not received any response because we do not count as people or as citizens in the eyes of the ANC led government.

The ANC does not care about the poor. They only see poor black people as objects, as people who are not taken as human beings, as people who do not deserve dignity. We are seen as banks for votes where politicians only come to us to seek votes. When elections come the ANC suddenly pretends to see us as humans because they need our vote. The ANC does not care about the lives of poor and working class – which are the majority of black people in South Africa – and must be removed in 2024. South Africans cannot be fooled anymore.

We have always been looked down on by what we once thought was our own black government because we are poor. We have been seen as human waste, not as human beings. Our dignity has been vandalised. We are supposed to be silent as we are burnt alive in shack fires. We are supposed to be silent as we are washed away by floods. We are supposed to be silent as young people face a future of permanent unemployment, and those who do have work continue to be exploited. We are supposed to be silent when we are denied access to land, to the cities, to quality education, safe and reliable public transport, services like water, electricity and sanitation and all that is required for a safe and dignified life.

When we take to the streets to voice out our grievances, we are shot at with rubber bullets, live ammunition or teargassed. This because the ANC sees us as people who can be killed with impunity. They see us as people who are not worthy of reply from the government. We continue to be undermined by those in power.

Under the ANC we have become the most unequal society in the world. Under the ANC we have the highest unemployment in history. Under the ANC more people are poor than before. Under the ANC inequality between classes and races is worse than it was before.

There has been no real land reform, the number of people living in shacks has grown, inequality and impoverishment have worsened and the country is becoming more and more violent.

The ANC has destroyed Eskom, Transnet, South African Airways and the Post Office. They have not acted to deal with the crisis in the schools attended by the children of the poor and the working class. The ANC has not done anything for black people in the 29 years that they are in power. All they did was to make themselves and their families rich and steal from the poor. They betrayed the long struggles of the people that brought them to power. This is how they will be remembered in history. They will be remembered as a disgrace. Ramaphosa will be remembered as a failed president, as an incompetent president with an incompetent administration.

It has been clear for many years now that the ANC are our new oppressors. The poor cannot be liberated if the ANC is not removed from power.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

16 JUNE 2023

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

The Youth Must Discover their Mission

Last night the Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League hosted a well-attended political education camp from 6:00 pm till 6:00 am. The discussions were rich.

We agreed that being poor and young does not mean that we cannot think and participate meaningfully in the governing of our communities and the country.

We are residents of this country and we must be afforded the opportunity to have a voice in how our communities and the country are governed. In order to participate in democratic life we need to build our power by organising from below.

The ANC has brought the whole country into a serious crisis. We have grown up seeing our parents suffer under the ANC led government. Now we as poor young people face a terrible situation. Youth unemployment is over 60%. This is the highest youth unemployment rate in the world. Schools are in a very bad state and most of us cannot access tertiary education. We must face very difficult living conditions in shacks, including the constant risk of fires and floods. We also face the constant risk of violence, including from the state. We live in a mafia state ruled by a mafia party.

Many young people who should be contributing to society with the energy of youth are sitting at home, often suffering from anxiety and depression. We are deeply worried about our own futures, and the future of the country. Many young people have lost hope, and some have turned to drugs and alcohol to ease their pain. The whoonga (heroin) epidemic is doing serious damage to people and families, and there is no support to help with this crisis in which a drug mafia linked to the political mafia and the police exploit the pain of young people to enrich themselves.

We have been completely abandoned by the government. We are not a lost generation. We are an abandoned generation. But as Frantz Fanon teaches us "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it." We will follow the example of Lindokuhle Mnguni, Ayanda Ngila,

Nqobile Nzuzi and others stand up for our lives, for our future, for our country and for what is right.

The ANC has failed the youth of this country and therefore we must vote with our conscious and not with our emotions about the struggle of the past. The ANC of today has nothing to do with the youth who rebelled in 1976. The ANC has betrayed the struggle and the nation. They are our new oppressors. It is time for the ANC to step aside.

But while it is vital that the ANC is removed from power an alternative form of power must be built from the ground up, by democratic organising. It is only by building the power of the oppressed from below that we can build a country in which each person is respected, democratic institutions – including a proper education system – built and power, land and wealth shared fairly. In eKhenana the youth played a leading role in turning an occupation into a commune and we need to follow this example in all our occupations and work towards building a movement of communes, and an international movement of movements.

With so many young people not working or studying it is important that we develop our sports and culture projects, that we continue our political education projects and, also, that we continue to develop our food sovereignty projects.

Last night's camp was a successful gathering which came up with serious resolutions for the Youth League and affirmed its commitment to play a leading role in building our movement, umbutho wabampofu, into a home for the oppressed that is also a powerful force for building socialism from below.

Thandeka Thusini
Lindokuhle Motha
Ndumiso Bonginkosi Mhlongo

18 JULY 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Khaya Ngubane has been found guilty of killing Ayanda Ngila

Khaya Ngubane, the man who assassinated Ayanda Ngila, our comrade and the deputy chairperson of the eKhenana Commune, was found guilty of murder by the Durban Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Khaya Ngubane is a member of the ANC youth league in Cato Crest and the son of Samson Ngubane the notorious ANC aligned Zionist Christian Church pastor. He, acting with others, attempted to assassinate Lindokuhle Mnguni on 8 March 2022 but Lindokuhle was able to escape. However, they found Ayanda and fired a number of bullets, ending his life. We hope that the others who were acting with Khaya Ngubane will also be arrested and prosecuted and that he will not spend time in prison alone.

As happened with the ANC witnesses in the trial that followed the attack on our movement in the Kennedy Road settlement in 2009 the Magistrate also found that both Khaya and his witnesses had lied under oath.

Khaya Ngubane's father and uncle, Samson and Mhlanganyelwa Ngubane, were present in court. They kept walking around in and out of court because they could see that the fence was closing in – not only on their son but on both of them too.

It must be remembered that both Samson and Mhlanganyelwa Ngubane were arrested for the killing of Nokuthula Mabaso who had written a sworn affidavit as the witness in the assassination of Ayanda.

Ayanda was a dedicated leader of the struggle who played a key role in building the eKhenana Commune and had a clear vision about how land must be used for the benefit of the poor in eKhenana. He was deeply committed to building democratic organisation and power among the oppressed, to the equality of women and men and the struggle for socialism.

The initial eKhenana land occupation and then Commune came under constant attack from the state since the beginning and the Commune also been

under constant attack from the local ANC in ward 101. There have been numerous illegal and violent evictions and a number of comrades have been assaulted, wrongfully arrested and imprisoned. Some have had their houses burnt. Ayanda Ngila was assassinated on 8 March 2022. Nokuthula Mabaso was assassinated on 5 May 2022. Lindokuhle Mnguni was assassinated on 20 August 2022.

Siyabonga Manqele was shot and killed by masked police officers on 11 March 2022 in the nearby eNkanini settlement.

The price for land and dignity has been paid in blood. The struggle for socialism has been met with death.

Over the years our movement has lost 24 comrades to state and party violence. There have only been three convictions.

In 2016 Velile Lutyeku and Mduduzi Ngcobo, both ANC councillors, together with their hired gunman Mlungisi Ndlovu, were convicted for the murder of Thuli Ndlovu in KwaNdengezi on 29 September 2014.

In 2018 Phumlani Ndlovu, a police officer at the Cato Manor police station, was convicted for the murder of Nqobile Nzuzi in Cato Crest on 30 September 2013.

Now Khaya Ngubane has been convicted for the murder of Ayanda Ngila in Cato Crest on 8 March 2022.

We are being killed by the ANC and the state for standing up for our dignity and organising to build the power of the oppressed from below. The ANC and the state want us to remain divided and silent while they continue to oppress us. They know that they cannot continue to rule in the name of the poor when the poor are autonomously organised. They know that as we build our power from below by organising and building productive communes their power to oppress us is reduced. They know that as we refuse to vote for amasela nababulali (thieves and murderers) they are slowly losing their hold on power. They know that if the impoverished continue to suffer in their millions the day will come when their anger will turn the country upside down.

Throughout the years of repression of the eKhenana Commune it has been clear that many police officers, and parts of the prosecuting authority, are captured by the ANC. However the charges brought against our comrades are always dropped in the end and they are always released from prison in the end while Khaya Ngubane was convicted. The criminal justice system has been seriously damaged by ANC capture but there are some police officers, prosecutors

and magistrates who remain independent. We salute all those who have resisted ANC capture and are guided by the evidence as they do their work. In some cases this takes real courage.

It is important that we all work together to roll back the ANC capture of the criminal justice system and ensure that it functions fairly and that murderers are held to account.

Ayanda lived his life with a commitment to socialism or death. We will honour him by taking that struggle forward with courage and commitment and we will keep struggling for justice for Lindokuhle, Nokuthula and all the others.

The struggle continues.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

3 AUGUST 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Statement on the Police Killing of Karabo Chaka

On Monday 31 July, a road blockade – the strike of the poor – was organised by residents of the Slovo Park settlement in the south of Johannesburg to demand that the City keep its promises, and adhere to its legal obligations. The protestors blocked the N12 highway for more than six hours. The police responded with violence, taking the life of Karabo Chaka (16).

Karabo Chaka was shot dead by the police while in the yard of his family home in the Slovo Park. We would like to express our deepest condolences to his family and all who knew and loved him. We would also like to express our solidarity with the Slovo Park community.

The Slovo Park community has been engaging the City of Johannesburg for thirty years, often assisted by progressive lawyers and policy experts like the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI) and Comrade Professor Marie Huchzermeyer. In 2016, the High Court ordered the City of Johannesburg to upgrade the settlement however this has not happened, and in the seven years since then a number of children have died due to falling into pit latrines or coming into contact with live electricity cables. A political party, a state and a society that leave children to die are an insult to the humanity and dignity of the poor.

We have also experienced police killings during protests. On 30 September 2013 Nqobile Nzuza (17) was shot dead by the police in Cato Crest, Durban, during a protest. Like Karabo Chaka she was shot in the back of the head. On 29 May 2017 Baby Jayden Khoza (two weeks old) died after inhaling tear gas when police attacked the Foreman Road settlement in Durban when protestors fleeing a police attack on the road took refuge in the settlement. On 29 July 2021 Zamekile Shangase (33) was shot dead by the police in Asiyindawo, Lamontville, after people began to protest the stealing of their food by the police in a ‘show your receipt’ raid.

All across the country impoverished communities risk death when they take to the streets, and it has been many years since it was reported that more than

a hundred people had been killed by the police during protests. This figure did not include the lives lost during the strike at Marikana.

In the United States and France huge numbers of people take to the streets to protest against police murders and killings. Here there is mostly silence. There are no mass protests. The lives of poor black people do not count to this society. The contempt for our lives and dignity is pervasive.

A state that murders its people has no right to rule. We are confronting a brutal state that vandalises the lives of the poor and then rules us with violence. Bheki Cele runs a police force that is a clear and present danger to poor black people, a police force that is only good at killing and violating the poor. It is a fact that people live in fear of the police.

Even when the poor only cry for basic services such as water and sanitation – basic necessities – their cry is met with violent repression. Of course our struggle for land and dignity is also repressed with assassinations by the izinkabi. As everyone knows 25 lives have been lost during the course of our struggle.

The ANC impoverishes us and then manages our impoverishment with violence from the police, land invasion units, private security companies and izinkabi. They are our enemy, the enemy of every real democrat and every person who believes in the equality of all human beings and the value of all human lives. A party that runs a government that regularly murders poor and working class people, including the Marikana massacre and the murders by the police and army during the Covid lockdowns, is the enemy of the people.

It is time that we all stop complaining about how the ANC steals from us, impoverishes us and rules us with an iron fist. We must get rid of it. We need to organise, build popular democratic power, build a political instrument for that popular democratic power and build a peaceful society in which every life matters.

The lives and dignity of the poor cannot tolerate the ANC a moment longer.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

8 AUGUST 2023

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Tomorrow We Will Celebrate Women's Day

Tomorrow we celebrate Women's Day, which is held on the anniversary of the women's march in 1956 when 20 000 women marched against the pass laws. The march was also about the wider issues of patriarchy, racism and classism. The women who led the march were Hellen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu and Sophia Williams De Bruyn and we honour them each year. We also remember and honour the women who were at the forefront of the riots in Cato Manor in 1959, including Dorothy Nyembe and Florence Mkhize. Women living in shacks played a major role in the struggle against apartheid and continue to play a major role in today's struggles.

Tomorrow we will honour the women who have given their lives in our struggle.

Nqobile Nzuza was shot from behind by the police in Cato Manor during a protest on 30 September 2013. After a long struggle a police officer was later convicted for this murder.

Thuli Ndlovu was assassinated in her home in KwaNdengezi on 29 September 2014. After another long struggle two ANC councillors and their assassin were convicted for this murder.

Zamekile Shangase was shot dead by the police in Asiyindawo, Lamontville, on 29 July 2021 during a 'show your receipt' raid. There has been impunity for this murder.

Nokuthula Mabaso was assassinated in the eKhenana Commune on 5 May 2022. Samson and Mhlanganyelwa Ngubane, both powerful people in the local ANC with connections to the taxi mafia, were arrested and charged with murder but the charges were provisionally withdrawn after the autopsy results were 'lost'.

We will continue to demand justice for Zamekile and Nokuthula.

Nokuthula once said that "we didn't choose this life, but landlessness made us live like this". The price for land and dignity cannot be continued to be paid in blood.

The spirits of Nqobile, Thuli, Zamkile and Nokuthula live in us and we honour their lives.

We cannot continue to accept evictions, social abandonment and impoverishment. We cannot continue to accept the violence that is all around us. We need to build a peaceful society in which there is full equality between men and women, a society in which land, wealth and power are shared. We need to build socialism from below. To get there we need to build women's power by organising ourselves from below. We need to support each, to encourage a family feeling in our branches, as we face impoverishment, state violence and violence in society, landlessness and the epidemic of substance abuse that affects many of our children.

We will be holding two events for women's day. In Durban there will be an event at the YMCA hall in Durban, starting at 9 am on 9 August. We will be joined by women from other progressive organisations and will discuss all the issues facing us as women. There will also be a workshop in Mpumalanga on 13 August discussing women's right and the role of women in the struggle, in our communities and in our homes. It will be held at the Amersfoort community hall at 9:00

Now is the time to say Enough is Enough! Now is the time to honour the fallen! Now is the time to build women's power from below and in struggle!

Zandile Nsibande
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
Thabisa Maphela

11 AUGUST 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity with the Socialist Party of Zambia

The repressive regimes across Southern Africa are highly intolerant of independent progressive organisation. There is sustained repression in countries like South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe including arrest, torture and murder.

When the notoriously authoritarian Edgar Lungu was voted out of office in Zambia in 2021 there was hope that the new President, Hakainde Hichilema, would allow space for political freedom.

On 8 August former journalist and newspaper editor Fred M'membe, who is now the leader of the Socialist Party in Zambia, was arrested on a ridiculous charge and detained overnight. The arrest came after months of threats to arrest M'membe.

The actual crime of the Socialist Party has been to expose the reasons why the Zambian people are kept poor, and how the Hichilema government is failing to build an economy that works for ordinary Zambian people.

We condemn all repression everywhere, and are in solidarity with all people resisting repression everywhere. Any government that unleashes the army, police, informal militia or assassins against people thinking and organising for themselves is an enemy of democracy. When a government begins to use the police as a tool to repress democratic political activity it cannot credibly claim to be a democratic government even if it was elected to power.

We send our solidarity to the Socialist Party in Zambia, and to all our comrades across the region, the continent and the world who are confronting political repression.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

18 AUGUST 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We will honour our fallen leaders on Sunday

This Sunday, 20 August, we will be marking a year since the assassination of Lindokuhle Mnguni, chairperson of the eKhenana Commune.

The Commune has lost three of its leaders through assassinations. Nokuthula Mabaso and Ayanda Ngila were assassinated in March and May last year respectively. In March, shortly after the assassination of Ayanda Ngila, masked police officers conducted an illegal raid in the nearby eNkanini occupation and murdered Siyabonga Manqele.

During the course of our struggle 25 people have lost their lives, the majority to assassinations and police murders.

Many of our members have committed themselves to 'land or death' or 'socialism or death'. Lindokuhle was prepared to risk his life in the struggle to build socialism from below and he paid the highest price in the struggle to defend the lives and dignity of the oppressed.

During the initial eKhenana occupation, the building of the commune, in prison and during the fullest flowering of the commune he was a humble and soft spoken leader who listened more than he spoke, a man of quiet courage, an inspiration to his comrades and a young man who reinvigorated our movement with vision and radical ideas rooted in our struggle and open to the world. For Lindokuhle struggle was a school, the living school of the oppressed in movement.

He was a selfless leader who did not put his interests ahead of those of the people in the community or the movement. He always welcomed the views of other people and listened carefully to everyone. He was clearly and strongly against patriarchy and was very critical of religious practices which encourage patriarchy. He was a leader who never minced his words when there were discussions on issues of gender equality. He was committed to ensuring that land was allocated on the basis of social need rather than private profit, to building democratic socialism from below, to community planning and to pan-Africanism and internationalism.

There have only been convictions for three of the 25 lives that have been lost during our struggle. A police officer was convicted for the murder of Cato Crest resident Nqobile Nzuza in 2013. Two ANC councillors were convicted for the assassination of our KwaNdengezi chairperson Thuli Ndlovu in 2014. Last month Khaya Ngubane, a leader in the ANC youth league in Cato Crest, was convicted of the murder of Ayanda Ngila on 8 March 2022.

On Sunday we will mark a year since the assassination of Lindokuhle, and remember all our comrades who have given their lives to the struggle for the dignity of the oppressed. We are not recognised as human beings by the government. We are regarded as something like human waste. It is therefore up to us to defend our own dignity, to give meaning to our own lives, to take our place in the world, to remember our heroes and make sure that they are given all the honour that is due to them.

Oppression denies us the fullness of life and murders us when we stand up for our lives and our dignity, and for a fair share of the wealth of the world. Death is always present in our struggle for our lives. This is why our movement has had to become a movement of dignity and courage.

Our gathering to honour the fallen will take place at the eKhenana Commune beginning at 10:00 am on Sunday. All comrades and people of good conscience are welcome.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

31 AUGUST 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Our deepest solidarity with the victims of the fire in Johannesburg

The news that at least 73 people have died in the terrible fire in downtown Johannesburg has left all people of good conscience reeling in pain. Just as with the Grenfell Tower Fire in London in 2017 that took 72 lives, and just like the shack fires that tear through our communities year after year, this fire is a direct result of the contempt for the lives of the poor by politicians and the state.

Last Sunday five children died in a shack fire in the Itireleng shack settlement in Pretoria. Shack fires are relentless. We are left to burn year after year. In South Africa to be poor is to live with the constant risk of fire.

We extend our deepest condolences to the families, friends and neighbours of all who have lost their lives, suffered injuries and lost their worldly goods. Alwehlanga lungehlanga.

We are sad to the depth of our souls. We are also deeply, deeply angry. We are angry that the poor are left to live in life threatening conditions. We are angry that politicians from both the ANC and the DA have swept in like vultures to blame both the victims and progressive lawyers, lawyers who are on the side of the poor. We are angry at the xenophobic organisations and individuals that have celebrated the fire because some of the people who have lost their lives are migrants. This is deeply sickening. It is pure fascism and must be named and contested as such. People who revel in the suffering of others because they were born in other countries are enemies of humanity.

Nobody is poor because their neighbour was born in another country. All over the world the politicians that serve the rich encourage this nonsense to turn the poor against each other and protect the rich from the anger of the people. All over the world the left works to build unity among the poor and the working class to challenge the power of corrupt and repressive politicians and capitalism to ensure a decent life for all.

A neighbour is a neighbour, a worker is a worker and a comrade is a comrade irrespective of where they were born.

If you live in Johannesburg you are from Johannesburg.

We call on all people of good conscience to oppose this sickening xenophobia clearly, directly and bravely, and to work to build the unity of the oppressed across South Africa.

We stand with the progressive lawyers who work with and for the poor. The statements by politicians like Colleen Makhubele and Malusi Booi are disgraceful and an affront to logic and to human decency.

We demand that the politicians and the state accept responsibility for this disaster and commit themselves to ensuring decent and safe living conditions for all. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that all people in the country have access to safe and decent homes and to support the self-organised initiatives from below to secure housing.

As Africans it is our belief that we must mourn with the families that are grieving for their loved ones. It is very unfortunate that there are people who have lost their humanity and continue to blame the poor for their suffering even when they are grieving. Our hearts and souls are with the families of those who lost their lives in this devastating fire. May they find comfort at this difficult time.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

14 SEPTEMBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali in solidarity with the people of Morocco and Libya

A devastating earthquake has taken just under 3 000 lives in Morocco. We would like to send our condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones during this catastrophic event, as well as all the people who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

As happens with every disaster the majority of those who lost their lives in the earthquake are the poor who live in houses that are not built as strong structures because they do not have money and are abandoned by the state. In Morocco as in South Africa, and around the whole world, the poor continue to suffer as a result of impoverishment and being abandoned because we are not considered as full and equal human beings. Every disaster hits the poor harder, and as climate change escalates it will be the poor who will suffer the most. In Libya a devastating flood has taken more than 8 000 lives. The death toll is expected to continue to rise in the coming days. In all African countries the rich continue to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. The poor and working class are the ones that build these cities but are left to die like flies. The life of the poor does not count at all in a government that is only interested in profit maximisation, whether via capitalist means or political and government corruption. We are angry when the poor and working class perish in the manner in which the people in Morocco and Libya have been killed by the earthquake and the flood.

If the people of Morocco are not killed by the brutal state under the dictatorship of the monarchy, they are left to die in the same conditions that we live under in South Africa. We send our deepest solidarity to the Moroccan people. We also send our solidarity to our brave comrades in the Democratic Way who are always in solidarity with us when we face repression.

The pain of the people of Morocco and Libya, is the pain of more than 120 000 members of Abahlali baseMjondolo. We are in solidarity with the oppressed from Palestine to the Democratic Republic of Congo to the ghettos and prisons of the United States. Capitalism strangles life and humanity across the planet and the struggles of the people stand up for life and dignity, for humanity, across the planet.

Our hearts and souls are with you in these difficult times.

Kunzima. Sidabukile. Kodwa thina simunye.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Bathabile Makhoba

21 SEPTEMBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali welcomes the SAHRC report on the water crisis in KwaZulu-Natal

Earlier this year the South African Human Rights Commission conducted an inquiry into the water crisis in the municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal. The inquiry has found that the municipalities have violated people's rights by not providing clean water for the residents of KwaZulu-Natal.

Many richer people do not know how difficult it is to walk kilometres to get access to water which is a basic necessity. It is a feeling that everyone experiences daily in the shack settlements and rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. This is not the life that South Africans should be living 30 years after apartheid.

Furthermore, the water trucks that are supposed to bring water for the people in the shack settlements are coming once a day and if you are left out, you have to find other means to get water. Some communities go for as long as a week without water. Some officials are making people pay in order for the water trucks to come in their areas.

It is clear that people are deliberately denied access to water to enable ANC water truck tenderpreneurs to enrich themselves. For this reason corrupt officials in the municipality will rather outsource water delivery instead of fixing water pumps and pipes, etc Water should not be commodified whether by the state or corrupt officials. The rivers flow for all and water should be free for all.

Water is necessary for life and yet the ANC is so contemptuous of the poor that even water is not made fully available to us.

The failure to provide water for all is a violation of our dignity and our well-being, including our health, time and comfort.

In this matter as in so many others the ANC and the state just do not care. Just as they don't care about the thousands of elderly people who did not receive their social grants as a result of the incompetence of the minister of Social Development and Communication. Just as they don't care about the people who are left to burn in shacks and city centres. Just as they don't care when we are

assassinated by the izinkabi or killed by the police, anti-land invasion units and private security. Just as they don't care about the masses of young people who have never worked. Just as they don't care about the young people struggling with heroin addiction. Just as they don't care about all the people going hungry.

The ANC will neglect, abuse and starve people and then expect them to vote for the ANC only to starve and suffer abuse and neglect again. The amount of arrogance from those who are supposed to serve us is huge. It is as if they think we owe them for 'leading us' while they get richer and we get poorer.

The water crisis is not only in KwaZulu-Natal. In Ekurhuleni people have taken to the streets in KwaThema after they have been without water for weeks. This is a complete violation of their rights. The most affected are those who come from the poorest communities such as KwaThema but the ANC has mis-managed the country's infrastructure so badly that just as the middle classes are also hit by loadshedding even some middle class areas are now going without water too.

Two major hospitals are without water as we speak. These are government hospitals that only serve the poor who cannot afford private health care. Besides having hospitals that do not have enough resources for the people, now we have to go to hospitals where there is no water.

In the midst of this crisis the ANC are now planning another round of devastating austerity that will be a massive attack on social services and institutions.

Colonialism and capitalism made us poor. The ANC keeps us poor because it is only concerned about the interests of its leaders and does nothing to restore land, wealth and dignity to the people.

The ANC does not care about poor black people. This fact must be clearly confronted by everyone. As the poor we are on our own and will have to build our own power and make our own future.

The task that confronts us is clear. We must build socialism from below.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Bathabile Makhoba

4 OCTOBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Youth paving the path to a just and equal society for all humankind

The 4th of October marks the day of the establishment of the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement, AbM in short. In 2005 the movement was established because the impoverished, the marginalised and the shack dwellers of South Africa were continuously rejected or left out by the system that had promised to be democratic and free to every citizen of South Africa.

The movement was formed in the Kennedy Road settlement, and other settlements in ward 25 in Durban, by young people who were tired of the inhumane conditions that they had to go through every day, were facing evictions and were deprived of their rights to political freedom. Since the establishment of the movement 25 lives have been lost during the course of the struggle for land, housing and dignity. Amongst the 25 there are young people who were so determined to change the oppression faced by the shack dwellers. As the Youth League of the movement we continue to salute and honour every soul who dedicated their lives to struggling for an equal society in which the dignity of all people is respected.

In 2008 the Youth League and Women's League were formed as an initiative to give the youth and women their own space within the wider movement and to build the next layers of leadership. The Youth League has been committed to organising and agitating the youth. For the Youth League the marking of 18 years since the founding of the movement means a journey that has been severely brutal, a journey that has left bruises, a journey that has cost lives and resulted in imprisonment, a journey that has created anger but also a journey of learning, celebrations, solidarity and most of all a journey of dignity and unity. The movement has created a space of belonging and meaning for young people who are otherwise denied a place in an oppressive society, a space where we can be together, learn together and advance and be respected within the movement and our communities.

One of the achievements for the people was the defeat of the Slums Act of 2007, which was reminiscent of apartheid policies and seen by many as an attack on the poor. It was judged unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of South Africa on the 14th of October 2009.

Through the movement new land has been opened for the poor through occupations, services have been won for shack settlements, there have been almost no evictions in settlements affiliated to the movement as a result of resistance against evictions in the streets, in the occupations and in the courts. Through the movement the impoverished are given attention simply because we have insisted that all people matter regardless of our living conditions. We have opposed xenophobia and insisted on the equality of women.

As young people of the movement we will continue to struggle for decent jobs, for land, for free quality education and health care, for service delivery, for inclusive economic distribution and more, and for our voice to be recognised and heard in all discussions and negotiations. Thus we say **NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US**.

The Youth League continues to stand with our hero Lindokuhle Mnguni who fearlessly said “Socialism or death the struggle continues” and his commitment to build radically democratic socialism from below in a set of linked communes that together make a movement that is part of a world-wide movement of movements.

We know that as the movement is growing stronger the ANC government and its allies will form ties to demolish the movement. The Minister of Police Bheki Cele has failed the young people of the movement and continues doing so because there are many cases of assaults, assassinations, evictions and violence that have been reported but have never been investigated. Kanti kuyoze kubenini?

The shootings and bogus charges that are continuously made against us are evidence that the change that the AbM is trying to build is not what the ANC wants. Our leaders are continuously being threatened and have been fearing for their lives every day for the past 18 years just because they want equality amongst the people, they want justice for all and they want to create progressive movement to movement international relations.

As young people we have realised that even the education that we are being taught doesn't suit our needs as the people of the grassroots but suits the needs of the capitalists and the bourgeois system, as well as the propaganda of the ANC. Hence we demand a democratic education that greets all learners and students as full human beings.

As the movement we believe in popular education which will benefit the people hence we have our own education programmes within the movement, including at the Frantz Fanon School in Durban. We have also sent our comrades to the political schools that promote popular education in other countries

such as the ENFF school of the MST in Brazil, the Amilcar Cabral school in Ghana and many other schools which continue to shape our leaders.

We say no to regressive politic that creates greed, patriarchy, broken families as well as vulnerability to oppression. We say no to regressive politic that fights the spirit of ubuntu and the unity of the organised masses. This includes xenophobia, ethnic politics and patriarchy. As the movement we are against gender based violence, violence against minorities, gangster politic and all forms of violence within society, including crime and murder. The movement provides a safe space for all the victims. We have many workshops that deal with every social ill accordingly. The movement has gone a long way and as young people we will continue to fight for what belongs to us, and to all people living here in South Africa. We will continue to pave the way for a just and equal future for the upcoming generations.

One major crisis faced by the youth is that we have been hit very hard by the unemployment crisis. We have many graduates who are unemployed. We need an economy that works for all, an economy where land, wealth and power are fairly shared.

The Youth League appreciates all the national and international movements, other organisations, parties and friends who continue to stay in solidarity with Abahlali baseMjondolo. The solidarity we have received has made us even stronger and we always try to be in solidarity with all struggles for human dignity to be recognised. In doing so, we will remain a people's movement.

As a movement that is growing rapidly through the struggles of the people, we will continue to be comrades, militants and leaders of the socialist revolution, a revolution from below.

SOCIALISM OR DEATH THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

NOTHING WITHOUT US ABOUT US!

KANTI KUYOZE KUBE NINI?

LONG LIVE TO ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO!

Thandeka Thusini
Lindokuhle Motha

14 OCTOBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Crackdown on the Indian media and others

The fascist government in India has launched a major attack against the media. On the morning of 3 October the homes of over 100 journalists and others, including a comedian, were raided in four cities, in an operation carried out by more than 500 police intelligence officers. Around 50 people were interrogated in police stations, and two arrested.

We have also just heard that the writer Arundhati Roy has been charged by the police, and may face sedition charges. She is one of the progressive intellectuals of the world who has expressed solidarity with us when we have faced repression.

The attack on the progressive media in India, which has been condemned around the world focussed in particular on NewsClick and People's Dispatch. NewsClick editor Prabir Purkayastha and administrator Amit Chakraborty were arrested. They have been denied bail and remain in detention.

NewsClick and People's Dispatch cover a wide range of people's struggles. NewsClick became globally famous as a result of its coverage of the farmers' strike in India in 2020 and 2021. It has also covered struggles in many parts of the world, including South Africa and Swaziland. NewsClick covered the assassination of our leader Lindokuhle Mnguni. People's Dispatch has often given excellent coverage of struggles that are ignored in other media. For instance they were the first publication in the world to break the story of the uprising in Swaziland in 2021. They have given excellent coverage of the recent assassinations of our leaders, coverage that has circulated across the world.

We add our voice to the global condemnation of the state repression of Indian journalists, writers and others, and express our solidarity with everyone who has suffered from this repression and affirm our commitment to supporting media freedom and freedom of speech for all people everywhere.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

16 OCTOBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Humanity is under attack in Gaza

Civilians, including children, were massacred on one side of the border between Israel and Gaza. Now terror and death crash through Gaza, on the other side of the border, as Israel uses the indiscriminate attack by Hamas to launch an even more cruel and indiscriminate attack on the residents of Gaza. We grieve all these deaths, and insist that the only way to put an end to the violence is to put an end to the oppression of the Palestinians. Justice is the only road to peace.

The people of the world are watching, their hearts burning in pain, as the Israeli death machine funded with millions and millions of American dollars, rampages through Gaza. Gaza is blockaded. There is no water or power. People are running out of food. The hospitals are overflowing. The bombs keep falling. Fear, pain and death are everywhere. More than a million people have been displaced. More than 2 600 people have been killed, including more than 700 children. The war has spread to the border with Lebanon. Syria has been bombed. Egypt has moved soldiers to the border.

Some Israeli politicians are describing Palestinians as animals. This is very painful for all oppressed people around the world. The recognition of the full and equal humanity of every person in this world is a non-negotiable moral and political principle.

Our movement stands for the value of every human life. We grieve for all the unarmed civilians and children killed in this new cycle of violence, and fully support the demand of the United Nations for an immediate ceasefire. Humanity is under attack and we join the call on all the peace loving people of the world to act now, and to act with all possible urgency.

The roots of this violence go back to 1948 when violence and terror were used to drive Palestinians from their land to form the state of Israel. The repression of the Palestinians has never stopped since then. The Palestinians continue to be dehumanised and continue to be dispossessed of their land. We understand these things from our own experiences. We know what it is to be dehumanised.

We know what it is to be dispossessed of our land. We are in deep solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

Palestinian has endured oppression and repression for too far too long. The people of Palestine gave us true solidarity during the difficult times of apartheid. Their solidarity was not in rhetoric, they supplied resources for us to fight the brutal apartheid state. It is time that we do not only show our solidarity as rhetoric and start to be in solidarity in ways that are true and visible. We need to take to the streets all over the world and call for an immediate ceasefire to be managed by the UN and for Israeli and its backers in the West to stop the oppression of the Palestinian people. This must be followed by a radical turn towards justice. Humanity must advance and call for peace and justice in the world, not war and oppression. War cannot bring peace. It can only bring more suffering, and leave more families displaced and grieving. It can only leave children without parents and parents without children.

The US openly supports the Israeli government's attack on Gaza despite the fact that it is killing unarmed civilians, including children. These are war crimes. The Netanyahu administration has announced the closure of water, electricity and the delivery of food in Gaza. This is a brutal and a complete violation of human rights. The invasion and killings of the people of Palestine is inhuman and those who are supporting Israeli attack on Gaza are not human, just like Netanyahu.

The attack on Israel by Hamas was followed by the attack on Gaza, and now the West Bank too, by the Israeli state. But it is important to understand the role of the US and other Western powers in this. When the people of Palestine are dehumanised, dispossessed, jailed, tortured and killed the West continues to fund and support the Israeli state, which is now governed by an extreme right-wing coalition. The lives of Palestinians are not counted as human lives. This becomes very clear in much of the Western media.

We are not surprised by the position of the imperialist state of US. They supported the apartheid regime in South Africa. They have always supported the oppressor. They have supported coups against democratic governments, and have invaded and bombed many countries.

We will always be on the side of the oppressed in general. We will always seek to build alliances with popular democratic movements of the oppressed.

We must always be aware that not all organisations that claim to represent the oppressed are democratic and progressive.

As at the attack on Gaza escalates and the conflict spreads we are calling for the South African government to work with governments across Africa to insist on an immediate ceasefire under the authority of the UN. We are also calling on the government to expel the embassy of Israel from our country.

We are calling for global support to boycott and sanction Israel. We are calling for trade unions around the world to refuse to offload ships that are carrying Israeli products because they are funding the army that is killing the people of Palestine. We must identify all products produced in Israel and boycott all those products. When we buy Israeli products we are sponsoring the occupation, the blockade and the war. When we are trading with Israel as a country we are sponsoring the war that is killing civilians, including children.

We are calling on all progressive forces around the world to build alliances and solidarity with the progressive, democratic formations among the Palestinian people.

The combined power of the people of the world can stop this war by demanding an immediate ceasefire and it can demand full justice for the people for Palestine, knowing, of course, that justice is the only way to achieve a lasting peace. A ceasefire on its own will not bring peace. A ceasefire can stop the immediate killing and destruction and it can open the blockade so that people can get water, power, food and medication. But there can be no lasting peace without justice, and the people of the world need to push for justice. The restoration of land stolen from Palestine will be central to the restoration of Palestinian dignity.

This is a call on all those who love humanity to act and to act urgently and collectively. We need to do because we are humans and humanity lives in us, unlike the US, the Israeli state and the armed Israeli settlers who continue to drive Palestinians from their land.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

17 NOVEMBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We condemn the killing of Ahmed Abbasi in Gaza yesterday

The mass murder of civilians in Gaza by the apartheid state of Israel, supported by the imperialism of the United States of America, continues before the open eyes of the world.

Ahmed Abbasi was the head of Gift of the Givers in Gaza. He was killed yesterday while returning from the morning prayer with his brother. His brother was also killed in what Gift of the Givers have said was a targeted attack. Another Gift of the Givers worker, Mohammed Al Ahel, was killed on 6 November.

Gift of the Givers is a highly respected organisation in South Africa and in many other countries too. When impoverished people suffer from shack fires or floods in South Africa we know that Gift of the Givers will come with solidarity while the state is absent. They have given support to people in Haiti and Turkey after the earthquakes in these countries.

Abbasi was a humanitarian worker and father of three children who has been described as a warm and kind man who courageously served orphans and widows at the risk of his own life. More than 11 000 civilians have been killed by the Israeli state since the attack on Gaza began. The people of Palestine have been called animals by Israeli politicians and soldiers, an open indication that they are not recognised as human beings.

Black people were not seen as human beings in this country under apartheid, and we as impoverished black people continue to have our humanity denied almost thirty years after apartheid. This is a very painful thing, and because we understand the pain of living under apartheid and as poor people in this country we understand something of what the Palestinians are going through. If you know the pain of living under oppression, you will be in solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

We fully support the call to have the Israeli embassy removed from South Africa with immediate effect. We also support the calls by the South African government to call upon the International Criminal Court to investigate Benjamin Netanyahu for war crimes. We are supporting the call for the boycott of Israeli products. We are in solidarity with all our Jewish comrades in South Africa and around the world who are standing up against the oppression of Palestine and this genocidal attack on Gaza.

We note that the ongoing massacre of civilians in Gaza by the Israeli state is also, mostly, a massacre of the poor.

When humanity is under attack all of us who believe in humanity are called to rise up and fight against the evil that oppresses us.

The deliberate killing of Ahmed Abbasi shows that the state of Israel is not targeting the terrorists as it claims. This is an absolute seizure of a part of Palestine. It is the absolute destruction of Gaza. It is mass murder. Israel does not respect and recognise Palestinians as people let alone as people with a right to an independent state or to have full rights in a single state.

We send our deepest condolences to the family of Ahmed Abbasi and his brother, as well as Mohammed Al Ahel, to Gift of the Givers and to the people of Palestine. We are in solidarity with you and we will do what we can to support you.

Every Palestinian comrade will always be welcomed in our occupations as an honoured guest.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

26 DECEMBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Christmas means solidarity with the oppressed

As the youth league, we were drafting warm Christmas wishes to our members in the Motala Heights settlement, but suddenly we were reminded that our lives can never be safe even during Christmas.

We are saddened to announce that a fire broke out in the Motala Heights settlement on Christmas this morning. A shack burnt to the ground. Luckily the children left the shack yesterday for a Christmas visit to family. The owner of the shack (Syanda Msomi) who was away during the fire incident clearly confirmed that through fear of load shedding and what it can do to electricity (common possible cause of shack fires) he switched off all electrical appliances but that still couldn't prevent the burning of his home. We are deeply hurt to know that on Christmas day someone's home is no more and that their belongings, work gear, and the children's school uniforms, as well as their stationary for next year is no more.

The lives of the poor are never stable. Something can always go wrong at any time: shack fires, floods, evictions, retrenchments. When we organise to affirm our human dignity we face intense repression.

The condition of the poor is global. Our struggle spans the world, and we have comrades in many countries. On Christmas day our thoughts were with the people of Palestine who were under ruthless attack from the Israeli military. In Bethlehem Christmas celebrations were cancelled.

We were reminded that Jesus was a Palestinian who was born poor and as a child had to flee to Egypt to escape an oppressive empire. The true message of Christmas is solidarity with the oppressed, with the poor, with refugees, with those who are under attack by cruel empires and states.

Our hearts are with the victims of the fire, and we hope God can strengthen them. We've been reminded that through every celebration we have as families, we still have a major duty to God and a duty to our country to fight for the recognition of the full and equal human dignity of the impoverished, landless, shack dwellers of South Africa and the poor people of the world. Indeed, our struggle continues in Motala Heights, across Durban, across South Africa and across the world.

Lindo Motha
Thandeka Thusini

31 DECEMBER 2023

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali welcomes government's filing of a genocide charge against Israel

The first of January marks an important date in the calendar of the long struggle to humanise the world. On 1 January 1804 enslaved Africans won their freedom in Haiti and so New Year's Day is a day of celebration. This year, though, our hearts will be heavy as the new year comes.

Around the world people of conscience are watching in horror as the attack on the long and brutally oppressed people of Palestine by the Israeli state rages on. In Gaza more than 23 000 people have been killed, more than 55 000 wounded, 85% of the population have been displaced and more than 80% of homes destroyed. More than 8 000 children have been killed. Hospitals and journalists have been deliberately targeted in the attacks. People are now starving, sleeping in the open, unable to get clean water and at great risk of disease. There is a real risk of the war spreading into neighbouring countries. It is clear that the Israeli state, with the backing of the United States, has launched a genocidal attack on the people of Gaza.

It is also important to understand that the Israeli state has a long record of working with repressive regimes around the world and continues to receive strong support from far right organisations and governments. The technologies that it has developed to oppress Palestinians are exported to reactionary governments around the world to oppress struggles for justice. Around the world far right movements and states want to use the model and technologies of the Israeli state to crush progressive movements and struggles.

The Israeli state and its backers in the United States and elsewhere do not recognise Palestinians as human beings. All people of conscience must oppose this and we must build as much national and global unity as possible in defence of the people of Palestine, and in opposition to the danger that the Israeli and US states pose to the people of the world.

Today, for the first time since our movement was formed in 2005, we are issuing a statement in full and strong support of an action taken by the South African government. Abahlali baseMjondolo welcomes the decision by the South African government to launch a case of genocide against Israel at the court of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice.

The South Africa government has joined progressive governments in Bolivia, Colombia and elsewhere in taking a clear stand against the extreme violence and cruelty of the Israeli state. We note and support this.

We also note the gross hypocrisy of the so-called 'international community' (which is really just the Western states and their allies) in this matter. We have seen a complete double standard when it comes to the attack on the Palestinians. Despite the war crimes being committed in Gaza the 'international community' has not done anything to condemn and oppose the US and Israel for carrying out this bloody massacre against innocent civilians.

Whole families have been murdered in Gaza. Families have been separated. Children have been made orphans, wives have been made widows and husbands have been made widowers. The cruelty is beyond words. The attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools are all war crimes.

This is not a war against Hamas. It is a genocidal attack on the people of Palestine by the criminal and deeply racist regime in Israel supported by Joe Biden and the government of the United States. It is clear that the Israeli state wants to destroy the Palestinians as a people. It wants to destroy all possibilities for justice and the independence of the Palestinian people.

We have faced serious oppression as poor people in South Africa, and very serious and at times murderous oppression as organised poor people in South Africa. We know oppression and we are always on the side of all oppressed people everywhere. We are and will continue to be in solidarity with the people of Palestine as they face this attack. Many of us lived under apartheid and we all live in the enduring systems of oppression built by apartheid and colonialism. We feel a deep, deep solidarity with the people of Palestine who are oppressed by Israeli apartheid and express our full support for the struggle for an end to the mass killing in Gaza and for freedom and justice for the people of Palestine.

We also express our support for all the progressive Americans and Israelis who are opposing their murderous and racist governments.

We call for maximum unity in South Africa and around the world in the struggle to stop this attack on Gaza and Palestinians elsewhere, such as the West Bank, and to move towards an immediate end to the oppression of the Palestinian people. We call for mass action and direct action against the Israeli state and its backers. Let us all commit ourselves to this on New Year's Day.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

15 JANUARY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Our Lawyers Made Us So Proud at the ICJ

Abahlali baseMjondolo commend the outstanding work by the South African legal team at the International Court of Justice in Hague. Many of us watched with great pride as our brilliant legal team stood in front of the world to protect humanity and end the devastating attacks against the people of Gaza that have led to the loss of more than 23 000 lives, including more than 8 000 children.

We do not see the importance of this case as being restricted to proving to the ICJ that the Israeli state is committing genocide. It is also a statement of conscience to the people of the world, and encouragement to the huge numbers of people around the world who have taken to the streets in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

We welcome the support of progressive governments in Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia for the action taken by the South African government. We also support the very strong statement issued by the government of Namibia condemning the decision by the German government to support the Israeli state at the ICJ.

The western media continues to condone the attacks on civilians in Gaza with its obvious and crude biases towards the oppressors and against the oppressed. They continue to refer to the attacks as a war between Israel and Hamas. This is not a war, it is a cowardly and genocidal attack on civilians by a country with one of the most powerful armies in the world, an army backed by the United States, the most powerful and dangerous state in the world.

Our movement has always been on the side of the oppressed. Until the South African government opened the case against Israel at the ICJ we had never taken a position or issued a statement commending our government in almost twenty years of struggle. We have faced severe repression under the South African government, ranging from illegal and violent evictions to the jailing and assassination of our leaders. However, politics must be guided by principles and when the South African government took the decision to stand up for justice for Palestine we offered our full support for that decision. We will continue to support any

further actions motivated by genuine solidarity with the people of Gaza, and with any other oppressed people anywhere in the world.

We have a long and great tradition of radical lawyering in South Africa. Our movement has worked with a number of brilliant and committed radical lawyers since 2005. We were so proud to see this tradition show itself to the world in the struggle to insist that the humanity of every person must be recognised and defended.

The great step that the South African government has taken on the global stage to end genocide must also be undertaken internally to end oppression. They must treat their own people with the same dignity. Brutal evictions, cuts to social spending, corruption and political repression cannot continue to be the order of the day. Singalingisi ihlamvu lona elishanela kude kube kungcolile eduze.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

4 FEBRUARY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Poor Need to Vote the ANC Out in the Coming Election

Frantz Fanon said “Each generation must discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it, in relative opacity.” The challenge of our generation is to move past the ANC, to build a politics of the future, a politics by and for the oppressed, a politics committed to humanising our country and the world.

In April it will be thirty years since the end of apartheid. In that time we have watched and suffered as the promise of the new society has been betrayed by the ANC. We have witnessed corrupt leaders continuing to enrich themselves and their families at the expense of the poor majority. We have seen inequalities grow as more and more people are unemployed or precariously employed, including by labour brokers. We have watched as the ANC continues to impose devastating economic policies, including brutal austerity, on the country as more and more people are pushed into poverty and the poor get poorer. We have seen that, year after year, there has been no real rural or urban land reform. Many more people live in shacks now than at the end of apartheid. As food and transport get more and more expensive and the government cuts spending on essential public goods such as education, healthcare and social grants the crisis lived everyday by the poor gets worse and worse.

Millions of people are without work and millions are going without food. The unionised working class is also struggling, and even many people in the middle classes are struggling and find that their salaries are finished after a week or two.

The ANC has not only failed to resolve the crisis of mass impoverishment. It has also failed to deal with the massive corruption in its ranks. In fact it even wants some of its most corrupt leaders to campaign for the party in the coming election. The ANC has also failed to deal with the crisis of violence in our society. It has allowed infrastructure like roads and water and the electricity system to collapse as well as institutions like hospitals. It rules the poor with violence.

It has killed our members and comrades during evictions and protests and during 'show your receipt' raids. It has regularly assassinated our leaders since 2013 when Nkululeko Gwala was assassinated.

Next year our movement will celebrate twenty years of struggle – struggle on the streets, in communities, in land occupations and in the courts. However, we must now also use the coming election as an opportunity to remove the ANC for power.

Our movement is a socialist movement linked to socialist movements around the world and committed to building a global movement of movements. Our movement is committed to building the democratic power of the oppressed from below with the aim of ensuring that land, wealth and power are fairly shared.

There will be no left wing party on the ballot paper when the election comes this year, and no party committed to supporting the oppressed to build its own power. We do not have our own electoral instrument.

However, we cannot sit this election out. It is essential that the ANC is removed from power and it is essential that all politicians in all parties learn the lesson that they will not stay in power when they disrespect the people.

The time to vote along the line of history is long gone. We are thankful to all those who have fought for this country's democracy. People fought for our freedom in many different organisations and not just the ANC or Umkhonto weSizwe as we are made to believe. The ANC does not own the history of resistance in our country. However, we respect its members who fought for freedom along with all others who fought for freedom.

This time we need to make a tactical vote for the future, and that requires removing the ANC from power. Of course at the same time we need to build the democratic power of the poor from below. And of course in the future there needs to be a democratic left wing party on the ballot.

This time we are voting, tactically, to save our country from the thieves and the looters and to put an end to political repression. It is our time and we dare not to miss this opportunity.

These discussions have begun with the leaders of the movement at all levels. There will be ongoing discussion by all structures and members of the movement on this very important issue. There will be discussions in every branch.

We will then discuss with members at our General Assemblies in all five provinces where we organise. Our movement belongs to our members and is given direction by its members. The responsibility of its leaders is to facilitate discussions, not to give direction from above. The power is with the members and they will take the decision on the way forward through our careful internal democratic processes. Once all this is done we will be taking a position on the elections from an informed and democratic process.

One thing is for sure though. We will be voting against the ANC and urge all South Africans to do the same.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

12 FEBRUARY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

McDonalds are Dumping their Rubbish in our Community

The Lindokuhle Mnguni Occupation in Rosherville, Johannesburg, organised strikes on Monday and Wednesday last week. On Monday South Rand Road was blockaded the whole day, from 3:00 am till 4:00 pm. On Wednesday it was blockaded from 5:00 am till 12:30 am.

The police were not violent to the protestors but some taxi drivers did assault comrades on the blockade.

This press statement is to explain the demands that led us to strike and will lead us to continue striking until they are met.

The Lindokuhle Mnguni Occupation is now one year old. The land was occupied in early February last year. Most of the comrades who first occupied the land were renting in Extension Five of the Good Hope shack settlement in Germiston, which is nearby. They could no longer afford to rent and did not believe that land should be bought and sold or rented. Also the Good Hope settlement is between a busy road, a mine dump and a scrapyard and the dust from the mine dump and the scrapyard is toxic. The dust is making people sick. Shacks have been built there without any community planning and it is massively and dangerously overcrowded with all the shacks on top of each other. Living there is very stressful.

Other comrades have come from places like Soweto, Rosherville, Tembisa, Vosloorus, Katlehong, the Johannesburg CBD and the Germiston CBD. There are comrades from the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and other provinces as well as Swaziland, Mozambique and Malawi.

We decided to find land where we could live well and safely and build a community. Dignity, community and homes all require land so occupying land is always the first step towards freedom. We prayed together asking God to show us the land that we needed to go to, the land where we could fight for our freedom and then we occupied together. Now we are working from this land with comrades across the country, Africa and the world to build a free, democratic

and socialist society. Comrades from movements in countries like Swaziland and Argentina have visited the occupation to share ideas and experiences.

We chose the land that we have occupied because it is not far from where we used to stay, because it is close to where we work and because it is a beautiful and peaceful place that is full of trees. Although there is a mine dump on one side it is covered with trees and other plants so there is not much dust. The land is close to industrial areas and people living here are mostly working piece jobs or selling vegetables, fruit and amagwinya nearby. However, some of the children are going to school in Ekurhuleni and so we need scholar transport.

We named the occupation after Lindokuhle Mnguni, the leader of the eKhenana Commune in Durban who was assassinated on 20 August 2022. Lindo had a vision of freedom for the oppressed, led the building of the eKhenana Commune and died fighting for poor people, for the forgotten people of this country, for people who are not even recognised as human beings. His spirit is always with us.

The Eskom Rotek Industries head office is about 200 meters from the occupation but we do not have any electricity. We use wood fires to cook. We do have one people's connection for water but the water comes very slow and residents of Elandspark keep sending Rand Water to disconnect us.

There are no political parties here. Our occupation is democratic and our elected council meets on Saturdays and on Sunday all residents are invited to a big meeting, an assembly.

There is no private ownership of land here and renting is not allowed. She-beens and drug selling are also not allowed. Women led the decision to not allow shebeens as they are associated with rape, violence against women and robberies.

There are 150 homes in the occupation. There are a number of small gardens growing crops like spinach and mielies. We are doing careful grassroots urban planning and have included open spaces and streets in our planning. We have measured out spaces for building, including future projects such as a community garden and poultry project, creche, workshop, community hall and political school. This land will not get overcrowded like Good Hope. It will be carefully planned and well managed like the eKhenana Commune.

Our occupation is a democratic occupation that is moving towards becoming a commune.

We are facing a number of serious problems though.

The first serious problem is evictions. The City of Johannesburg has come to evict three times. The first time they came to evict us they didn't talk to us. They came with metro police and red ants (private security). The metro police turned down their name tags. The red ants destroyed the homes on one side of the occupation. After the homes were demolished they destroyed the building materials. They destroyed many things in the homes and stole money, blankets and a phone. They stole our collective community money as well as money from individual comrades. We rebuilt.

The second time they came to evict us they demolished every shack. Again we rebuilt.

The third time they came to evict they engaged us. This time they destroyed 13 incomplete shacks.

Another very serious problem is that rich people from Elandspark, building contractors and businesses, especially fast food restaurants such as McDonalds and KFC, are dumping their rubbish here at a huge scale. The building contractors dump rubble here but also broken glass which is dangerous to our children. McDonalds dump here every Monday and Friday. Dumpers have threatened to shoot us when we tell them not to dump here.

They often dump building rubble on the road into the occupation and we have to continually work to keep the road open. We hired a grader to clear the building rubble but the guy took our money and ran away.

It is very painful that all these people and businesses continue to dump rubbish in our community. There are dumps where rubbish should be taken, and one is not far away, but they just continue to dump their rubbish in our community. We do not count as human beings to them. We do not count as human beings to the municipality which leaves the rubbish here and does not stop the dumping. We are staying here with small children and everyone can see that and yet they continue to dump. It is clear that we are seen as rubbish, that our community is seen as rubbish and that our struggle to free ourselves by building a commune on this land is seen as rubbish.

Another issue is that the zama zamas (informal miners) came to the occupation and offered money to be able to take the land to rent and sell it. They also dug holes, blasted rocks and threatened us. In Durban our comrades have been assassinated because local gangsterised ANC structures try to take over occupied land to rent and sell it. It is possible that there could be problems with the zama zamas in the future.

There was also a problem with establishing whether or not the Ekurhuleni or Johannesburg municipalities have a responsibility to provide services to the land we are living on. For almost a year we got contradictory information. In December the ward councillor Faeza Chame, who is a DA councillor, told us that the land we have occupied belongs to Ekurhuleni. We went to city planning in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni and confirmed that the land belongs to the City of Johannesburg. On Monday, after the first day of the strike, the councillor agreed that we belong in Johannesburg so this issue has been resolved.

We made the following demands during the two strikes:

The land must be left under the democratic and collective management of the residents. There must be no more evictions.

The municipality must provide electricity, water, sanitation and waste collection.

We need scholar transport for our children to travel to and from schools. The massive amount of rubbish that has been dumped on the land must be removed and the dumping must be stopped.

We need to be given an address so that we can apply for grants, jobs and schools and register to vote.

There must be an accessible voting station

On the second day of the strike Nokuthula Xaba from the Premier's Office came. She is deployed in Ekurhuleni and said that she would refer us to the right person in the Johannesburg Municipality. The ward councillor Faeza Chame refused to come.

We are going to continue the strikes until our demands are met. We are not going to stop the struggle.

When we came to this land it was bush. We opened the land. We brought ubuntu. We are no longer renting and we live peacefully here. We can live socialism here like in the eKhenana Commune.

Sandikazi Masiza (Secretary)

Luyanda Fitshane (Chairperson)

Daluxolo Sibiya (Deputy Chairperson)

27 FEBRUARY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali will be in the Constitutional Court today

The right to the cities, to live in the cities and to shape the cities from below, continues to be denied to many in our country thirty years after apartheid. Along with oppression by a predatory political class the poor continue to face brutal evictions in the form of gentrification by capital whose interests are in maximising private profit at the expense of the poor.

Cities are built by the poor and working class but they often cannot afford to live in the cities because the rent is too expensive for ordinary families. Capital is brutal and has no mercy for the poor. It is inhuman.

Bromwell Street residents in Cape Town have been living in the area for generations. They were raised there and continue to live in the area. They have rejected all attempts to force them out of the city and into the human dumping grounds outside the city but are now facing forced removal from the city because the land on which they live is valuable to capital and profit is being put before people and the City of Cape Town does not believe that poor black people should be living in central Cape Town.

In 2014 families living in Bromwell Street in the Cape Town city centre were served with an eviction order after their homes were brought by a property development company. In 2016 the Cape High Court ordered their eviction. The court wanted them to be moved far outside the city, 25 km away.

The residents went to court to oppose the attempt to remove them from the city and in September 2021 the Western Cape High Court found that the City of Cape Town's Housing Programme was arbitrary and unlawful, and ordered the City to provide the applicants with temporary emergency accommodation in Woodstock, Salt River or in the inner city precinct.

The anti-poor and anti-black City of Cape Town appealed the Cape Town High court judgement because they do not want the poor to live in central Cape Town. In February last year the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled that the

Bromwell Street families should be evicted and dumped in shack settlements far outside the city. The Supreme Court decision also overturned the Western Cape High Court's decision that the City of Cape Town's Housing Programme was arbitrary and unlawful.

Today the residents will ask the Constitutional Court to overturn the decision by the Supreme Court of Appeal. The central issue before the Court is the location of alternative accommodation provided after an eviction. Abahlali baseMjondolo has been admitted as a friend of the court and, represented by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute, will ask the Constitutional Court to rule that the Bromwell Street residents must be housed in the Cape Town city centre where they have always lived.

The oppressed will continue to suffer for as long as land and housing are commodified. For as long as the social value of land and housing comes after their commercial value, and for as long as profit is placed before people, the poor and the working class will continue to be forced out of the cities by capital. Thirty years after apartheid we still see the same old logic of apartheid oppressing the residents of Bromwell Street who are facing forced removal to the human dumping grounds far from the city centre.

Mqapheli Bonono
Bathabile Makhoba

1 MARCH 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

We stand in solidarity with the Kurdish freedom movement

Abahlali have been following the struggle for the liberation of the Kurdish people for many years now. Nearly 15 years ago our president was invited to Turkey by our comrades in that country and spoke at the University of Ankara and other platforms. At that time, he was asked to share South Africa's experience on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Zodwa Nsibande also visited comrades in Turkey.

The Abahlali Youth League has recently had an opportunity to have an exchange with the Ronahi Youth Center for Public Relations. This exchange follows a meeting of radical youth from around the world. In this meeting it was agreed that exchanges to advance mutual learning and international solidarity are key for building the power of young people of our movements.

The Abahlali Youth League is pleased to have been visited by our young comrade from the Ronahi Youth Center for Public Relations who has spent the last two weeks learning about our movement's struggle for land, decent housing and dignity. He has had an opportunity to learn how Abahlali organises and he has participated in various political programmes in Abahlali communities. We have had an opportunity to learn from the comrade about the liberation struggle of the Kurdish people. His presentation has left many of us with tears, terror and anger. We have come to realise how colonialism and imperialism operate and stand against aspirations for freedom throughout the world. We have also learnt how we continue to live in colonial time even after thinking that colonialism is the thing of the past.

The comrade has also enlightened us on how comrade Abdullah Öcalan was abducted and incarcerated 25 years ago. Comrade Öcalan is a leader of the Kurdish freedom movement and the founder of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Comrade Öcalan has been held in solitary confinement on an island for more than 25 years as a result of his struggle for self-determination and the rights of the oppressed people of Kurdistan. In the last three years there has been

no communication with the outside world, and no sign of life coming from the prison. Against all international conventions, even his lawyers are not being granted access to the island to see a political prisoner.

We also stand firmly against the assassination of the women and youth movement leaders Bişeng Brûsk and Sara Hogîr Riha, who have been martyred as a result of Turkish airstrikes and have been confirmed dead on the 26th of February 2024. We see these attacks, as well as the isolation of president Abdullah Öcalan, as an attempt by an oppressive system to silence the voices of freedom. All over the world struggles for freedom are repressed by capitalism, imperialism and corrupt and authoritarian elites many of them hiding behind the mask of nationalism. Anyone who stands up for freedom anywhere in the world is our comrade.

This horror of the repression faced by the Kurdish struggle reminds us of how the apartheid system incarcerated Nelson Mandela for 27 years. It reminds us of how leaders of our movement have been assassinated. We simply cannot understand how on earth the world is so silent when humanity is vandalised by armed forces for standing up for democracy and the right to self-determination.

Today we express our heartfelt solidarity with all the Kurdish people in their struggle against oppression. Just as we are in solidarity with the struggle for freedom in Haiti, the Palestine, DR Congo and elsewhere we are also in solidarity with the Kurdish people in their struggle for peace and freedom.

We stand and call for the immediate and unconditional release of comrade Abdullah Öcalan.

We demand justice for Bişeng Brûsk and Sara Hogîr Riha as well all other murdered and assassinated comrades of the Kurdish movement. The perpetrators must be brought to justice!

We call on all progressive forces and the South African government to provide the same solidarity to the Kurdish struggle as they have for the Palestinian cause.

The voices of all the martyrs in the struggle to humanise the world will always bring their light to the uprising of conscious young people throughout the world. Their effort in the struggle for the liberation of the Kurdish people shall live forever.

Lindo Motha
Nkululeko Ketelo
Nokuthula Chamane

20 MARCH 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Still No Human Rights for the Poor

The poor and marginalised have not seen any gains in almost 30 years of democracy. The poor remain poor and unemployment, poverty and inequality are worse today than at the end of apartheid. Many more people live in shacks than in 1994.

Those who live in shack settlements continue to be denied access to basic services such as water and sanitation. Violent evictions continue. Those in the rural areas continue to walk long distances to the nearest health facilities. Those who live in farms continue to be abused by farmers who see them as less than human.

For almost thirty years we have been treated as human waste and not as human beings. For as long as our dignity and our existence as humans is not recognised we will not be celebrating Human Rights day. For as long as rights on paper do not mean rights in reality we will not celebrate. Instead we are mourning the betrayal of democracy by the ANC, a democracy that so many ordinary people fought so hard for.

The ANC is a corrupt government with immoral leaders who have no integrity. They came to power claiming to represent the people but have made themselves the enemy of the people. They have vandalised our humanity.

The ruling party will be using this holiday that is held on the anniversary of the massacres in Sharpeville and Langa in 1960 for its own electioneering. It will do so despite the fact that it perpetrated its own massacre in Marikana in 2012, and despite the fact that it has never acted to stop the assassinations of grassroots activists. It will do so despite the fact that the people of Sharpeville and Langa continue to live under inhuman conditions, like so many other poor people across the country.

The rights to equality, dignity and justice – as well as the more concrete rights to land and housing – have not been realised because the ANC is led by people who do not care about society. They continue to steal from the poor and deprive us of even basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and refuse

collection. They continue to deny us access to land, to a fair share of the wealth of the country and to a right to participate in all relevant discussions and decision making. Thirty years of rule by the ANC has been thirty years of shame.

When we organise to build our power from below to struggle for justice we are met with repression, including assault, arrest, imprisonment and assassination. Even our most basic rights to political freedom are denied under the ANC. For us the rights and freedoms on paper do not exist in reality. Repression ensures that we remain oppressed.

For this reason it is essential to use our collective vote to remove the ANC from power and to give a clear lesson to all politicians in all parties that if they disrespect the people and repress their struggles they will also be removed. We know that there is no socialist or even progressive party on the ballot and that we cannot vote for freedom and justice in this election. All the political parties are funded by factions of the elite and not one of them is on the side of the people. Not one of them is a mass democratic formation. We know very well that whatever coalition of parties rules us after the election we will have to keep struggling against them from the day that they form a new government.

However we can vote against repression, against the political party that has murdered our comrades and the government that has allowed it to happen and often acted in support of repression. We will be using our collective vote as the poor to remove the ANC.

Outside of the electoral process we will be organising to keep building our collective democratic power from below and using it to advance towards a more just society.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

21 MARCH 2024

Document · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Record of information provided to a journalist taking discredited fraud and slander seriously

In November 2023 the movement held three long meetings to discuss a podcast by a journalist who took seriously the completely discredited fraud that emanated from within and around the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), an academic NGO previously headed by Patrick Bond, after our movement was formed almost twenty years ago. The bulk of the fabricated slander against our movement was produced by Heinrich Bohmke.

Our process for preparing a letter to the journalist was to establish a committee to deal with the matter. That committee listened to the podcast together, taking notes and pausing the audio to discuss issues as they arose. We then produced a number of drafts of the letter, reading each draft out aloud line by line, discussing anything that anyone wished to raise and making any changes that were collectively agreed on.

This document includes excerpts from that letter in which direct references to the journalist and his very many errors of fact have been removed but important information about that history of fraud from within and around CCS is retained as it may be useful to other journalists in the future. [For a version with proper formatting, see [here](#)].

It would be useful to read these excerpts together with the statements previously issued on these matters in February and July 2015. Please note that the second statement should be read together with the drafts of our unpublished replies to a fraudulent article published (with the support of Patrick Bond) in *Politikon*, an academic journal, which are attached below the statement in pdf files.

An Old Snake in a New Skin – From Raymond Masondo to Heinrich Bohmke and Bandile Mdlalose

Abahlali baseMjondolo Responses to the Fraudulent Article Published in *Politikon*

The basic facts of the context of Heinrich Bohmke's slander against our movements are as follows:

Before the formation of our movement the left in Durban, and its academic, donor and international connections, was controlled by Patrick Bond, Ashwin Desai and Bohmke, who were all at or linked to Bond's Centre for Civil Society (CCS) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

After our movement was formed Bohmke came to the petrol station where S'bu Zikode was working and offered him R7 000 a month to 'bring the movement to us'. Of course S'bu declined this offer to sell the movement.

When it became clear that the movement would take direction from its members and not from CCS they launched an all-out attack on us, an attack that included public and private slander, presenting us criminal, corrupt, unable to think and speak for ourselves and 'under the control of white intellectuals'. This attack was supported by a number of academics and NGO people elsewhere in the country, not one of whom had direct knowledge of our movement or approached us to get our view on these matters. One well known NGO person in Johannesburg who is now an academic called us criminals in writing Bohmke led this attack but various other people at or linked to CCS participated in this attack. We were seriously defamed in writing by at least four people employed by Patrick Bond. At one point Bond even hired a journalist to attack us. Most of this defamation was self-published but it did include an article published in a university publication in the United States. That article was withdrawn almost immediately after publication as the editors agreed that it was fraudulent. There was also an academic article published in which the author falsely claimed to have been an 'insider' to our movement. Not one of these four people had participated in our movement, witnessed our day to day organising, had any credible claim to knowledge about our movement or had done credible research on it. Bohmke's attacks – full of wild fabrication and a disturbing level of hatred – were widely circulated to academics all over the world by Bond.

Some academics and other people initially believed Bohmke's attacks on our movement because they accorded with their prejudices about poor black people. However, without exception every one of the many academics from around the world who had done credible and serious research on our movement, the journalists and film makers who had worked on our movement, the people from churches and the church organisations that we worked with and the lawyers that we worked with rejected his writings as fraud. The main lawyer that we worked

with at the time, a highly respected person, described Bohmke as a 'crank' in writing.

Bohmke fully supported the ANC line on the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009 and his piece supporting this line was taken as credible by some academics and NGO people not one of whom had any personal knowledge of the events in question. However the ANC line, and Bohmke's support for it, was entirely discredited when the case against our members who had been charged with murder was thrown out of court in 2011 after the prosecution completed its case. The magistrate found that there was no case for us to answer and described the ANC witnesses as 'dishonest' and 'belligerent' and noted that they contradicted each other and that the police had instructed witnesses to point out certain people in an identification parade. Our highly respected advocate described the case as a 'frame up' and all the legal work done in preparation for the case showed the allegations by the ANC and Bohmke to be bogus. Also Kerry Chance, a Harvard academic, undertook a very detailed study of the attacks that included more than a hundred interviews. She wrote this up in various places beginning in 2010 and including a book published by the University of Chicago Press in 2018. Her work completely discredited Bohmke leaving him and CCS with a major crisis of credibility.

At the same time despite active and sometimes successful attempts (often in writing) to suppress independent academic work on our movement more and more serious academic work on the movement, sometimes following years of research, was coming out. Also, more and more activists from other organisations had spent time with our movement, as had church leaders who publicly supported us and in 2012 a multiple award winning film on our movement was released. All this escalated the crisis of credibility for Bohmke and CCS.

At this point CCS had lost its ability to claim to represent the left in Durban and to mediate national and international networks. Our movement and other popular organisations were representing themselves and building their own national and international networks and alliances. This was exactly the reason why our movement was hated and continually slandered.

It is important to note that despite all the slander (and in some cases harassment) we never issued a press statement publicly attacking CCS and tried to ignore the slander and focus on our work and let that speak for itself. For almost ten years this was a one way attack.

In 2014 Bandile Mdlalose, our then Secretary General, was expelled from our movement after a delegation of residents of a block of flats came to our office, many in tears, saying that they had been facing an eviction and had approached Bandile for help after which she had taken a lot of money from them saying that she needed it to arrange lawyers for them via the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI). When the court date came Bandile was nowhere to be found and there were no lawyers. She never told us that she had been approached by the residents of these flats and she never contacted SERI about the coming eviction. SERI offers pro-bono legal services so she had collected this money on a fraudulent basis. She also collected membership fees for our movement from the residents but she inflated the membership fee and did not bring the money to the movement's treasurer or in any way alert him that she had collected this money. After a delegation of residents approached us we went to the block of flats with a lawyer from SERI and met the residents where they told us their story. SERI tried to help them but it was too late and, as well as being defrauded by Bandile, they were evicted.

Following all this we set up a disciplinary hearing to investigate the allegations and offer Bandile a right to respond to them. She failed to attend the hearing and we therefore had no option but to continue it without her. At that hearing it was very clear that the residents of the block of flats had been defrauded by Bandile and so we had no option but to expel her. No movement can tolerate corruption within its own ranks. If we did so we would be no better than the ANC.

Following her expulsion Bandile joined Black First Land First (BLF), the pro-Zuma and pro-Gupta organisation notorious for its dishonesty and for taking direction from the equally notorious British public relations firm Bell Pottinger. At the same time she also took a job at CCS. They clearly saw her expulsion as opportunity to regain their credibility and power by destroying the reputation of the movement. Of course they had never cared about Bandile while she was in the movement and they don't care about her now.

After joining CCS Bandile announced that she was forming a new movement. A number of people reported to us that she had approached them to join her new movement and that she had told them that Bond was her funder and that Desai was writing her public statements. Bond contacted many people around the world to support this new movement. However it failed to attract

enough members to begin to build a viable organisation and so there never was a new movement.

Emails viciously slandering our movement then began to be sent to our entire mailing list of over 4 000 people as well as a long list of academics in the United States, some of whom we knew were connected to Bond. These emails, sent from Bandile's email address, were full of the words and phrases used by Bohmke, as well as his obsessions and hatreds, and repeated all the false allegations that he had been making about our movement over the years. In fact the first email stated that Bohmke had been unfairly marginalised from the struggle making Bohmke's desire for power and control, rather than the oppression faced by impoverished black people, the important issue! Many extreme and entirely bogus allegations were made. For instance in one of the emails it was even implied that our movement was responsible for the murder of a man named Dutch Faku. Faku was a security guard who was killed at work by criminals. One was arrested after the murder and the other was shot dead by the police. These criminals had no connection of any sort to our movement. These facts were reported in the media. This is exactly what the ANC does. They find a body of a person killed in a criminal matter and then use that to falsely accuse us of murder, arrest our members, deny them bail and then keep them in prison for as long as they can before the charges are dropped. Both CCS and the ANC wanted us to be seen as criminals.

It was clear that as well as now being employed by CCS and being a member of BLF Bandile had chosen to align herself with Bohmke's slander and the broader project of CCS.

We did not issue any public statement in response to this slander and continued with our work.

At the end of 2014 an article was published in *Politikon*, an academic journal, in Bandile's name. It made all kinds of untrue and defamatory claims for which no evidence was provided. It used exactly the same language as Bohmke and repeated his obsessions and hatreds and his bogus allegations against our movement – the main one being that poor black people cannot think and speak for themselves and that there must always be a white person remoting them.

Patrick Bond called a press conference at CCS to present the article to the media. A number of academics, black and white, expressed concern that an article slandering and defaming a movement and some individuals while providing no evidence for its claims had been published in an academic journal. They then

came under public attack and their expression of concern for academic ethics was grossly misrepresented. This worsened the existing climate of fear among many academics some of whom told us how scared they were to risk being attacked by Bond, Bohmke, etc.

Politikon explicitly denied one person defamed in the article the right to reply saying that their legal advice was that the article was defamatory and that if they gave that person a right to reply they would open themselves up to being sued for defamation.

Politikon gave us a right to reply in principle but made it impossible for us to reply in practice by, for instance, insisting that our reply be done too quickly for our collective processes, that it take the form of a standard academic article whereas none of the committee tasked to respond had a university degree and not allowing us to state plain facts unless we could give an academic citation to support the statement of those facts. We were not even allowed to say that our members had been assassinated or that Bandile had been expelled from our movement. The double standards were gross as the article that slandered us was not academic and provided no evidence at all for its bogus claims. We were, therefore, denied the right to respond in practice. This is an injustice that the journal has not fixed. We will be writing to the new editor asking that we finally be given a full and fair right to reply.

Once it was clear that we would not be given a right to reply in practice we, for the first and only time, issued a public statement noting the history with Bond, Bohmke and CCS and noting that Bandile was now employed at CCS. We also shared our various drafts of the reply to the article in Politikon, all of which had been suppressed by the journal, on our website. In that statement we said that:

Many people have noted how racist this campaign against our movement has been. It shows us to the world as criminals, people who are like children and can't think for ourselves and as people who are just hunting for money. Yet our members have been committed enough to our struggle to have been arrested, assaulted, tortured and murdered. Many of our members have lost their jobs due to their political commitments.

Following the issuing of this statement in February 2015 the slander from within and around CCS, which went back to 2006, and had been relentless since then, suddenly stopped. It has now returned via your podcast series.

In your podcast you note your long conversation with Bohmke, repeat some of his claims and begin to echo his general views and obsessions, and even to use some of the words and phrases he uses. You make no effort to place his attacks on our movement in the context of his early attempt to buy control of our movement, or the actions of CCS. You make no attempt to enquire into his motivations for his attacks on our movement, or to speak to the many credible people around the world with real knowledge of our movement who can confirm that his attacks are not credible. You ignore the contempt for poor black people that is so obviously present in his writings.

You mention the piece that Bohmke wrote after the attacks on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009 in which he supported the position of the ANC. You treat the piece as if it is credible and repeat some of his allegations. You do not acknowledge that the position he took in this piece has been completely discredited by legal processes and academic work. You mention Kerry Chance but you do not mention her academic work which wholly discredits Bohmke's article and position in relation to the attacks. To take Bohmke's slander seriously while ignoring Chance's rigorous and respected academic work is not credible journalism on your part.

Another way in which you follow Bohmke is when you assume that there is something strange or dubious about a poor people's movement having connections to professionals and experts of various kinds, as well as international connections. It seems that, like Bohmke, you assume that to be 'authentic' poor black people must remain in the dark confined corners where oppression has placed us. Like Bohmke you assume that it is illegitimate and suspicious for us to move out of these dark confined corners. For instance you say that our movement has a "strange international influence". This is a very disturbing statement.

Why is the fact that we have built solidarity in other countries 'strange'? What is disturbing about this? All social movements all over the world work to build international connections and solidarity. We have strong connections in many countries including Ghana, Swaziland and Brazil, among others, and are often in solidarity with movements and struggles elsewhere in the world. Building and sustaining these connections is part of our political work and we often visit social movements elsewhere in the world, and host visitors from other movements in South Africa. Activists from many countries have attended classes at the Frantz Fanon Political School in eKhenana, and people from many countries have taught there, including radical academics from Jamaica, the

United States and elsewhere. We consider this to be a beautiful thing but you take something good and make it seem suspicious. Would you be more comfortable if we remained alone and isolated? We find it astounding that you did a whole podcast series on eKhenana and did not at any point seem to be aware of the strong links between our movement and the MST in Brazil. Are you not aware that the seeds with which the garden was started were a gift from the MST? Is your failure to see this because you can't imagine a progressive grassroots internationalism because it does not fit with your assumptions about poor black people?

Perhaps the most offensive way in which you follow Bohmke is his delusional obsession with 'white academics'. The first point to make here is that like movements around the world we have worked to build productive and mutually respectful relationships with various kinds of professionals who are willing to work under or with the democratic structures of our movement. This includes lawyers, policy experts, researchers, historians, political theorists, people with design, photographic and filmmaking skills, experts in areas like environmental issues, gender, trauma, LGBTI+ rights and medicine. Like movements around the world we would like to extend these kinds of relationships. We would be pleased, for instance, to have relationships with more radical doctors, with radical psychologists, radical architects, and so on.

When we are confronted with a legal issue we value the opinion of a trained and experienced lawyer. When we engage the state on housing policy we value the opinion of a housing policy expert. When we want to develop solar power in a settlement we value the skills of an expert in solar power. Relations with people with these kinds of expertise when they are willing to humble themselves and work with us in a democratic and respectful manner are an asset to our movement. This should be obvious. They do not, as you say, 'dictate' to us or 'control' us from 'behind'. They openly share their knowledge which then becomes part of our discussions. The fact that a lawyer gives us an opinion, an opinion that we have requested, does not mean that we then give up our power to discuss things and make decisions to that lawyer. Would you be more comfortable if we had no relations with people with useful forms of specialist knowledge?

You say that we 'haven't done a great job of hiding' the fact that we have worked with 'white academics' – who you describe, without any evidence at all, as 'dictating', 'controlling', etc. Why do you assume that we have tried to 'hide'

anything? Our meetings are open. Very often pictures from our meetings are on Facebook and WhatsApp groups. Anyone can see who we are engaging. We note that although the vast majority of the professionals that we have engaged over the years are black they are invisible to people like you and Bohmke.

When we first started our movement we worked with three academics at the university. All three soon lost their jobs as a result of their activism. One of these people was white, and the other two were black. We then also began to work with a fourth intellectual, someone who worked in a church organisation. He was also black. But Bohmke would always obsessively go on and on about 'white academics' while simply erasing the black academics and intellectuals working with our movement. When a black intellectual working in an NGO wrote a letter to the editor of a university publication in the US to complain about a fraudulent article written by a journalist funded by Bond and the publication withdraw the article after realising that it was fraudulent Bohmke immediately said that 'white intellectuals' had tried to suppress the article. This is all just ridiculous.

The same thing happened when a group of academics protested against the publication of fraud in *Politikon*. They were all attacked as 'white academics' even though they were not all white. We have comrades all over the world and will work with any comrade who is politically committed to our goals, brave, honest, humble and willing to work with or under the democratic structures in our movement. Neither Bohmke nor you have any right to tell us that we shouldn't be working with any comrade that we choose to work with. Neither you nor Bohmke have any first-hand knowledge or experience of how we work with these people, and you have made no attempt to speak to us about this, or to the many people who do have first-hand knowledge.

Decisions in our movement are made in meetings. From the branches to our general assemblies these meetings are open to all. Numerous academics, journalists, filmmakers, activists, etc, etc, from around the world have attended our meetings, listened to the discussions and seen how we make decisions. They all affirm the democratic character of the movement. You give no account of our meetings and decision making practices and simply repeat Bohmke's delusions about 'white academics' controlling the movement. You even use the word 'dictate'. This is not credible journalism. You have no evidence at all to support what you state and imply.

But the main issue with Bohmke's obsession with 'white academics' – which is often either a complete fabrication or fantasy on his part – is that it is deeply racist. He does not believe that we as poor black people can think for ourselves, speak for ourselves and organise ourselves and so he assumes that we must be being remoted by white people. This is deeply racist and by following Bohmke's fantasy about white control – a fantasy for which, as we have already noted, you provide zero evidence – you repeat his racism. We do not make this allegation against you and your podcast series lightly but it has to be made, and made clearly, because it is true and because we cannot accept racism from any quarter. You need to do some deep reflection on how and why it has happened that you have produced such a racist podcast.

Not one of the many activists, academics, filmmakers, journalists, photographers, lawyers, church leaders, etc, etc from around the world who have worked with us or done research on the movement over the years – freely attending all meetings and interviewing whoever they want to – accept Bohmke's writing as credible yet you did not speak to any of these people to get their view on Bohmke's attacks on our movement. Unlike Bohmke these people have real knowledge of our movement. People who have real knowledge of our movement regularly use words like 'fraud' to describe Bohmke's writings.

You have taken a white person notorious for slander and fraud, a white person who has been discredited by legal processes and serious academic work, a white person who has no first-hand knowledge of our movement, a white person who has done no actual research on our movement, a white person who makes plainly untrue and plainly racist claims about us and our movement very seriously. In fact he clearly shapes your thinking. However you have not taken us, our ideas and our lives seriously.

You also repeat the defamatory allegations made in the fraudulent Politikon article as if they are credible despite the fact that no evidence was given for these allegations and despite the fact that we have refuted them in our replies to that article that, while suppressed by Politikon, are online on our website. Moreover you do not give us the right to reply to those defamatory allegations on your podcast. We were defamed in Politikon and now you have repeated that defamation in your podcast. It seems that to you we are people whose reputations can be casually trashed without evidence, thought or consequence, that for you we are people who do not count as people.

5 APRIL 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Presenting the People's Demands to the Political Parties

Abahlali baseMjondolo will be discussing the political, social and economic situation of the country leading up to the election on 29 May 2024 at our General Assembly on 7 April.

Since the first General Assembly of the year we have held an extensive process of meetings and discussions at all levels of our movement, and in all our 87 branches in good standing across the four provinces where we have members, to develop a collective strategy for the election.

The discussions in our monthly General Assemblies have all been open to the public and have been attended by representatives from a number of other membership based progressive organisations from South Africa, and elsewhere in the world. The process culminated in a three day camp for leaders from all provinces and has produced a set of People's Demands.

We also held a successful voter registration drive with the aim of mobilising all of people who are coming from shack settlements, hostels and rural areas, including farm workers, to participate in the election, and to encourage our members to engage their families, neighbours and others on the importance of registering for the election in order to be able to deal a collective blow against the ANC.

We invite political parties to our General Assembly where we will be presenting The People's Demands. However due to space constraints we cannot accommodate more than three representatives from each party.

The General Assembly will be held at 10:00am at the YMCA Hall, 29 Beatrice Street, Durban.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono 74
Zandile Nsibande

7 APRIL 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Election 2024: The People's Minimum Demands

Beginning at the General Assembly held in Durban on the first Sunday in February Abahlali baseMjondolo has held an extensive process of meetings and discussions at all levels of our movement, and in all our 87 branches in good standing across the four provinces where we have members, to develop a collective strategy for the election to be held on 29 May 2024. The Youth League and Women's League also held their own discussions. The discussions in our monthly General Assemblies have all been open to the public and have been attended by representatives from a number of other organisations. We also held a successful voter registration drive with the aim of mobilising all of our more than 120 000 members in good standing to participate in the election, and to encourage others to do the same.

There were three starting points to our engagement around this election, all agreed on in the General Assembly in February. They were as follows:

1. The ANC has been assassinating our leaders since 2013 and in 2022 we lost three leaders to assassination and a fourth to a police murder. It is therefore imperative that the ANC be given a very strong message that repression will not be tolerated, and preferable that it be removed from power altogether. The new MK party is an off-shoot of the ANC in which some of its worst people and tendencies are present. It has taken some dangerously right wing positions. It must also be considered as a serious threat to society and to our movement.

2. We are a socialist organisation committed to building socialism from below via the construction of popular democratic power. However there is no left party on the ballot and so we cannot vote for the programme of any party or with any confidence in its allegiance to the people and to progressive principles. It is not possible to vote for our key principles such as the full decommodification of land or the right to recall.

3. Given the seriousness of the crisis of repression, a crisis that poses an existential threat to our movement, abstentionism is not a viable strategy and it is therefore necessary to make a purely tactical vote against the ANC and MK.

No tactical considerations can enable a vote for the DA as it opposes land occupations, puts the commercial value of land before its social value and refuses to condemn the ongoing genocide in Palestine.

Although the imperative to deal a serious blow to the ANC in this election is urgent, and a literal matter of life and death, there are limits to how far we can compromise with a tactical vote. In the past we have called on people to vote against the ANC according to their conscience but there is a possible benefit in voting as a bloc in that whichever party we collectively decide to give our tactical support will know that this support is conditional on accepting some key principles. We are aware, of course, of the risk that any party that we choose to support in this election with the tactical aim of weakening or removing the ANC may hand our votes back to the ANC, to the people who are assassinating us, during coalition negotiations.

These demands are not a statement of our full political vision or our political practices. They are a statement of the minimum criteria for us to be able to offer a party our tactical support as we take our struggle against political repression onto the electoral terrain.

The set of twenty minimum demands that emerged from two months of intensive discussions involving thousands of people are as follows:

1. Well located urban land must be made available for people to be able to build homes and other community infrastructure, including community gardens. This will require a land audit to make planning effective.

2. Those who wish to receive government housing and meet a reasonable income criteria should be placed on the housing list. Government housing must be built at scale and with urgency and must be decent and fit for human beings. Transit camps must be rejected as an insult to the dignity of the people. The housing list must be transparent and neither renters nor any other particular group of residents should be excluded from the list.

3. There must be a serious commitment to affirming and defending the dignity of the people, of all the people including the poor and all vulnerable groups.

4. There must be a clear and viable plan to provide either decent jobs or a liveable income for all. While youth unemployment is a particularly severe crisis people over 35 must be included in this plan. Informal forms of work should be respected, supported and, where there is danger and exploitation, regulated to ensure safety and fair labour practices. This must include sex work.

5. There must be an end to the criminalisation of land occupations which need to be understood as a form of grassroots urban planning. When there are genuine social complications around land use these must be resolved with negotiation and not with state violence.

6. Existing shack settlements and new occupations must receive collective tenure and the provision of non-commodified access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation and road access, and refuse collection must be undertaken as an urgent priority.

7. There should be extensive state support for community gardens including seeds, tools, irrigation and fencing, as well as participatory workshops in agroecological farming methods. The state should also support a system of community controlled markets for produce to be sold. People receiving grants from the state should be able to use their cards to buy at these markets.

8. There must be a clear and viable plan to end load shedding that includes commitments to provision for access by the poor, to a responsible transition to socially owned and managed renewable energy and to ensure that workers in the current system are not discarded.

9. There must be lifelong, free and decolonised education available to all, irrespective of age. Education must include skills for people to be able to find employment and develop their communities as well as forms of education that are simply there for people to develop themselves. Community run creches and schools (along the lines of the Frantz Fanon School in eKhenana) should receive state support if they meet clearly elaborated criteria for democratic management and a social function.

10. There must be state support for democratically run communes and co-operatives and the tendering system should, wherever possible, transition from supporting private business towards supporting cooperatives.

11. There needs to be a clear plan to address the crisis in the health care system, which must include employing many more doctors, nurses and other health care workers. The overcrowding of clinics and hospitals must be addressed.

12. There needs to be a clear plan to address the crisis of violence in society, including violence against women, as well as other forms of socially damaging behaviour. This must not take the form of escalating the endemic state violence against the poor but should rather take the form of building a more peaceful, safe and just society.

13. There needs to be a program to decentralise access to educational opportunities and possibilities for employment to ensure national access, including in rural areas.

14. Political parties need to have a clear program to develop the intellectual strength and integrity of their leaders, and to do the same for government officials.

15. Corruption needs to be understood as theft from the people and to be dealt with decisively. After due process any politician shown to be guilty of corruption must be suspended from their political party for a period of five years, after which rehabilitation can be considered if there is genuine acknowledgment of wrong doing. Any official seeking to extract bribes, to sell houses or to only allocate houses, services or any other benefits to members of a particular political party must be swiftly investigated and, after due process overseen by an elected jury from the affected community, dismissed from their position.

16. There must be a serious commitment to dealing with the environmental crisis from a people centred perspective. This includes effective action to stop the dumping of rubbish in shack settlements.

17. Participatory democracy – affirmed under the slogan ‘nothing for us without us’ – must be committed to as a clear principle to guide all engagements between the state and the people. This is particularly important at the community level.

18. There must be clear opposition to the genocide being carried out in Gaza, and a clear commitment to freedom and justice for the Palestinian people, and for all oppressed people everywhere.

19. There must be a clear rejection of xenophobia, ethnic politics, sexism, discrimination against LGBTQTI+ people and all other attempts to divide and weaken the people.

20. There must be a clear commitment to oppose all forms of political violence and political repression in South Africa, no matter which person or organisation is suffering political violence or repression. This commitment cannot be limited to empty words and must be backed up with real action including mass mobilisation, media campaigns, legal action, etc. There must be a commitment to work against political violence and repression with all political forces opposed to political violence and repression.

There was also a clear demand addressed to the movement rather than to the existing political parties. Our members are clear that while they understand that

electoral politics is just one terrain of struggle and that it should never replace or distract from the work of building popular democratic power from below, of building socialism from below, they do want to be able to vote for a left party in the next election, and that the movement should, working with like-minded membership based organisations, begin a process of considering how to build a political instrument for the people, a political instrument that aims to put the people in power rather than a new set of individuals.

A three day camp for leaders from all provinces was held from 22 to 24 March in the Valley of a Thousand Hills. At that camp it was resolved that we would:

1. Invite interested political parties other than the ANC, MK and the DA to the Abahlali General Assembly to be held on 7 April. It was decided that at this General Assembly we would present the People's Minimum Demands in order for parties to respond to the demands carefully developed by the people through a democratic process as opposed to Abahlali listening to the parties' manifestos. The parties would then respond to the people rather than the people responding to the parties. We will then collectively consider their responses before formulating our final position on the election.

2. Engage in mass mobilisation for the Unfreedom Day Rally to be held in Durban on 21 April. This mobilisation will include mobilising other progressive membership based organisations, progressive trade unions and other left organisations willing and able to work with organisations of the poor and working class on the basis of mutual respect.

3. Make a public announcement of the final movement position on the election at the UnFreedom Day rally.

We have just concluded the General Assembly at which the People's Minimum Demands were presented to representatives from a number of political parties. The process of discussion in our movement, and engagement with other membership based organisations of the poor and the working class, will continue until 21 April.

S'bu Zikode
Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

17 APRIL 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Private Security Firm Attacks the Sihlalangenkani Occupation in Umhlali

On 7 April the notorious private security firm IPSS, with support from the SAPS, launched an attack on the Sihlalangenkani Occupation in Umhlali, on the North Coast. The occupation is affiliated to our movement. The attack was unlawful and violent.

People's doors were kicked in and people were assaulted, insulted, and threatened by men wielding automatic weapons. Many people were kicked, including women. The police fired rubber bullets at the residents. Money was also stolen. People who tried to film the attack were threatened. The police boasted that they have been instructed by police minister Bheki Cele to shoot and kill. The residents were dehumanised and the whole community criminalised.

The residents of Sihlalangenkani refused to accept that they were now being policed by a private security company hired by the rich, demanded to know why they were under attack from a private security company, and why this company was taking over the work of the police. They successfully resisted the attack. After this they moved to the Umhlali police station where they protested against the attack and demanded to know why IPSS Security was now doing the work of the police. The IPSS website shows that the company is actively involved in "thwarting land invasions".

In terms of the law the actions of IPSS and the police were unlawful and criminal but of course IPSS Security and the police will be treated as if they are above the law and poor black people are always treated as if we are beneath the law. Our mere presence on this land in an elite area is taken as a crime, a crime that legitimates unlawful and violent behaviour from IPSS Security and the police.

The real 'crime' of the Sihlalangenkani residents is that they have occupied and held 'prime land', land where very rich people, most of them white, live in gated communities.

On Friday 12 April the police returned to the community and arrested Fezile Gosa and Bongeka Gazu, the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Abahlali baseMjondolo branch. Bongeka is pregnant and was kept in very bad conditions while she was under arrest. These were obviously political targeted arrests.

The community protested against the arrests while they were being carried out and then again outside the police station. Fezile and Bongeka were released on Monday. Their case was not even placed on the role in the court as there was no evidence against them and no case to make against them. Our lawyers expressed their shock at the conditions under which the Deputy Chairperson was detained.

We note that in both of the media reports in Independent Online on the attack on Sihlalangenkani and the arrests of the community leaders only IPSS Security and the police are quoted. Not a single resident of Sihlalangenkani is given an opportunity to speak in either of the two articles. We also note that both articles contain statements that are not true. Perhaps the most important of these is the claim that residents fired on IPSS Security and the police.

Both articles take the statements from IPSS security and the police as fact despite the long and well known history of both the police and security companies lying to the media after they have committed violence against poor black people, including murder.

We would like to remind the media that after the police murders of Nqobile Ngcobo in 2013 and Zamekile Shangase in 2021 the media uncritically repeated false claims by the police that they had had to open fire while under attack as if these claims were true. In the case of the murder of Zamekile Shangase the police claimed that they were “coming under fire from all sides” when, as was later shown, no shots were fired at them. In both cases the media did not ask eyewitnesses for comment or ask for comments from the communities that had come under police attack or from our movement. In both cases they did not withdraw or correct their articles when the facts came to light, or even make an apology.

We would like to thank the lawyers from the Right to Protest for representing our comrades in the KwaDukuza Magistrate’s Court on Monday.

Our comrades spent three days in police cells for the ‘crime’ of being elected leaders of the residents of a land occupation. The ‘crime’ of the residents of the occupation is being poor and black and residing on land near to where very rich people live.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

19 APRIL 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Will Mark UnFreedom Day in Durban on 21 April

There is no freedom for the poor in South Africa. Thirty years after Nelson Mandela became president and we were told that freedom had come the poor and marginalised in shack settlements, hostels, white farms and former Bantustans have nothing to celebrate.

The rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer. Far more people live in shacks than in 1994. We remain landless and without work. Millions are without even the most basic services, such as water, sanitation and refuse removal. Millions are hungry. We continue to live in terrible violence. We continue to be violently repressed by the politicians, the police and private security companies. For thirty years our humanity has been vandalized in the name of freedom. The lives and dignity of the poor mean nothing in the eyes of the ANC.

The ANC serves an elite in the name of the people while continuing to oppress and repress the people. It continues to rob the people.

Under the ANC it has become a crime to be poor. We are taken as beneath the law, as people who can be robbed, assaulted, dispossessed and murdered with impunity. We regularly face illegal evictions at gunpoint and armed raids on our settlements. Rubbish is regularly dumped in our communities sending a clear message that we ourselves are seen as less than human, as rubbish.

Under the ANC we have paid the price for land and dignity in blood. Many of our comrades have been murdered by the police, private security and the izinkabi. Comrades in other struggles and organisations have also been killed. Striking miners were massacred in Marikana in 2012. The politic of blood must be brought to an end.

Our movement has been marking UnFreedom Day since 2006 when we decided to contest the lie that real freedom has been achieved. We refused to allow the politicians to bus us into the stadiums to tell us that we were free when it

was clear that we are not free. On UnFreedom Day we insist that the struggle for land, housing and dignity continues, that the struggle for freedom continues. We also remember and celebrate our fallen comrades who have given their lives in the struggle for real freedom.

This year we will hold our annual Unfreedom Day rally at the eNkanini Sports Ground in Mayville, Durban, on 21 April 2024 at 9 am.

This year the focus of UnFreedom Day is on the 2024 General Elections and a question that has become urgent: 'How can we use our vote as a tactical tool to advance the interests of the poor and marginalised?'

We will present The People's Minimum Demands, a list of twenty minimum demands that we have put to all the parties seeking our vote. These demands come out of a process of collective discussion including thousands of people in hundreds of meetings.

We will also make a special announcement on the position of the movement regarding the General Elections on 29 May. We are clear and unashamed that we want the ANC removed from power. The ANC has kept us poor, denied us land and dignity, stolen from the poor and killed us when we have stood up for our humanity. It must be removed.

We are calling on the progressive organisations of the impoverished, the marginalised and the working class to join us at this very important gathering as we reject fake freedom. We will not be able to overcome oppression if we are not united and strong. We will not be able to overcome oppression if we do not build the democratic power of the oppressed from below. We will not be able to develop and manage a credible electoral instrument for the oppressed if we are not organised from below at a mass scale.

We will not be free until the question of land is resolved in our country, and until it is resolved in the interests of the majority.

Land, wealth and power must be fairly shared, and the dignity of all people must be respected.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

10 MAY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali mourns the George building disaster

The tragedy of the building that collapsed on the workers in George is one more sign that the working class are always at risk as a result of capitalism.

The working class are most often at the receiving end when disasters of this nature take place. So far there are 14 people who have been confirmed dead and many more people are still trapped in the rubble, including an 18 year old migrant worker.

This is as a result of both capitalist profiteering that is only concerned about profit and not the lives of workers and the failure by the state to properly regulate the construction industry in terms of safety standards.

We send our deepest condolences to those who have lost their loved ones and continue to pray for those who have been trapped under the rubble for more than four days. They are our sisters and brothers, our mothers and fathers, our children. Their lives are as important as the lives of every other human being in our country.

We know that in the eyes of a profiteering capitalist firm the workers who have lost their lives and spent days trapped under rubble are seen as objects to be exploited to make more money, even at risk of their lives. All the cities in the world were built by workers. Some workers have given their lives to build these cities, or suffered from accidents at work. Many workers have retired poor after a lifetime of work. Often workers cannot live in the cities they have built because it is very expensive to live in the cities. In many countries the same workers who build the cities do domestic and security work for the rich while continuing to live in shacks.

To be poor means that your life is always at risk whether from shack fires and floods, to violence of different kinds or accidents at work. From the Marikana Massacre to the many lives lost to neglect and abuse in the Life Esidemeni outrage to the Marshalltown fire to the less well known everyday deaths from shack fires, violent policing and accidents at work it is clear that the lives of the poor are not taken seriously.

We send our deepest solidarity to those who have lost their loved ones in George and to those who are still waiting to get news of their loved ones. We continue to pray for those who are still trapped under the rubble.

We will not be free until every person's life is taken seriously and everyone is kept safe at home, on the roads, at school and at work. We really do need to build a caring society in which every person's life matters.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

1 JULY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity with our Kenyan Comrades

Twenty four lives have been lost in the successful struggle against the Finance Bill in Kenya. The bill was pushed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to force ordinary poor and working class people to pay off debts to rich countries. It proposed extreme tax hikes on basic necessities such as vegetables, cooking oil, sanitary pads and nappies.

In all countries it is important to tax the rich and big business, and to nationalise certain industries under worker control, to fund social programmes. Along with land reform and other measures taxation and nationalisation have always been important tools for progressive governments. However raising taxes on basic necessities, necessities that should in fact be subsidised rather than taxed, is nothing but an attack on the poor and the working class in the interests of the rich.

Neoliberal policies have always been against the poor and caused severe suffering to the marginalised. This bill would have immediately worsened the very dire situation that many Kenyans already confront.

The Kenyan state, which is a client state of the US, has a long history of using lethal violence against the poor and against political dissent. It has now shown that it is willing to send its soldiers to Haiti to continue the oppression of the Haitian people without the West having to be seen sending its own soldiers to Haiti. The Kenyan elites also have a long history of turning people against each other along ethnic lines.

Young people came to together across ethnic lines to oppose the Finance Bill building unity and power in struggle. They were on the streets since the bill was first put on the table for the president to sign and they forced President Ruto to withdraw the bill.

At the same time as Kenyans were coming together in struggle, led by courageous young people, Kenyan soldiers were arriving in Haiti to continue the oppression of the Haitian people.

The Police Reform Working Group of Kenya has reported that there are a number of activists who have been abducted and are still unaccounted for. This kind of police brutality is common across Africa, and elsewhere in much of the world too. It is used to teach fear, to teach people that it is dangerous to question a government and safer to keep quiet and accept oppression. It is used to ensure impunity for oppressors.

We are encouraged by the struggle that the people of Kenya have waged, especially the youth who faced armed police head on demanding that the Finance Bill be scrapped. We celebrate their courage and the victory that was won when the president had to concede to the power of the people and withdraw the bill. This is a victory won by popular power. We must honour those who died for this struggle.

We are calling on the African Union and the United Nations to intervene and ensure that justice is done for those who have lost their lives fighting against this regime. Police officers who killed innocent protesters and the politicians who gave them their orders must be brought to book.

Progressive organisations in Kenya such as the Mathare Social Justice Centre and the Organic Intellectuals Network have become important contributors to the Pan-African and international left and a number of members of our movement have visited Kenya over the years. It is very encouraging to see the growth of the left in Kenya, especially among young people.

The struggle of the Kenyan people is an encouragement to all the struggles of the oppressed and working class. It our struggle too. We are in full solidarity with our Kenyan comrades and support their calls for the immediate resignation of President Ruto and the immediate recall of the Kenyan soldiers from Haiti. Kenyans must be given full political freedom and an economy redesigned to benefit the poor and the working class. Haitians must be given the freedom to elect their own leaders free from Western interference and to shape their own future.

The situation in Kenya is also a warning for us in South Africa. Now that the ANC has not been able to win an outright electoral victory the liberals are pushing hard for new government to adopt neoliberal economic policies and to become a client state of the West. They often present Kenya as an example that South Africa should follow. If the liberals do succeed in imposing neoliberal economic policies on South Africa poor and working class South Africans we

follow the example of uprising in Kenya We send our deepest condolences to the families, friends and comrades over all those who have given their lives in the struggle for a better Kenya.

An injury to one is an injury to all.

A victory for one is a victory for all.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

16 JULY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

An Important Judgment in the Supreme Court of Appeal

Last week, on 10 July the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) issued its judgment in the matter of South Africa Human Rights Commission v The City of Cape Town. The Court found that municipalities have no legal right to evict people who are in the processes of constructing a home (once that construction has begun) without first obtaining a court order under the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 19 of 1998 (PIE) or obtaining other legal sanction.

Our movement was admitted as a friend of the court (*amicus curiae*) in the matter and we were represented by our longstanding comrades in the Socio-Economic Rights Institute.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) brought the matter against the City of Cape Town after the unlawful eviction of residents of the eThembeni shack settlement in Khayelitsha, Cape Town in July 2020 during the Covid shutdown.

There were many unlawful and violent evictions during the Covid shutdown, including in Durban, but this eviction became a national scandal after Bulelani Qolani was violently removed from his home, while he was naked. This was a cruel and unlawful attack on his human dignity that showed the world just how deeply the South African state, whether governed by the ANC or the DA, undermines the dignity of the poor. In fact it is clear that we are hated.

Our lawyers argued that the city cannot lawfully evict someone whose home is still in the process of construction simply by using the argument of ‘counter-spoliation.’ The court found in our favour on this matter. The court also found that “on the facts in this appeal, the conduct of the City’s personnel did not only constitute a violation of the occupants’ property rights and to their belongings, but also disrespectful and demeaning.”

As comrade Nomzamo Zondo, the leader of SERI, said “I am certain that the judgment’s emphasis on the behaviour of anti-land invasion units, outlawing the confiscation of possessions, and restating the obligation to treat people with dignity will significantly protect the landless.”

Our movement has lost two comrades, Samuel Hloele and Nkosinathi Mngomezulu, to armed attacks by the Anti-Land Invasion Unit in Durban and we welcome the SCA judgement as a huge victory for the poor and marginalised.

The judgment fundamentally changes the power relations between impoverished people and municipalities and private land owners. It shows, again, that there are important progressive commitments and possibilities with the Constitution and the laws derived from the Constitution that the organised poor should, working with progressive lawyers, use along with other strategies to resist the landlessness, precarity and violence suffered by impoverished people.

Our access to land and housing is always ultimately won by organisation and struggle. However, tactical use of the courts is an important component of our struggle, and has always been part of the struggles of the urban poor going back to the days of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union. We thank SERI for their commitment to our struggle and our movement and to the struggles and organisations of the oppressed in general.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

20 JULY 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The eThekweni Municipality warned not to evict residents in Clermont without a court order

Abahlali baseMjondolo, represented by the Socio Economic Rights Institute of South Africa, approached the Durban High Court on an urgent basis this morning. This follows several illegal and violent evictions carried out by eThekweni's Anti Land Invasion Unit against several communities in Durban, including in C Section in Clermont.

The matter was adjourned to Friday next week, giving the Municipality the opportunity to file papers. However, the judge, Mahendra Chetty, issued a strong warning that the Municipality must not evict the residents of Clermont.

Abahlali is seeking an order that prohibits the municipality from demolishing and evicting poor residents of Clermont.

We are happy that while the matter is waiting to be finalised, the court has warned the municipality that it has acted in full violation of the law. We want to make it very clear that should the municipality continue to act in full violation of the court order, as they have done before, we will not hesitate to resist their actions and to return to court on an urgent basis.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Nombuyiselo Cenga

13 SEPTEMBER 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo to March against racism, evictions and forced removals

Abahlali baseMjondolo will be marching in Ballito on Monday 16 September 2024 at 10 am. The march will begin at the Shaka's Head shack settlement and end at the offices of the KwaDukuza Municipality in Ballito. We are marching against militarised 'raids' on our communities, against forced removals and for collective land tenure and access to services. We are marching against segregation and racism.

At the end of apartheid many of the rich people in Durban fled north to the gated communities in uMhlanga. They have continued moving north, and now many of the very rich live in gated communities in and around places like Ballito. At first these gated communities were mostly white. Now there are many black people living there too.

Instead of using progressive and democratic urban planning to build more just cities many of the ANC elites moved to join the rich whites in the gated communities. These gated communities are now given special treatment by the ANC government. This is not hidden. In KwaDukuza they were even exempt from loadshedding!

It is not enough for the residents of these gated communities that they have used their wealth to separate themselves from the rest of the people. They also demand that the poor not be allowed to live near to their gated communities, on what they call 'prime land'. They want to use both their private wealth and the power of the state to enforce segregation.

They have militarised private security with armoured vehicles, and even a helicopter, that are tasked with stopping 'land invasions' and that, working with the police, 'raid' our communities.

The KwaDukuza Municipality is openly working with the rich to remove poor black people in Ballito and Umhlali. The ratepayers' association and the

ANC led municipality are working together to evict poor black people, to destroy our homes and communities.

They say that our presence reduces the value of the land, as if value is just a question of the price of the land and has nothing to do with the value of land for the human beings who live on it. They say that we must be removed because we are a health hazard as we must use the bush to relieve ourselves whereas the obvious solution to the lack of sanitation is to provide sanitation. They say that we are 'chasing tourists away'. The strong element of racism driving all this is often openly displayed on the social media used by the white residents of the gated communities. The black elites who live in the gated communities are silent about this racism.

The KwaDukuza municipality and the owners of the gated communities are, working in partnership, aiming to remove the residents of the Shaka's Head settlement to Vlakspuit, which is 15 km away, where they can be hidden from the eyes of the rich. At the moment residents of the settlement can walk to work. If they are forcibly removed they will need expensive transport to get to work, and there is nothing in Vlakspuit other than an old cemetery. A total of 980 households are facing an apartheid style forced removal to Vlakspuit. The matter is currently in the Pietermaritzburg High Court.

We are being treated like sub-humans, like animals. For thirty years we have been told that we are not good enough to live in the cities and that we must be taken to the human dumping grounds where there is no work, schools or services. Now we are told that we are not good enough to live on the 'prime land' near to the gated communities outside the cities.

We are good enough to wash the clothes, clean the homes, raise the children and keep the homes and families of the rich safe but we are not good enough to live near to them. When we are not at work, working for them, we must be far away, we must be invisible. This is exactly the same logic as apartheid.

In 2024, more than thirty years after the first democratic election, poor black people continue to face systemic and at times violently enforced segregation from an alliance between the white elites who believe that they are the only ones who are human beings and the ANC.

The right to access the cities was denied to black people by the apartheid government. This continued after apartheid under the ANC who forced large numbers of people out of the cities to the human dumping grounds beyond the

urban peripheries. Now private power, using violent and militarised private security companies, is also trying to enforce segregation.

Even though apartheid was ended its practices have not ended. The urban poor and working class build the cities and the gated communities outside the cities and yet we face brutal evictions from the cities and from the 'prime land' near the gated communities.

When the Freedom Charter declared that 'South African belongs to all who live in it', it did not say that parts of the country only belong to the rich. All of South Africa belongs to all who live in it. Rights that can only be realised with money are not real rights, they are fake rights.

We are marching to stop the violent and militarised 'raids' by private security and the police. We are marching to stop evictions. We are marching to demand collective tenure and for the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation. We are marching against the racism of the white elites and the collaboration with that racism by the black elites. We are marching against the dehumanisation, oppression and repression of the poor.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Ongama Mncameni

3 OCTOBER 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

A Declaration of War on the Poor

On 16 September we marched in our thousands in Ballito to oppose evictions and racism. However, the attacks on the poor are escalating and the Dolphin Coast Residents & Ratepayers' Association have made a public declaration of war against one of our branches.

Since the formation of the Government of National Unity there has been a huge increase in state attacks on shack settlements around Durban and elsewhere. This includes settlements in Belair and the Bluff, both formerly white suburbs, and the Lindokuhle Mnguni Occupation in Johannesburg, which is near to a middle-class area. In all these cases settlements in middle class areas are being targeted. There have also been evictions in KwaDebeka in Durban.

We have also been resisting evictions along the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal where the super-rich lived in mansions in gated communities. They employ violent and militarized security companies to police the poor. The police follow the lead of these security companies. The Hlanganani occupation in Salt rock, the Sihlalangenkani occupation in Umhlali and the Ekuphumleni occupation in Ballito are all resisting evictions. The Phola and Magebhula settlements, also on the North Coast, under the KwaDukuza Municipality, have also suffered violent evictions.

It seems clear that two things are driving this general attack on the poor. One is that the DA, which has been viciously evicting in the Western Cape, has pressured the ANC to step up its attacks on the poor. Another is that the state is cynically responding to the public outcry about the frightening levels of violence in the country, including kidnapping and extortion, with violent attacks on the poor and on migrants in the name of 'fighting crime'. They are criminalising and abusing vulnerable people instead of dealing with the real crisis of violence.

In the case of the evictions from land near the gated communities on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal the power of property, of wealth, is being mobilised to crush grassroots urban planning and decommodification of land organised via popular democratic power.

The ANC gives special preference to the super-rich in these gated communities. They were even given an exception for loadshedding. They have told us that we are living on 'prime land' and must be moved away to desolate human dumping grounds far from work and schools.

In our statement issued before the march in Ballito on 16 September we said that:

The KwaDukuza Municipality is openly working with the rich to remove poor black people in Ballito and Umhlali. The ratepayers' association and the ANC led municipality are working together to evict poor black people, to destroy our homes and communities.

They say that our presence reduces the value of the land, as if value is just a question of the price of the land and has nothing to do with the value of land for the human beings who live on it. They say that we must be removed because we are a health hazard as we must use the bush to relieve ourselves whereas the obvious solution to the lack of sanitation is to provide sanitation. They say that we are 'chasing tourists away'. The strong element of racism driving all this is often openly displayed on the social media used by the white residents of the gated communities. The black elites who live in the gated communities are silent about this racism.

Now the residents of the gated communities, the super-rich, have made their racism and contempt for the poor clear. The Dolphin Coast Residents & Ratepayers' Association have released a viciously anti-poor and racist video in which we are said to be criminal, dangerous, unhygienic and polluting. These are old colonial stereotypes about impoverished black people, stereotypes that have long been used by governments and elites to justify state violence and the destruction of homes, communities and livelihoods.

The video aggressively criminalises impoverishment declaring that we are engaged in illegal occupation, illegal trading and illegal water electricity connections and demanding that the state 'take action' and that 'the law be enforced'.

When it demands the enforcement of the law it is not demanding that the limited but important rights given to the poor in the Constitution are guaranteed. This is an open demand for violence against us by private security and the state, for the destruction of our homes, our community infrastructure and our livelihoods. It is a declaration of war against the poor by the rich, a declaration of war against the black poor by the white dominated elite in the area.

It is true that we are denied access to land, water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal. The solution to this is to provide land and services, not to incite state violence against us when we make our own arrangements to build viable lives and communities.

We would like to note that not all the wealthy residents of the area are taking this hostile, anti-poor and racist position. One resident has publicly stood up to make the important point that our living conditions are due to state failure and that this is the problem that needs to be fixed. No doubt he is not alone and there are other decent people who also recognise our humanity.

The racist and anti-poor video put out by The Dolphin Coast Residents & Ratepayers' Association must be condemned in the strongest terms. It should be investigated by the Human Rights Commission.

It is also important for us to note that according to the KwaDukuza Speaker's office the Mayor has refused to respond to the People's Memorandum submitted on the 16 September march. She has long been failing to engage people with respect, to take the dignity of the poor seriously and to run an efficient administration. This anti-democratic refusal to respond to the Memorandum is provoking the anger of the people.

We will continue to defend our right to live on the North Coast and to demand that our occupations be recognised and provided with all the services required for a decent and dignified life.

Our humanity is not negotiable. South Africa belongs to all who live in it, including the poor. There can be no compromise with racism. We will hold the land.

Mqapheli Bonono
Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

21 NOVEMBER 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Building peace and unity in a traumatised community

Ukwakha ukuthula nobunye phakathi kwabalimele

Our movement currently has over 150 000 members organised into 93 branches in four provinces. The process to join the movement and form a branch in good standing is slow and careful, and the requirements for a branch to sustain membership of the movement include rigorous adherence to the principles of the movement, including a clearly specified set of democratic practices. To ensure that branches remain committed to the principles of the movement, including democratic practices and organisation, membership must be periodically renewed and new elections held.

There have been cases where the affiliation of branches to the movement has lapsed due to a failure to elect new leaders for various reasons, including the emergence of serious divisions in a community. There have also been cases where a branch has had to be suspended until it can resolve problems that have arisen. When the membership of a branch has lapsed or been suspended and we are asked to assist in working to resolve problems and restoring its affiliation to the movement, we always provide support. When divisions have emerged we always try to work towards healing and building unity.

There have also been cases where we have had to recall members from positions of leadership for conduct that violates our principles. In 2014, we had to expel a person in a senior leadership position due to serious corruption that had devastating consequences for a whole community. In 2018 some leaders were recalled from their positions after agreeing to take money from VBS bank in exchange for offering political support to the Zuma faction of the ANC. When there is acknowledgment of wrongdoing on the part of individuals, we also work towards healing.

We have all been damaged by oppression, and we all continue to be damaged by oppression, and so our politics must be grounded in the work of collective healing. We all come out of a history of serious violence from colonialism, to apartheid, the civil war in KwaZulu-Natal, and ongoing violence and

repression, and so our politics must be grounded in the work of building peace. We have been committed to this work of healing and building peace for almost twenty years.

Branches often face serious challenges in the struggle to hold land, to ensure that land is not commodified, to sustain democratic practices and to sustain the progress required to develop occupations into communes. Many branches have faced repeated state violence, evictions, attempts to take over land and occupations by local party thugs, arrests, imprisonment and killings whether by the izinkabi, the police or municipal or private security. Recently, both the Sihlalingenkani Commune in Salt Rock on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal and the Lindokuhle Mnguni Occupation on the East Rand in Gauteng have faced militarised 'raids' from combined forces drawn from private and state security.

Repression always results in trauma and anxiety and can sometimes result in paranoia and serious divisions in movements. People who have suffered serious repression can come to feel that they should have a special standing in a movement, a standing above democratic processes. This, like the risk of paranoia and division, is common to all movements facing serious repression and is something that must be handled with great care and sensitivity.

In recent years, the eKhenana branch in Durban has faced the most severe repression suffered by any of our branches, including numerous violent attacks from the state and the imprisonment and assassinations of activists.

The struggle for land in eKhenana has suffered serious repression by the municipality, a notoriously violent ANC ward councillor and local ANC thugs trying to make money from land and housing. Because the initial occupation was chaotic and unplanned there was not a clear and shared sense of how it should be organised. There were disputes between people who wanted to sell and rent land and shacks and those who wanted to build a commune in which land and shacks are not rented and sold. This created a complex situation with multiple pressures. The severe violence and repression that people have suffered has resulted in terrible trauma, including among the children who have seen and lived with things that no child should ever see or have to live with.

As we explained in a statement issued on 10 May 2021, "the eKhenana Occupation has not been an easy occupation and the road to its current achievements was very difficult." The land was occupied in August 2018 and the eKhenana

branch was first launched on 14 April 2019. However, serious division and conflict emerged in the branch, and there were credible allegations of abusive behaviour by some individuals. As a result the branch's membership of our movement was suspended in September 2019. As we explained in the statement, "As a result of the failure of the branch to address these issues swiftly and effectively, it was shut down and the membership of all the residents was terminated. The residents were advised to organise an assembly open to all to discuss the issues, to work to resolve the issues, and then work towards relaunching the branch."

The work to resolve the problems was begun and on 5 October 2020, an election was held and the branch was relaunched as an affiliate of our movement. The branch suffered extreme repression, including three assassinations, in 2022. One of our members was murdered by a masked police officer in the nearby eNkanini branch in the same year.

The branch was scheduled to renew its membership and hold a new election on 1 October 2023. However, they were not able to go ahead with the election and the renewal of the branch membership as serious divisions had emerged within the branch. After a discussion, we agreed that the branch would hold its election and have its membership renewed on 30 November. However, the leadership of eKhenana cancelled the scheduled election and membership renewal set for 30 November. We were expecting them to propose a new date, but they did not.

As is standard in our movement, they had a three-month grace period to hold the election and renew their membership during which they could continue to participate in the movement with all rights and responsibilities. However, they did not set a new date, and so their membership automatically lapsed after three months, which was 1 January 2024. As a result of this we have not had any members in eKhenana since the beginning of this year. The community has not elected a new structure and, therefore, does not currently have an elected leadership. In a situation like this where there is no elected structure the only way to avoid factionalism and engage openly and fairly is via well attended community assemblies open to all residents.

Our movement has never recruited members. People come to the movement if they wish to join, after which a process has to be followed to build democratic structures before a branch can be launched. It can take months or even years for a branch to achieve full membership. We also do not try and persuade branches to sustain their membership. The same principle applies – branches must choose to join the movement and to remain in the movement. Of course, if people

request our support to work towards launching or renewing the membership of a branch, we gladly provide that support. If we do not receive such a request we do not intervene and, of course, we cannot speak or act for a community or faction of a community who are not members of our movement.

In September this year, we were approached by a group of residents from eKhenana who explained that serious divisions and problems had emerged in the community. They said that they wanted the help of the movement to work towards resolving these problems, building unity and moving towards the reestablishment of a democratic branch council and a renewal of the affiliation of the branch to the movement.

As a result meetings were held with eKhenana residents on 10, 26 and 29 September 2024 and again on 18 October. In these meetings it became clear that there were serious tensions between a small group of residents and the rest of the community, and between that same small group of residents and former residents of eKhenana who had fled during the violence and now wish to return. The people who wish to return are former members of our movement whose legal right to be present on the land was confirmed in a court judgment won against the municipality. It has been said that they are ANC members trying to take over the land but this is not true.

It became clear that there are a few people who, as often happens under conditions of severe repression, have started to see everyone else as the enemy, including former comrades on the land and former comrades who wish to return to the land. Serious complaints were made about a small group of residents. Serious complaints had previously been made about two of these residents. In such circumstances, it is always our responsibility to listen to everyone and to listen very carefully.

It was agreed to hold an open public meeting, open to all residents of eKhenana across the divisions that had emerged, on Sunday 10 November with the aim of building peace and unity. The meeting was opened by S'bu Zikode, whose first words were "We are here to bring peace, unity and stability". Zikode went on to recognise and honour each and every life that has been lost in eKhenana. There was also an opening prayer for peace from Pastor Errol Khumalo.

The meeting was very well attended. A total of 54 residents attended the meeting, 36 women and 18 men, which, in this now very small community, means that almost all residents were present. After careful discussion, the majority of the residents committed to a process of building peace and unity, and

48 people signed a declaration committing to this. However, six people in the minority faction in the community did not sign the declaration.

With a clear majority of the residents in support of the process to build peace and unity we have agreed to proceed with the process, a process grounded in healing. We will continue to make it clear to the six people who did not want to commit to the process that they are welcome to join the process at any time. If this process goes well, eKhenana will be able to elect a new council with a mandate to represent the community. If that council wishes to relaunch the eKhenana branch and take membership of our movement, it will be warmly welcomed back into the movement. If it wishes to be independent we will gladly work in solidarity with them when asked to do so as we do with many other organisations such as the Congolese Solidarity Campaign, the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, Ubunye bamaHostela, etc, etc.

There are some challenges. The breakdown in the relationship between a small group of people and the rest of the community as well as former residents who wish to return to the land is serious. There are credible allegations of unacceptable behaviour. There is paranoia and there has been serious dishonesty. However, when there is enough commitment, healing can happen, and unity rebuilt in difficult circumstances. We have recently achieved a successful healing process with the former leaders of our movement who were recalled from their positions in 2018. We are hopeful that we can do the same in eKhenana despite the severity of the trauma that people have suffered and the seriousness of the divisions in the community.

We have agreed to start the process of healing, which will include ceremonies and prayers of all religions at eKhenana. Traditional healers will also participate. We are also asking progressive social workers and psychologists to volunteer to work with traumatised residents. Healing will be a process, and the residents will require all possible forms of ongoing support.

The work of struggle is the work of healing, and the work of healing is the work of struggle.

Thapelo Mohapi
Bathabile Makhoba

19 DECEMBER 2024

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Judgment to be Delivered Tomorrow in Landmark Case

The judgment in the matter between the City of Cape Town and the Bromwell Street community in Cape Town will be handed down tomorrow in the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

This matter was brought forward by Ndifuna Ukwazi, who represents the community. Abahlali are *amicus curiae*, a friend of the court, represented by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI).

The case will determine how well-located land must be used. The City of Cape Town wants to relocate a community that is established and has been residing in this area for many years to an area that is 30 km away from the city. This repeats the logic of apartheid spatial planning.

Abahlali baseMjondolo has been struggling for well-located land to be provided for the poor and marginalised for the past 19 years. The poor have the same right to access the cities as everyone else. We deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. We need to be treated like human beings, not human waste to be dumped in human dumping grounds like Wolwerivier and Blikkiesdorp. These human dumping grounds are without opportunities for work and education. Transportation is very scarce, and there is no access to the pleasures and possibilities of urban life.

This judgment is very important for our movement and all organisations that struggle and advocate for well-located land to be made available for the poor, for the social value of land to be given more weight than its commercial value. The judgment will be very important for all those across the country who face eviction from well-located land to human dumping grounds.

Mqapheli Bonono
Thapelo Mohapi
Zandile Nsibande

13 JANUARY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Solidarity with the Class of 2024 as Matric Results are Announced

In a just society, every child would be received as a gift and supported to grow and flourish. However, young people in South Africa face conditions of extreme crisis.

Millions of children experience hunger while growing up, and one in four children have their growth stunted due to hunger. Millions grow up in shacks, and public schooling remains in an appalling state, especially in rural areas. Violence is common in schools. Unemployment is close to 75% for people under 24 years old. Rates of depression and anxiety are very high, as are rates of addiction and suicide. There are also extremely high levels of violence between young men and against women, with alcohol abuse often being a key factor.

The poor as a whole face conditions of organised abandonment due to the structural and pervasive contempt for our humanity. The youth face particularly severe conditions within this wider crisis of organised abandonment. This is why we have no choice but to commit to the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order—an order that is inhuman and immoral as it treats human beings as waste.

In these conditions of extreme crisis, all possible care must be taken to support young people.

The matric results will be announced today, 13 January. About 40% of children drop out of school before their final year, and around 20–25% fail the matric examination. The result is that less than half of all children pass matric. Of these, fewer than 40% attain marks that allow them to apply to study at universities.

This can be a very stressful time for those who did not pass, or for those who hoped to go to university but did not achieve the required marks. Learners and their parents should receive their results privately in a supportive setting that provides vocational counselling and psychological support. We encourage all young people who are experiencing stress and anxiety at this time to seek help from their families, friends, comrades, and the counselling options available to

poor people. Nobody should suffer alone. The Youth League will offer all the support we can.

We are in this crisis together and must survive and overcome it together.

While it is important that every learner, teacher, and official in the Department of Education works as hard as they can to achieve the best possible results, we must always be aware that the poor receive a vastly inferior education compared to the rich and middle classes. There is very little investment in our schools, and although the many dedicated teachers deserve our full respect, sometimes our schools are sites of disrespect for learners, violence, and corruption.

Success at school is often directly linked to class, and until there is massive investment in public education and socially committed management, outcomes for the poor will continue to be much worse than for the middle classes and the rich. We cannot continue with a culture of celebrating the matric successes of the rich without acknowledging that a deeply unequal education system produces deeply unequal results. There needs to be a national project to ensure that all children are received with respect and given every opportunity to flourish.

Let us not forget that learners are not just statistics or headlines; they are individuals with rights, dreams, and the potential to contribute to our nation's future. It is essential that during the issuing of results, vocational counselling and mental health services are made available and free for every student embarking on the journey of new discoveries.

The struggle to build an education system in which each child is received with dignity and respect and given the support to flourish and contribute to the development of society is at the heart of our struggle for socialism. Every child is precious, and a society that does not recognise this is a society in urgent need of revolutionary change.

We wish the class of 2024 all the best and for the road ahead. We congratulate all who have done well and express our solidarity and care for those who have been betrayed and disrespected by an unfair and unequal society.

Those who need counselling are encouraged to seek help by phoning 0800 21 22 23.

Youth Secretary
Thandeka Thusini
Youth Coordinator
Andile Mngadi

21 JANUARY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity with the MST

The movement of the landless in Brazil, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), has suffered a violent attack. On 10 January the Olga Benário occupation in Tremembé, São Paulo was attacked by armed men who entered the occupation in cars and motorcycles. They shot indiscriminately at residents, leaving two people dead and six people injured, among them children and elderly people.

The comrades who have fallen in the struggle are Valdir Nascimento and Gleison Barbosa.

Valdir Nascimento, known as “Valdirzão,” was a prominent figure in the struggle for agroecology and a staunch defender of occupied land. A committed member of MST since 1993, he dedicated his life to fighting illegal land sales and strengthening the peasant movement in the Paraíba Valley.

Gleison Barbosa, known as “Guegue,” was the son of a family living on the occupation. Although he lived in São Paulo, his dedication to the occupation led him to actively contribute to community efforts.

Denis Carvalho remains in an ICU ward after undergoing surgery to remove shrapnel from his head. His condition is critical.

Lula da Silva’s Workers’ Party government moved quickly against the attack and the following day Antonio Martins Filho, known as ‘Nero do Piseiro,’ was arrested and charged with leading the attack. An arrest warrant has been issued for Ítalo Rodrigues da Silva, who is currently at large. This is in striking contrast to our own government that often fails to act against assassins even when there is clear evidence of their guilt.

Like our occupations on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, the Olga Benário occupation faces intense competition from real estate speculation due to its location in the Paraíba Valley region where land is very expensive and ownership of land is lucrative.

Gilmar Mauro, from the MST national leadership, explained that “This is a region with some settlements very close to urban areas and where there is intense pressure from real estate speculation, in conjunction with local politicians and militias, to enter our territories and take over some lots. This group went there to annihilate them and our people were resisting because they [real estate speculators] wanted to take over a lot.”

Our movement has had a close relationship with the MST for many years. Many of our leaders have participated in classes at the Florestan Fernandes National School in Guararema near São Paulo. We have hosted comrades from the MST in South Africa, and our movements are in constant communication. The MST has always offered solidarity to us when we are under attack.

All over the world, popular movements that work to build the political power of the oppressed face repression. That repression often intensifies when land is occupied, decommodified, and run on the basis of democratic self-management. Struggles by the oppressed to build socialism from below are often met with extreme violence.

The MST are our very close comrades in the struggle to build a global movement of movements, and we offer them our full solidarity as they come to terms with this attack on the Olga Benário occupation.

The struggle is always global, and an injury to one is always an injury to all.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

28 JANUARY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

From Marikana to Stilfontein Our Lives Count for Nothing

In South Africa, more than thirty years after the end of apartheid, the lives of people who are black and poor are not counted as human lives. We are murdered with impunity and left to die with impunity.

We are regularly murdered by the state and private security during street protests and evictions. We are left to die in shack fires and floods. Our lives are taken in xenophobic attacks.

In 2012 34 striking miners were murdered by the state at Marikana. In 2016 mental health patients in Gauteng were moved out of proper care and into the hands of opportunistic NGOs in the name of ‘cost saving’. 144 patients died as a result of starvation, neglect, and lack of proper medical attention. Now at least 78 miners have died in Stilfontein after enduring horrific conditions as a result of the police barricading them into a mine shaft.

The police blocked the exit of the mine leaving people to starve to death after Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, the Minister in the Presidency who is under investigation for serious corruption, said that “We are going to smoke them out.” The state knowingly condemned the miners to agonising deaths.

Often no reason has to be given for the deliberate murder of people who are poor and black, or for leaving us to die via organised abandonment because we are already not counted as human. At other times killing us or leaving us to die is justified by calling us ‘criminals’ and ‘foreigners’, and by saying that we are really under the control of a ‘third force’ or some criminal conspiracy when we are just seeking livelihoods and land for living.

It is not just the state that kills us or leaves us to die. We can also be killed by private security or xenophobic mobs, often supported by local politicians and given impunity by the police. There is more and more violence within our communities.

No political party takes this seriously. Some, like the Patriotic Alliance, actively call for violence against us. Mostly the media is not concerned when we are killed or left to die. The middle classes do not take to the streets when we are killed or left to die.

We are on our own.

Every human is a human and must be counted as a human. This is the principle on which our struggle is founded and it is a principle for which many of our comrades have given their lives.

We need to build alliances with all people and organisations of good conscience in support of this principle.

The ANC-led government of national unity must be forced to take full responsibility for the human catastrophe in Stilfontein. Families have lost their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers and the right-wing Government of National Unity does not care. There is no party in parliament that really cares.

Ntshavheni must be removed from her position with immediate effect. The Patriotic Alliance must be recognised for what they are, a party with fascist elements that is the enemy of the poor and the working class. Gwede Mantashe, who continually criminalised the miners claiming that they were stealing from the economy, must also be clearly seen for what he is and removed for his position.

The propaganda that was created to justify starving human beings to death is that the miners are 'foreigners' and 'criminals' here to dig out 'our gold' at the expense of 'our economy'. Africans were mining gold long before colonialism took control of the land and set up a system of private property and invented and enforced borders.

We have never benefited from the colonial and neocolonial economy. Many of our fathers and grandfathers worked in the mines their whole lives and retired sick and poor. Their families remained poor. The communities in and around the mines remained poor.

The mining companies were and remain highly exploitative organisations concerned with nothing but private profit. Billions of rands have been and continue to be removed from our economy by corporate mining companies without tax being paid by what are called 'illicit financial flows'.

Just as there are some shack settlements run by people who use violence to seize land to sell or rent it there are mafias of various kinds in what is called the

informal economy. There are people in these mafias who also have no regard for the lives of poor black people. This must be acknowledged and addressed, as must all forms of predatory economics and violence, including those of the mining companies and their alliances with traditional leaders and politicians that have often resulted in the assassination of grassroots anti-mining activists.

Every human life must be recognised and counted as a human life. All attempts at dehumanisation must be opposed. All forms of exploitation and violence, whether in the 'formal' or 'informal' economy, must be opposed. We must build an economy centred around human well-being and not private profit. We must build a just and peaceful society.

We fully support the ANC's brave stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine but repeat our call for the ANC to show the same consideration for poor black people at home.

We express our deepest solidarity with the families of the miners who were forcibly starved to death by the ANC.

Mqapheli Bonono
S'bu Zikode
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

A Nation in a State of Despair

Every year the President of the country makes all kinds of promises in the State of the Nation Address. Every year the President tries to create the impression that the nation is moving forward and that we should all be hopeful.

Tonight the President will speak in a time of deep crises across the world. The Congo is being attacked and plundered by Rwanda, a dictatorship backed by the US and other Western powers. Israel, also backed by the US and other Western powers, has devastated Gaza and is now, with Donald Trump in the lead, planning to completely remove the Palestinian people from Gaza and escalate oppression in the West Bank. Trump is threatening South Africa to prevent land reform while supporting the violent theft of land in Palestine and the Congo.

He will also speak in a time of deep crisis in South Africa. In fact, every State of the Nation Address since 1994 has been given in a time of crisis for the poor. We were made poor by colonialism, kept poor by apartheid, and we remain poor today. There are more people living in shacks than in 1994 and unemployment, poverty, and inequality are all worse. We were always told to be patient, that things would get better, but in fact, they are getting worse.

There is no freedom for poor black people, and most black people remain poor. More than 60% of our people remain poor. More than 40% of our people are unemployed. Almost 75% of our young people are unemployed. People are going hungry in more than one in ten homes. Most people cannot afford to access healthy food. We live in an extremely violent society. Nobody is safe but the poor are most at risk.

Rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide are rapidly escalating. The stress on people who cannot provide for their families is extreme. Parents who had hoped that at least their children would escape poverty now see their children sinking into despair. Many people try to numb their pain via alcohol abuse, which is widespread, and there is a massive heroin epidemic, especially in the big cities such as Durban and Johannesburg. Some people try and survive by

turning on other people. The government thinks that putting people in prison is the solution to this instead of ensuring that everyone can have a decent and dignified life.

People continue to live without basic services, and the ANC has not even been interested in doing something as simple as eradicating undignified and unsafe pit latrines. This shows the depth of their contempt for the poor.

The ANC has failed to achieve significant land reform, and urban land reform from below is met with violence from the state and private security. Our attempts to access land and livelihoods are criminalised and met with violence. We are left to die and we are deliberately killed. In Stilfontein, the state deliberately starved 78 miners to death. Most of society accepted this. As we have been saying for thirty years, we as the poor can be left to die or killed with impunity. Our lives do not count as human lives.

Just like in the US and many other countries, politicians and other opportunists continually try to tell us that the reason why the poor are suffering is because some of our neighbours were born in other countries. This is a lie. Nobody is poor because their neighbour was born in Zimbabwe or Mozambique. It is a lie told to distract us from the real causes of our oppression and the real paths to liberation.

There will be no honesty on the real state of our nation in parliament tonight. There is no party that genuinely represents the poor and the working class. The true state of the nation can be seen in the shack settlements, in the poor rural villages, in the townships where young people spend their days on the streets, in the prisons, and in the migrant detention centres.

The number of young people that have given up on life and have taken the path of drug and alcohol abuse has increased dramatically. These are young people whose parents had hoped that they would one day rescue them from poverty. Instead, they have turned to a life of crime because they have nothing to do. And the only solution that their government has is to put them into prison. In fact, poverty has been criminalised. Living on occupied land or working an abandoned mine means that you are shown to the world as a 'criminal'. When you are poor, you are seen as lazy or criminal or both.

Instead of coming up with ways to address the problems that the country is facing, the neo-liberal government of the ANC is attacking the poor. Under the GNU, many violent evictions have been carried out. The militarisation of

the suburbs through private security by the so-called ratepayers' associations is aimed at ensuring that the poor do not get access to 'valuable land'. We are allowed to work for the rich but not to live near to the rich. Under the GNU, we have seen the rise of right-wing elements who feel that they are now entitled to do as they please, including using militarised force to evict the poor from occupied land. These elements will now feel further emboldened by Trump.

If the President took the lives of the poor seriously, he would announce a programme of radical urban and rural land reform, the implementation of a basic income grant, and other emergency measures to begin to address the crisis that most of our people live in every day.

The delivery of the State of the Nation Address by President Ramaphosa will not change anything for the poor. The poor will remain poor. Mass unemployment will remain and the social ills that have emanated as a result of poverty and inequality will continue. The government continues to be under the control of the liberals who think that markets are more important than human life. The ANC continues to fail to act against the mafias that have become so powerful in the ANC and in and around the government.

This is going to be another State of the Nation Address that will offer no hope to the oppressed. It will have no meaning for the ordinary people on the ground.

We express our deep solidarity with the people of Palestine, the people of the Congo, and the people of America and the world who must now confront the serious dangers coming from Trump's extreme right-wing presidency.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Zandile Nsibande

10 FEBRUARY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Need a United Front Against the Alliance Between AfriForum and Trump

Our movement condemns the reckless and racist actions of AfriForum in inciting the white right in the United States to act against South Africa. These actions have now resulted in a potentially highly damaging Executive Order against South Africa by Donald Trump.

The rise of the far right across Europe, as well as countries like Argentina, India, Turkey, and the Philippines, is deeply concerning for all people of good conscience. Here in Africa we have Western-backed right-wing governments in countries like Kenya, as well as the dictatorship in Rwanda. The return of Trump as the US president is a major threat to the whole world.

Trump is an extreme racist who uses fascist language about migrants from countries like Mexico and Haiti and now wants to welcome white migrants from South Africa as ‘refugees’. Trump is close to a number of far right-wing white South Africans living in the United States. Two closely related right-wing organisations here in South Africa, AfriForum and Solidarity, have been lobbying the American right for years to try and misrepresent white people as victims in South Africa.

Now we face a very serious situation in which Trump has moved against South Africa. US support for health care services for people living with HIV and AIDS may be withdrawn, South Africa may be expelled from AGOA, and there could even be sanctions. This could be devastating for our health care system and worsen the existing crisis of unemployment. Sanctions would have a disastrous impact on our society.

We condemn the actions of AfriForum and Solidarity in the strongest terms and support the call for a broad front across political lines to isolate these two organisations. These two racist organisations are built on white supremacy and have intentionally misled the American right about the land question in South

Africa, and falsely claimed that the general crisis of violence in our country, a crisis that affects the poor most of all, is a political attack on white farmers.

The members of AfriForum did not face the brutality of apartheid and colonialism. They were not robbed of their land. The leaders of AfriForum are not jailed and assassinated when they oppose the ANC. Some of their members are poor, but very few white people live without access to water and sanitation, very few white people live in shacks, and white people have the lowest level of unemployment among all races in South Africa. AfriForum and Solidarity have never expressed concern about the impoverishment and landlessness of most black people. These are organisations that exist to protect white privilege and to keep the status quo.

We welcome the actions by white South Africans of good conscience to clearly oppose the lies told by AfriForum and its attempt to build an alliance with the right in the US. It is important for white people to say that AfriForum does not speak in their name.

We do not agree with the ANC's policies on land reform and we have no confidence that new legislation will bring about real urban and rural land reform, let alone land reform in the interests of the poor and centred around the political agency of the poor. We have always made it clear that if the government is serious about land reform, they must start by first giving ownership of the land that has already been occupied by the poor in urban and rural areas, by supporting ongoing land reform from below. As we write this statement, the ANC continues to collaborate with militarised private security companies to defend the interests of the rich, and to try and use the courts to evict us from land occupations.

The new legislation is nothing but another piece of paper that will not be implemented. When land reform does happen, it is far more likely to benefit the politicians and other politically connected elites than the poor. The ANC is not and never has been on the side of the poor.

White people are not oppressed by the ANC. We have been genuinely oppressed by the ANC. Our poverty is criminalised and we are subject to unlawful evictions and all kinds of state violence. Striking miners were massacred in 2012 and miners have now been deliberately starved to death by the state in Stilfontein. Many of our leaders have been assassinated, and some of our leaders continue to live under death threats and at serious risk of violence.

We have worked, for almost twenty years now, to build solidarity with progressive organisations in other countries, such as social movements, tenant unions, and trade unions. We have also worked with some human rights organisations because we are often not believed when we say that we have been repressed until a human rights organisation does research and then confirms that what we are saying is true. We have built connections all over the world and have addressed the European Union and United Nations committees.

However, we have never called for sanctions against our country, or for any actions that would damage our society and make things worse for ordinary people. All we have called for is solidarity to end political repression. We offer that same solidarity to comrades facing political repression elsewhere in the world, such as Brazil, Kenya, and other countries.

AfriForum is trying to build a white international, a white international that is willing to do serious damage to our society, to damage our health care system and worsen unemployment so that they can continue to feel special because they are white and to be treated differently because they are white. It is reckless and unpatriotic for anyone to go to powerful right-wing forces outside the country, to lie to them and encourage them to attack our country. It is unacceptable for any South African to collaborate with racists in the US to undermine our country and put its people at risk.

Trump and the right in the US have been looking for an excuse to attack South Africa ever since we took Israel to the International Court of Justice. They want South Africa to become a client state of the West, like Kenya or Rwanda. Many white liberals in South Africa make the same demand. AfriForum's lies about white people being oppressed in South Africa have given Trump the excuse he was looking for to attack South Africa to punish South Africa for standing up for justice for the Palestinian people.

We do not forget that the United States government supported apartheid for many years. Ronald Reagan was a strong supporter of apartheid and supported the violence against our people in the 1980s.

In this situation, broad united fronts around shared minimum commitments will be necessary. It is necessary for progressive governments, especially in the Global South, to unite around matters of shared principle, such as support for the people of Palestine. This can reduce the risk of individual countries being isolated and punished.

It is also important for popular progressive movements and trade unions to unite across borders on questions of principle, and against the rise of the right in many countries. There must be support for any country that is isolated and punished for its support for Palestine.

Here in South Africa it is necessary for the progressive forces to unite and make it clear that we oppose the general oppression of the poor and the repression of the organised poor under the ANC-led government. We all need to make it clear that we oppose the abandonment of the working class, the corruption of the ANC government, the xenophobia of the government, and the way that it has carried out land reform. At the same time, we must all make it clear that we support the principle of land reform, rural and urban, that we support the principle of the human value of land being placed before its commercial value, and that despite our very serious disagreements with the ANC, we all fully support its decision to take Israel to the ICJ.

Despite facing very brutal repression from the ANC-led government, our movement will use its connections abroad to oppose the propaganda peddled by racist organisations such as AfriForum, and the racist South Africans living in the US.

We will be engaging with progressive trade union federations to try and develop a combined position and strategy for a way forward for diplomacy by the poor and the working class. We need to tell the true story of South Africa.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

19 FEBRUARY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

A Budget Speech in Desperate Times

When the minister of finance takes the podium to deliver his budget speech today he will be addressing a nation of desperate people.

The majority of our people are impoverished. Rates of hunger are sky high. The rates of unemployment, inequality and violence in our country are among the worst in the world. Even the middle classes are going without water these days, and roads, hospitals, schools, libraries, parks and whole city centres are all falling apart before our eyes. Years of austerity, kleptocracy and mismanagement have left the country broken.

Even the suburbs are decaying, and for most people life outside of the gated residential complexes, office parks and malls is desperate. In the shack settlements and townships young people are wandering around with nothing to do. They are walking in the streets aimlessly like strollers.

As we speak, many young people who have passed their matric despite the crisis in our schools are unable to further their studies. Many of those who have been given places at universities and TVET colleges are struggling for accommodation. Many are still waiting for financial aid. Our youth have lost all hope in our government. Most have lost all hope in all political parties.

There is no work and depression and anxiety are rampant. People are increasingly numbing their pain with alcohol, heroin and other drugs, and turning on each other. Some are joining the gangs that prey on society. Poverty is being criminalised and the poor are being policed with increasing and sometimes militarised violence.

More violence from the state and private security is not the solution. Violence can never resolve a social crisis. Building a decent and just society in which the lives and dignity of all people are valued is the only way to resolve the social crisis.

With almost no economic growth year after year and relentless austerity, which is just a polite way of describing brutal cuts to social spending, we are in a frightening spiral of decline.

Now that there is a real threat from Trump's fascist government against the longstanding American support for the health care system to provide care

for people living with HIV and AIDS there may soon be a massive hole in the health care budget. Many people who are kept alive and healthy by ARVs are suffering a lot of stress and despair as they face Trump's cruelty. A lot of people who are on this treatment will be going through depression. It is imperative that the finance minister must find money to sustain the treatment and care programme for people living with HIV and AIDS. We cannot be dependent on a man as cruel and racist as Trump.

We are living in desperate times and Minister Godongwana must provide a budget that will give hope to everyone, including the poor in shack settlements and in the rural areas. It is time for the super-rich to give up some of their privileges for those who go to sleep without food. Taxing the rich for the benefit of the poor will be welcomed by our movement.

At the same time corruption needs to be decisively dealt with so that public wealth is used for the public good. We need massive investment in schools, universities, hospitals, housing and psychological and rehab services. We need massive investment in building peace and safety. We need massive investment in our cities. We need, above all, massive investment in our people.

In the urgency of this desperate crisis the SRD grant must begin to pave the way for a universal basic income grant and land must be allocated for people to grow food and markets established for people to buy and sell food. There must be support for grassroots cooperatives and communes. Young people must be offered work in public works projects. These kinds of measures will begin to instil confidence and hope for the poor.

More austerity can only lead to more suffering, more decay of our institutions and infrastructure and more violence. There are alarming rumours that the health and education budgets will be cut, and that VAT, always an anti-poor tax, will be increased.

Austerity and regressive taxes must be opposed.

Desperate times call for bold, creative and decisive measures, measures in the interests of the people.

We also take this opportunity to express our solidarity with the people of Palestine, who continue to be attacked by Israel, the people of the Congo who continue to be attacked by Rwanda and the friends, family and comrades of Imam Muhsin Hendricks. As always, an injury to one is an injury to all.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

13 MARCH 2025

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Tomorrow We Oppose Mass Evictions in the High Court

Tomorrow, Abahlali baseMjondolo will be in the Pietermaritzburg High Court to defend an attempt to evict the poor by the Dolphin Coast Residents and Ratepayers Association, acting together with the KwaDukuza Municipality.

The poor are under attack by an unholy alliance formed between the ANC in KwaDukuza, who openly say that the poor should not be allowed to live on 'prime land', and a group of rich white racists who do not want poor black people to live with them.

A racist video released by the Dolphin Coast Residents and Ratepayers Association refers to black people who are living in Ballito as polluters who bring crime to the area and chase away tourists. We produced this video in response: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUqykK24KYc&t=236s> The Dolphin Coast Residents and Ratepayers Association wants us to work in their homes and businesses for low wages but not to live with them. Our humanity is being denied. This racism is very painful, and we will resist it.

The alliance between the KwaDukuza Municipality and the Dolphin Coast Residents and Ratepayers Association is asking the court to forcibly remove 980 families to a human dumping ground far from where they now live, close to their jobs and schools.

We are aware that the legal fees for this case are not paid by the municipality but are paid by these rich racists who have built gated communities for themselves. They have paid a fortune to separate themselves from other people, and now they want to get rid of the poor black people who have come to live in the same areas.

After 30 years of fake freedom, the black poor and working class continue to be pushed away from the areas where we live and work. We are seeing a new form of apartheid where segregation is no longer only about the colour of one's skin but also about how wealthy you are.

This case shows clearly that the ANC does not want to redress the injustices of the past and is, in fact, creating new injustices in the present. They are now working with the rich—many of whom are racists—to force poor black people off what they call ‘prime land’ and into human dumping grounds in the middle of nowhere.

This is not justice. This is not freedom. This is an updated form of apartheid.
We will resist.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

25 MARCH 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo Back in Court Today

The waves of attempts to evict us and destroy our occupations and communes via the courts continue.

On 14 March, the application by the KwaDukuza Municipality and the Dolphin Coast Residents and Ratepayers Association to forcibly remove poor black people from “prime land” along the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast was dismissed in the Pietermaritzburg High Court.

Today we are in the Mthatha High Court to contest an attempt at a mass eviction in Mount Ayliff in the Eastern Cape. The Umzimvubu Municipality has filed and served eviction papers against people who live on a piece of land close to this small town.

For decades, most shack settlements have been in the big cities where people seek better opportunities. However, with worsening impoverishment, hunger, and desperation, we now increasingly see people occupying land and building shacks in smaller municipalities. This is the result of the failure of government to enable viable forms of life for people in rural areas. In many rural municipalities, the main aim of the politicians and municipal officials is corruption. There is often no commitment to providing land, housing, services, and livelihoods for the people. When people occupy land in order to access better opportunities, municipal governments continue to respond by attempting to evict people.

The hypocrisy in the ANC continues. On one hand, they have signed the Expropriation Bill into law, and on the other, they continue to evict the poor in the cities. They talk about rural land reform in the abstract while violently repressing urban land reform from below.

We will also be defending the people of Hillary in the Durban High Court and the people of Shaka’s Head in the Pietermaritzburg High Court.

The struggle for the defence of the poor, carried out in our occupations and communes, on the streets, and in the courts, remains as we face attacks from all fronts.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Thandeka Thusini

22 APRIL 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Celebrate the Life of Pope Francis, a Pope for the People of the World

Abahlali baseMjondolo joins the millions of Catholics around the world in mourning the passing of Pope Francis, who died on Easter Monday, 21 April 2025, at the age of 88.

Pope Francis began his ministry in the shanty towns of Buenos Aires and, over his life, moved closer to liberation theology. He was always on the side of the poor and came to increasingly support the protagonism of the poor.

Pope Francis never accepted the fact that there was inequality in the world. He was against the atrocities in Palestine and in South Sudan. He visited countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, where there are deep and terrible wars. Although there is still a long way to go he moved the church closer to justice for LGBTI+ people. He understood that everyone is equal, that it is the forces of oppression that deny this and that society must reflect the equality of all human beings.

Pope Francis touched issues that must have been difficult for him to raise, such as the West being responsible for taking the minerals in Africa and leaving Africa in dire poverty. He visited leaders like Fidel Castro and the great footballer Diego Maradona. He also encouraged the working together of all religions, and tried to build peace and respect across religious divisions.

In 2016 S'bu Zikode, the president of our movement, visited Rome at the invitation of Pope Francis to attend a Popular Movements gathering. Our president was invited to a private audience with the pope, who humbly asked our president to accept his confession for the failure of the church to stand with the poor and to pray for him. He blessed the banner of our movement.

Pope Francis was a humble man who understood that, as a man of God, he could not save the world alone. He understood that it would take the people of the world to solve the issues facing the world. This is why he embraced our

movement and was such a strong supporter of the MST in Brazil along with many other movements.

In his last words, Pope Francis said again, “Brothers and Sisters, I am leaving you now. Please pray for me.” This is a Pope who did not see himself as a messiah but as a Pope who believed in collectivity. He believed in everyone playing a part in creating a world with the tranquillity that comes from peace and justice.

We believe that he was a Pope for the people of the world. We saw a Pope who allied himself with the interests of the poor. We noticed and appreciated that he was very concerned and sent his condolences to the families of those who lost their loved ones in the fire that engulfed the building in Johannesburg, where more than 70 people lost their lives. We also noted that he was strongly against xenophobia.

Religion can be used to oppress people and it can be used to emancipate people. Pope Francis was no ordinary Pope. His commitment to justice and opposition to oppression were clear and strong.

Pope Francis began his ministry in the villas miserias, the shanty towns of Buenos Aires. He always recognised the deep suffering caused by poverty and inequality, and emphasised the dignity of the poor and the need for justice. As he grew older he came closer to liberation theology and he began a process of healing with the liberation theology movement within the church. He met with Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian priest widely regarded as a founder of liberation theology, who spent much of his life living and working among the poor in the shanty towns of Lima. He also canonised Óscar Romero, the archbishop of El Salvador who was assassinated for standing with the poor, and José Gregorio Hernández, a radical Venezuelan doctor known as the “doctor of the poor” for treating impoverished patients in the shanty towns of Caracas for free and even buying people medicine with his own money.

May his soul rest in peace.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

23 APRIL 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Denounce Fake Freedom

We have been collectively mourning UnFreedom Day since 2006. This year we will be holding rallies and protests in three provinces to show the world that we are not free and to build the unity and power of the poor in struggle.

We are not free because millions of us remain impoverished, hungry and without work.

We are not free because millions of us remain without land, housing, water, electricity.

We are not free because public education and health care, which never fully received the people with all the dignity that we deserve, are in decline.

We are not free because we live in a very violent society in which the state is a major perpetrator of violence. No serious person can say that South Africa is free after Marikana and Stilfontein. A state that deliberately kills its own people while abandoning millions of others to impoverishment is not an instrument of the people. It is an instrument of oppression.

We cannot be free under capitalism. We cannot be free while the genocide continues in Palestine and the people of the Congo continue to suffer. We cannot be free until racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia are defeated. We cannot be free while the government prioritises the interests of elites over the interests of the people. We cannot be free while corrupt politicians continue to steal the public wealth for their own private benefit, wantonly destroying public institutions and infrastructure in the process. No serious person can say that South Africa is free while politically connected people rob public hospitals with impunity. A state that allows this is an instrument of a predatory elite.

It is a shame and a disgrace that in a country that has so much wealth, millions of people do not have access to three meals a day, that millions of children go to sleep every month without food. The only reason why children continue to die of malnutrition and drown in pit toilets at schools is because the poor are not counted as human beings in this country.

The majority of our young people are without work. Depression and anxiety are rife. Some are self-medicating with drugs. What future is there for a country

that offers no future to most of its young people, a country that vandalises their hopes?

The poor continue to suffer alone without any services from government. We continue to be washed away by floods and to burn alive in shacks while the politicians use public money, the shared wealth of the people, to enrich themselves and their families at the expense of society.

For the last 31 years the poor have been used as vote banks. We are only important during elections during which we are given lies and food parcels but once a new government is in place we are left to die. This is the painful truth.

There is no political party that stands for the interests of the people. There is no political party that struggles with the people. There is no political party that is an instrument of the people. Many parties are trying to win votes by turning the poor against each other by inciting and exploiting xenophobia and ethnic prejudices. Nobody is poor because their neighbour was born in a different country, comes from a different province or speaks a different language.

The forces of oppression are global and so too are the forces of resistance. We express our solidarity with the people of Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Swaziland, and all people everywhere who are suffering and resisting oppression.

Every human being must be counted as a human being everywhere. The earth and its riches must be shared everywhere.

We will be free when land, wealth and power are fairly shared, and when democracy is understood as the day-to-day power of the people where we live, work and study.

In KwaZulu-Natal we march from Curries Fountain to the City Hall in Durban on 25 April.

In Gauteng we will hold a rally at the Mountain View Occupation in Braam Fischer Phase 2 in Soweto on 27 April.

In Mpumalanga we will hold a rally at the eNkanini 1 Occupation in Perdekop on 27 April.

The struggle continues.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

26 APRIL 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Unfreedom Day Rallies in Gauteng and Mpumalanga on 27 April

Note: The Perdekop Police Have Tried to Ban the Mpumalanga Rally

For us to be free means that we have a right to express ourselves, to stand up for what we believe in without restraint or repression.

We are not free because we are denied access to good land, decent housing, and decent work.

We are not free because we are denied access to services like electricity, water and sanitation, and because institutions like public healthcare and schools are not ready to receive us with respect and care.

We are not free because we must travel far to access healthcare, education and work, and there is no safe affordable public transport. We are not free because women are not safe.

We are not free because people must leave their rural homes to come to the cities looking for work and education because there is nothing provided for people in the rural areas.

We are not free because farm dwellers are denied services because they live in private land. They also face brutal eviction from farmers.

We are not free because we are not welcomed to participate in all discussions and decision making affecting our lives. They discuss and conclude for us without us.

We are not free because parliament is full of sharks. We are not free because no political party represents the poor, including shack dwellers.

We are not free because we are not recognised by local government.

For the politicians we are just tools to be pulled out when elections come. They come and lie to us and then they disappear after the elections are over.

The elites, whether in politics, NGOs or elsewhere, like to pity us. They say that they are on our side for as long as they can pity us while we remain sad and silent. But when we insist on our right to think, speak and act for ourselves

they say we are criminals; they treat us like criminals. When we build our power together, they come to undermine and repress us.

The government has contempt for us. This was shown, again, when they tried to increase VAT while most of us are not working, and millions of people are growing hungry. The politicians just think for themselves and their families; they do not think for the people.

The rich, often supported by the government, say that we cannot be allowed to live where we want and need to live because we are going to decrease the value of property prices. They work together to push us off good land and out of the cities. We are threatened with evictions all the time.

If our presence makes property prices fall, then it is clear that capitalism has no respect for us as human beings and that capitalism must fall. The social value of land must come before its commercial value.

All over the country we continue to face fires, and our comrades in Durban face regular floods.

How can we say that we are free when we are treated as criminals? How can we say that we are free when we are treated like we don't mean anything, when our humanity is denied and vandalised?

We are not free because our dignity as human beings is not respected and protected. We are forgotten, looked down on and disrespected. We are treated as if we do not belong. We are not even given a chance.

We are not free when our brothers and sisters in Palestine, the Congo, Swaziland and elsewhere are not free.

We have nothing to celebrate on this so-called 'Freedom Day'. We will come together to mourn the reality that we have been left out of this so-called freedom.

We insist that our dignity must be respected and that our voices must be heard. We call on all those who know that they are unfree to come running with us.

Unfreedom Day 2025 in Gauteng will be held on 27 April at the Mountain View Occupation in Braamfischer Phase 2 in Soweto. Along with the Gauteng branches comrades from elsewhere in the country will also be present. We will start at 9:00 a.m.

Unfreedom Day 2025 in Mpumalanga will be held in Perdekop on 27 April at the eNkanini 1 Occupation. All Mpumalanga branches will participate, along with comrades from elsewhere in the country.

The Station Commander at the Perdekop Police Station has told us that the police will not allow the rally to proceed as Cyril Ramaphosa will be speaking on the same day. Once again, the political police are acting on the instructions of politicians to repress the basic democratic rights of the organised poor. They have no legal basis to ban the rally, and we will proceed in defiance of the instruction from the police.

At both events we will send a strong message to the government and the whole country that we are not yet liberated.

They must know that we are not all afraid.

Thapelo Mohapi (General Secretary)
Zanele Ngobese (Gauteng leadership)
Lesley Modikwa (Gauteng leadership)
Sandile Mofokeng (Mpumalanga leadership)

13 MAY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo in Court Against Evictions This Week

Our movement defends against all attempts to destroy the homes of the poor and to drive us off our land, whether in the occupations, on the streets, or in the courts.

Today the Mthatha High Court will hear the matter between Abahlali baseMjondolo and the Umzimvubu Municipality. Comrades in Mount Ayliff are being evicted by the Umzimvubu Municipality under the Alfred Nzo District. The community in Mount Ayliff has faced brutal attacks from the ANC-led municipality and the police. Many of the people in the occupation, which has faced unlawful arrests, teargas, and rubber bullets, are elderly.

Yesterday the Johannesburg High Court heard the matter between Abahlali baseMjondolo in Mountain View in Soweto and the Johannesburg municipality. A consent order was reached between our lawyers and the municipality's lawyers, stating that because the municipality had served the wrong location, they cannot continue with the evictions. The municipality was instructed to serve the correct people and not our members, with the result that the municipality is ordered to cease its evictions.

Evictions at gunpoint continue in Durban, where people are routinely brutally beaten by the Anti-Land Invasion Unit and private security. Many people have suffered as a result. One person has been hospitalised due to the severe injuries he sustained from being beaten by private security while people were being unlawfully evicted from their homes next to Howard College.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

28 MAY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Our People are Starving

Millions of our people have been impoverished by the system of oppression that makes the poor to be poor and the rich to be rich. Hunger is a very painful part of impoverishment. Some people feel ashamed and hide this pain and suffer alone.

Many parents are missing meals to feed their children. Some are even boiling weeds to at least give their children something. Almost a quarter of children live in what is called 'severe food poverty', and almost a third suffer from stunting due to a lack of sufficient nutritious food. More than 15 million people live with what is called 'food insecurity'. These terms are used to hide the pain of real people and real families who suffer from hunger and in some cases outright starvation. Since January 2025, 155 children under the age of five have died from malnutrition in public health facilities.

People were made poor by colonialism and capitalism and have been kept poor by neocolonialism, capitalism and the predatory elites who captured the national liberation struggle. For as long as people must live without land, there is mass unemployment, grants are not enough to afford healthy food, food remains commodified and the supermarkets dominate the food system, people will continue to go hungry.

The commercial value of food trumps its social value and we continue to export food while our people are dying like dogs because they cannot afford food. Profit maximisation is put before human life. Many supermarkets, restaurants and rich people are throwing good food away while there are those who go to sleep without anything to eat.

The good question is not only about quantity. It is also about quality. When poor people can buy food we often cannot afford to buy healthy food. The food crisis is not only about access to food. It is also about access to healthy food.

The food question is not only about distribution. It is also about production. Land is very important in our struggle. Land is not only used for housing. We also grow healthy organic food on the land we have occupied. When we are

denied land we cannot grow our food. Evictions violently deprive people of land to grow their own food.

Some of the supermarkets make huge profits and their owners and managers are extremely rich in a country where hunger is endemic and some people are starving to death.

Starvation is being used as a weapon of war in Palestine, the Congo and elsewhere. This is correctly recognised as a crime against humanity. However hunger is not treated as a crisis in South Africa. It is mostly ignored by elites because we are not counted as human.

Today is World Hunger Day. Abahlali baseMjondolo is part of the Union Against Hunger and today we make the following ten demands:

1. Immediate measures must be taken to reduce the price of food. These measures must include zero rating of basic food in terms of tax and generous subsidies for basic foods. They must also include strict regulations to prevent supermarkets and others from selling basic food at inflated prices.

2. A basic monthly food basket for a family costs just under R5 500. The system of grants must be urgently expanded and increased so that no family has to go hungry.

3. Measures must be taken to stop supermarkets and restaurants from throwing good food away.

4. Supermarkets must be regulated to reduce profit-taking and limits must be set on executive salaries and bonuses.

5. There needs to be a major programme of urban land reform. This must include releasing new land and regularising existing land occupations. Evictions must be stopped. This programme of urban land reform must be accompanied by a massive project to support urban farming with training in agroecology and cooperative management and the provision of seeds, irrigation and tools.

6. Rural land that is unused, or held for speculation, must be expropriated, placed under democratic forms of collective management and used for food production.

7. Community markets need to be established so that poor people can sell their produce to each other and not have to rely on the supermarkets. These markets must be able to accept SASSA cards.

8. Free and nutritious food needs to be provided at every school and hospital.

9. There needs to be a massive public health campaign to educate our people about which foods are healthy foods and which are unhealthy. Unhealthy foods must carry clear warning labels. Unhealthy foods must also be taxed and the money used to subsidise healthy foods.

10. Advertising of ultra-processed junk food, especially to children, must be banned in the same way that advertising of tobacco products has been banned.

The activation of all these measures must be fully public and transparent, and overseen by credible democratic membership-based organisations, to ensure that there is no corruption.

Hunger must be understood as a serious crisis and urgent measures must be taken to end hunger in South Africa. It must be understood that the crisis of hunger is directly related to the land question and that it is a matter of dignity as well as health and survival.

As our comrades in the MST say 'Without food sovereignty, there is no sovereignty at all'.

Thapelo Mohapi
Bathabile Makhoba
Mqapheli Bonono

9 JUNE 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

A Devastating Fire has Taken Two Young Lives in the Mountain View Occupation

One of the many cruel consequences of the organised abandonment of the poor in our country is the regular shack fires that devastate families and communities. People often lose all their possessions, including IDs, SASSA cards, school books, clothes – including school and work uniforms – family photographs and more. Many people have suffered terrible burns. Many people have been robbed of their lives.

Winter is a very difficult time for the poor who are homeless and those who live in shack settlements. While we try to keep warm by using izimbawula (braziers) or stoves to keep warm, the risk of these fires escalates. When the fires come the politicians always rush to blame them on drunkenness or ‘illegal electricity connections’ without bothering to find out the real causes. They never act to provide the forms of infrastructure and support that can reduce the risk of fire. We are left to burn.

Just after midnight on Sunday morning two children, Eyethu Mpanza and Thabiso Mpanza, who were 8 and 6 years old respectively, lost their lives in a shack fire in the Mountain View Occupation, Braamfischer, Soweto. One-year-old Ayabonga and their father, Phethangani Langa, are still in hospital fighting for their lives. The mother is completely traumatised.

The cause of the fire is not yet known.

Being poor in this country is a crime for which you can pay with your life. There are many ways to pay for being poor with your life. You can burn, starve, get washed away in a flood, be shot by the police or land invasion unit and more.

The government simply does not care about the poor. Land, housing and services are not provided. Instead of bringing what we need for a safe and dignified life, the government brings men with guns to evict us.

We are left to die in floods and fires. We are often blamed for our suffering and poverty. We are told that we are lazy, drunk, stupid and criminal. Our humanity is vandalised day after day and year after year. The situation is desperate.

We cannot carry on like this.

Thapelo Mohapi
Zanele Ngobese
Lesley Modikwa

17 JUNE 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Successful Meeting with Ministers Hlabisa, Simelane and Others

On Saturday 14 June our movement held a successful meeting with national, provincial and municipal government. The meeting was attended by a national delegation from our movement and several senior politicians, including Mr Hlabisa, the CoGTA Minister, and the Minister of Human Settlements, Ms Thembisile Simelane, among others.

Important commitments were made in terms of land, housing, evictions, responding to disasters, and sustaining channels of communication around key issues. A commitment was made to allocate a billion rand to upgrade shack settlements during this financial year.

The road to this meeting has been long.

On 19 March 2005, residents of the Kennedy Road settlement in Durban blocked a major road in protest at betrayal and lies. They blockaded the road because they wanted to be able to engage the ward councillor, Yacoob Baig. When he arrived at the protest, he arrived in an armoured police vehicle and told the police that the protestors were criminals and that they must be arrested. People were beaten and arrested.

In late 2006, our movement, which was formed on 4 October 2005, finally secured a meeting with the provincial Housing Department after a year of intense struggle in the face of violent state repression. We had high hopes for that meeting. It came after a huge march on Mike Mabuyakhulu, who was then the MEC for Housing in KwaZulu-Natal. That march was illegally banned by Michael Sutcliffe, who was then the city manager for the eThekweni Municipality, and then unbanned by the court.

We thought that we would be heard at last and that this meeting with Mabuyakhulu would mark the beginning of some progress. But when we got there, they started by accusing us of working with an agent of a foreign intelligence agency paid to destabilise the country and threatening us with arrest.

We were then told that if we wanted to be able to meet with the government regularly and to be able to get houses, we must join Slum Dwellers International (SDI). The instruction was clear: stay on our own and keep thinking and speaking for ourselves and be arrested, or join SDI and be obedient and be rewarded. We refused to join SDI. We announced this on the radio. Within days the arrests and beatings started.

We faced severe repression in November 2009, and Willies Mchunu, who was then the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Community Safety, announced that a decision had been taken to ‘disband’ our movement. We had to go underground for some time, and when we rebuilt an open presence and returned to mass protest, we won a meeting with Nigel Gumede, who then chaired the housing committee in the eThekweni Municipality, in October 2011. Gumede openly threatened our President, S’bu Zikode, at that meeting, saying: “Ngingumbulali.”

In June 2013, the assassinations started when Nkululeko Gwala was shot hours after then ANC regional chairperson Sibongiseni Dhlomo publicly said that Nkululeko would be “sorted out.”

Things were very different on Saturday.

On 25 April this year, thousands of comrades braved the heavy rain in Durban to mourn unfreedom and march against the official Freedom Day celebration. The CoGTA Minister, Velenkosini Hlabisa, accepted the memorandum with humility and respect and promised to respond to it.

The meeting that was held on Saturday proceeded with the same spirit. For twenty years, senior politicians have sent junior officials to accept our memoranda at marches and then thrown them into the bin.

Along with Ministers Hlabisa and Simelane, the KZN MEC for CoGTA, Mr Mfu Buthelezi, and the eThekweni Deputy Mayor, Cllr Zandile Myeni, were present. Apologies were received from the Minister of Water and Sanitation, the KZN MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, and the eThekweni Mayor. The KwaDukuza Municipality did not attend and failed to extend an apology.

Our delegation included leaders from KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Mpumalanga.

The following agreements were made:

The KZN MEC for CoGTA will convene a meeting with Abahlali and the KwaDukuza Municipality in two weeks’ time.

The eThekweni Deputy Mayor will convene a meeting with the leadership of our movement to engage on the details of issues raised by Abahlali baseMjondolo in the eThekweni region.

Minister Simelane will arrange meetings with Abahlali baseGauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape to engage on issues of concern to the movement in these provinces.

CoGTA will consider training and empowering Abahlali baseMjondolo members on disaster management—such as dealing with fires and floods.

A working relationship will be built with both ministries and all the municipalities where the movement has a presence.

Minister Hlabisa will facilitate in terms of the IGR (intergovernmental relations) and enable and monitor the working relationship with our movement going forward.

We will seek to resolve conflicts over land use with negotiations rather than litigation.

One billion rand will be set aside in this financial year for the upgrading of shack settlements.

The Minister will ensure that municipalities' plans and budgets include provisions for the issues and priorities raised by the movement.

We welcome and appreciate the respectful spirit in which the meeting was held and look forward to ongoing engagement in the same spirit. We thank Minister Hlabisa for making this meeting possible.

As we continue to build the democratic power of the oppressed from below, we remain willing to engage with all levels of government whenever there are opportunities to advance the interests of our movement, of the poor in general, and to move towards a more just society.

Thapelo Mohapi, General Secretary
Melita Ngcobo, Gauteng
Zanele Ngobese, Gauteng
Sandile Mofokeng, Mpumalanga

8 JULY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The KwaDukuza Municipality Continues to Try to Displace the Poor

The corrupt KwaDukuza Municipality, led by a mayor who moves with fifteen bodyguards at a cost of R73,000 a month to the public, continues its assault on the poor. Working hand-in-hand with the elite and racist Dolphin Coast Rates and Residents Association, the municipality is determined to drive poor black people out of Ballito.

In KwaDukuza, the police and private security routinely mount joint operations against impoverished communities. Instead of addressing the urgent needs of the poor, the municipality has chosen to focus its energy on evictions to appease the elite, much of it white.

The legal framework which has been shaped over time by rulings from the Constitutional Court, requires the municipality to engage meaningfully with the community before any eviction can take place. The matter is due to be heard in court in 3 months' time but the KwaDukuza municipality failed to set up an engagement with the community until 5 July. During the meeting, our members asked clear and serious questions about the proposed relocation. The municipality failed to answer those questions or address the community's concerns.

From the start, the municipality tried to control the process. They insisted on holding the meeting at a venue outside the community, but residents resisted. Eventually, the municipality was forced to come to the occupation itself to meet with the people.

The issue of tenure security – a critical concern in this country – was raised, but the municipality had no meaningful response. Community members also raised concerns about basic services. The municipality's only plan is to dump people in a place with no electricity, no piped water, and no infrastructure. The water will be delivered via private tankers. These tenders are widely known to be corrupt, and the service provided, such as it is, is unreliable. When the

tenderpreneurs are not paid, the water doesn't arrive, and the people are left to suffer.

No provision has been made for subsidised, safe and reliable transport from the proposed relocation site. There are no plans to build decent houses. These human dumping grounds are not a place for human beings to live and flourish. They are a place where people are kept out of sight and expected to survive at a bare minimum. It is an attack on our dignity and the value of our lives.

The community that has been built at Shaka's Head is well organised. Residents have made significant progress in self-governance and in developing their own community infrastructure.

This is not new. When our movement was formed 20 years ago, the state was already attempting to carry out forced removals from suburbs like Clare Estate, Sydenham and Reservoir Hills. Their aim was to push poor black people out of well-located urban areas and into human dumping grounds. We resisted then, and they failed. People are still living in those communities.

We will resist this attempt at forced removal – in the courts, in the streets, and in the community.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Ongama Mncameni

17 JULY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity with SERI and Other Organisations Under Attack by Operation Dudula

Around the world, right-wing forces are scapegoating migrants for the devastation caused by capitalism and, in countries like South Africa, extreme corruption.

Our movement has always put human dignity at the centre of our struggle. We began our struggle by demanding the recognition of our own humanity and dignity from the ANC and the state which were vandalising our humanity.

We do not only struggle for the recognition of our own humanity. Every human being, everywhere, must be counted as a human being. We are in solidarity with all oppressed people everywhere. We are in solidarity with the people of Palestine, Swaziland and the Congo. We are in solidarity with the young people facing the police on the streets of Nairobi, with people resisting ICE in the United States, and with everyone who resists the vandalism of humanity.

In 2008, when the first wave of serious xenophobic violence began in South Africa, we held an urgent discussion and issued a strong and clear statement of our principles. We noted that we had been warning for years that the anger of the poor can go in many directions, and we affirmed the principle that a person is a person wherever they find themselves: *Unyawo alunampumulo*. We agreed that we would shelter and defend people under attack.

That statement can be read here: <https://abahlali.org/node/3582/>

We have held to these principles and have worked closely with migrant organisations, worked to support migrants to organise themselves, and welcomed everyone into our movement and into its leadership. Wherever we organise, we make it very clear that opposition to xenophobia is a fundamental principle of our movement.

In recent weeks, Operation Dudula — which has a long history of violent attacks on migrants — has been blockading the entrances to public hospitals and

aggressively denying people they claim are not South African access to health-care. This is an all-out and cowardly attack on vulnerable people. It is a deep shame on our country that there are groups openly and violently denying other human beings the right to access healthcare simply because they were born in another country.

Our public healthcare system is in crisis as a result of many years of austerity, which has seen budgets ruthlessly cut year after year; mismanagement by political appointees; and massive looting by politically connected operators, some of them operating as violent mafias.

Scapegoating migrants for this crisis, and aggressively denying them access to hospitals, is not just cowardly and cruel – it is also a form of public political miseducation that diverts attention away from the real causes of the crisis.

Today, Operation Dudula will march on the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI) and other organisations, accusing them of being ‘unpatriotic’ for including migrants in the legal support that they offer to all people in South Africa whose rights are under attack.

SERI has represented a number of organisations, including our movement, in court action against Operation Dudula for assaulting, intimidating and generally harassing and abusing migrants. Details of the case against Operation Dudula can be found here: <https://www.seri-sa.org/index.php/latest-news/1443-press-statement-the-high-court-to-hear-arguments-in-operation-dudula-matter-9-june-2025>

If ‘patriotism’ is misunderstood as dehumanising and scapegoating some of us who live in this country we want nothing to do with it. However the patriotism with its roots in the vision of a just society that was developed in the struggle against apartheid, the struggle in which the South African nation was built, is a patriotism that we can and do support. We love our country and we struggle with and for all oppressed people to build a better South Africa for all of us who live here.

When we heard that Operation Dudula was going to march on SERI and other organisations we discussed this at our General Assembly in Durban. Our members decided that we should meet with Operation Dudula. They decided that the meeting should begin by acknowledging that South Africans are and should be angry at massive unemployment and impoverishment, collapsing services and institutions and very high rates of violence. Our members thought that

once we had agreed on this we should discuss the real reasons for the suffering of the people, and the need to affirm and defend the humanity of all people.

We contacted Operation Dudula to request a meeting but they refused to meet us, saying that we are also 'unpatriotic' and that we have taken them to court.

Our movement has a long history of support from SERI. They are genuine movement lawyers who have worked with respectful, principled and dedicated commitment year after year. Working in partnership with SERI we have won many victories for our members. Some of these victories have benefited poor people as a whole. SERI are our comrades, and we will stand with them, as we stand with all people and organisations under attack from Operation Dudula, or any other expression of fascist politics.

Today we will be on the streets, outside the SERI office, in solidarity with our comrades and in defence of our principles. Just as we cannot allow the vandalism of the humanity of others, we cannot allow our own humanity to be disgraced.

These are trying times in our country that require all of us to work together to build the unity of the oppressed and to build powerful movements for justice. We must direct our anger where it belongs – at the state, the government, the ANC and the capitalist system – and not at people who were born in other countries.

We must not allow right-wing forces to justify violence against the people in the name of the people. The political forces that try to divide the oppressed – to turn people against their neighbours – are always the enemies of the oppressed, and the struggle for justice.

If Operation Dudula change their minds we remain willing to meet them in order to discuss how to understand the real causes and nature of the crisis that we all face and to unite the poor and the working class to build a peaceful and just society.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

19 JULY 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Death Threats from Operation Dudula Supporters

On 17 July a small group of Operation Dudula supporters marched on the offices of the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI), a social justice non-profit organisation in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Many were dressed in military uniforms and some wore MKP regalia.

Operation Dudula is a militarised, fascist organisation that encourages hate against migrants and openly attacks migrants. For years it has perpetrated violence in public, including murder. Recently it has been violently preventing migrants, including babies, from receiving health care at public hospitals. Operation Dudula has repeatedly acted with complete impunity and there are cases where the police have acted in support of Operation Dudula.

As we explained in our previous statement when we heard that Operation Dudula was going to march on SERI and other human rights organisations we discussed the matter at our General Assembly in Durban on Sunday 6 July. Our members wanted us to meet with Operation Dudula to discuss the real reasons for the social crisis in the country. Operation Dudula refused the meeting.

Following this we invited all of our Gauteng leaders to a meeting on Saturday 12 July. Melita Ngcobo gave a moving personal testimony about how SERI successfully sued the police for damages after she was assaulted and wrongfully arrested on the order of a councillor. Luyanda Fitshane also gave a very powerful testimony of SERI's work with the residents of the Lindokuhle Mnguni occupation.

We then invited all our Gauteng branches to a meeting at the eNkanini Occupation on Sunday 13 July. More than 900 people participated in this meeting.

At that meeting we discussed the dangers of xenophobia and the fascist politics of Operation Dudula. Comrades spoke profoundly about the support that they have received from SERI during their struggles. People spoke about how

SERI worked to support the rights of residents in Vusimuzi when the government was imposing reblocking in an authoritarian and damaging way. SERI's role in defending the Lindokuhle Mnguni occupation from eviction was discussed.

It was agreed that we would stand together in front of the SERI offices to protect SERI, its people, its work and our political principles from Operation Dudula.

On Thursday 17 July comrades from the Mountain View, eNkanini in Ellendale, Estineni, Bambanani, Zikode Village, Sophiatown, Vusimuzi and Lindokuhle Mnguni occupations came to be in solidarity with SERI and to hold the line against Operation Dudula in particular and fascism in general. Representatives of other organisations that have worked with SERI were also present.

Operation Dudula were hugely outnumbered. They swore at us, insulted us and threatened us. They threw bottles and stones at us and pepper sprayed a comrade from the Inner City Foundation. We remained disciplined and resolute. Operation Dudula left in humiliation and disgrace.

This is the first time that Operation Dudula have been confronted like this and it is clear that it is only the organised collective power of decent people and progressive forces that will put a stop to their reign of terror. We call on health workers' unions to organise together to confront and repel Operation Dudula from hospitals and for all progressive forces to take a clear stand against Operation Dudula, including confronting them in the streets.

Following Operation Dudula's humiliation in Braamfontein our movement has been targeted by a vicious campaign of attack on social media. Some of the profiles participating in this attack are obviously and crudely fake but others are clearly real. This attack has included numerous death threats. We give just three examples of death threats made on our Facebook page here:

Given Moore

You shall be necklaced one by one

Bafana Zikhali

One day we will kill all your members one by one. We want to see who will win between your stupid movement And Dudula.

Ngobeni Mashaba

We will assassinate you one by one

Victory to Israel and Operation Dudula

People making such public death threats must be exposed and held accountable. If we come under attack and it is necessary for us to engage in self-defence we shall do so.

Operation Dudula have no base. They are a small group of fascists who are unable to mobilise popular support and are attacking migrants with the support of authoritarian, corrupt and repressive political forces that want to destroy democracy.

Far right political parties are in parliament and are actively trying to build more support via xenophobia. If left unopposed there is always a risk that fascist politics could become stronger.

There is mass unemployment, mass impoverishment and rapidly declining public services and institutions. People are desperate and if the only explanation that they are given for their suffering is one that scapegoats migrants rather than explaining the real forces that have made people poor and that keep people poor, as well as the real reasons for the collapse of government services and institutions, there is a danger that xenophobic and fascist politics could spread.

All decent people and all progressive forces need to take clear positions against xenophobia. Xenophobic forces, some of which are fascist, must be directly confronted.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono

8 AUGUST 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Women's Day Political Camp

Tomorrow, as the Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League, we will come together to hold a political camp under the theme: "20 Years of Women's Resistance – Ubuhlalism Begins with Us."

This theme allows us to reflect together on the long and difficult road we have travelled. We will remember the founding of the Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement South Africa in 2005, and the formation of the Women's League on 9 August 2008.

We formed the Women's League because our dignity as women was still not being respected, even after all the sacrifices made during the struggle against apartheid. The demands of the historic 1956 Women's March, the women's resistance in Umkumbane in 1959 and the demands of women expressed by leaders in the struggle like Dorothy Nyembe, Emma Mashinini and Jabu Ndlovu have still not been met.

As women, we continue to face violence, poverty, exclusion, displacement and disrespect. But we refuse to be silent. We are leaders. We are organisers. We are builders of our communities. We are militants in the struggle to build revolutionary democracy and socialism from the bottom up occupation by occupation and commune by commune.

We have campaign, "Women Can Do It," that is based on four pillars:

- Supporting women in leadership
- Building livelihoods for women to enable their wellbeing and autonomy
- Taking direct action to ensuring women's access to land
- Organising to end violence against women

These pillars help us build strength, unity, and power from below. They are rooted in Ubuhlalism, our philosophy of dignity, democracy, and community.

As women, we are also building gardens, organising solidarity kitchens, and taking care of one another. As millions go hungry food sovereignty is central to our struggle. As Thomas Sankara said: "He who feeds you, controls you."

We resist any system – and especially including capitalism and patriarchy – that wants us to be landless, impoverished, dependent, voiceless, or invisible.

As Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement, and as poor people in this country, we continue to face armed evictions, demolitions, and violent attacks. These attacks do not come from foreign enemies, but from our own government and from the organised power of the rich.

Right now the KwaDukuza Municipality and Dolphin Coast ratepayers are working together to evict people from communities they have lived in for years. We send a clear message:

This reminds us of the Group Areas Act under apartheid. We were made poor, and now we are being told that certain places are not for us, even under this so-called New Republic of South Africa. The Freedom Charter declared that “All people shall have the right to live where they choose” and Ballito is our place too!!!

In Durban, the Anti-Land Invasion Unit continue to demolish and burn people’s homes. Families are left homeless. These evictions are illegal and, in law, criminal acts.

If we were truly free, no one would be evicted or have their home destroyed. If we were truly free, no child would sleep outside because their shack was burnt down by the municipality. Freedom only exists on paper. That is why, as Abahlali, we talk about “unfreedom.”

We take this moment to address Operation Dudula, a vicious and criminal fascist organisation whose actions are spreading hate and death. All progressive forces must unite against Operation Dudula and bring an end to their brazen and inhuman actions to stop access to clinics and hospitals and their threats to deny access to schools. It is outrageous that the government, the state and the ruling political parties are allowing the poor to be terrorised.

We also express our deep concern about the attacks on SERI – the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa. SERI has always stood with the poor — in courts, in communities, and in crisis. Our comrades at SERI are movement lawyers and we stand with them. SERI is us. To attack SERI is to attack the people.

We also express our solidarity with and love for all our LGBTI+ comrades, the people of Palestine and the Congo and the people of Angola and Kenya who are being murdered on the streets of Lusaka and Nairobi by the police

We say:

No to xenophobia

No to evictions and demolitions

No to attacks on our homes, our bodies and our dignity

We say:

Yes to women's power

Yes to land, housing, and food

Yes to solidarity, justice, and ubuhlalism

#Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo

#Women's resistance and solidarity

As Thomas Sankara said "There is no true social revolution without the liberation of women."

MaBongi Shoba
Zandile Nsibande
Sne Mncanyana

5 SEPTEMBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Panyaza Lesufi Declares War on the Poor

At a press conference held in Johannesburg on Wednesday to release the final report of the Usindiso Commission of Inquiry led by Justice Khampepe the ANC Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi declared open war on the poor.

Lesufi claimed that land occupations in Gauteng are organised by a criminal syndicate and alleged that “the majority of people living in shack settlements are people that are not documented in our country.” He said that the government has “no choice but to fight back” and warned that “there are going to be an unprecedented number of evictions and dismantling of informal settlements in our province.” Declaring that “we are going to destroy those informal settlements” and that “those informal settlements must be crushed,” Lesufi said that he had told his “team” that “we are going to dismantle this informal settlement at 2 a.m. I said it to the team. I don’t want anyone during the day – at 2 a.m.”

This is an all-out declaration of war on the poor, and on the protection given to our rights by the Constitution and the law. If Lesufi tries to carry out his threats he will be in direct and gross violation of the law.

It is ironic that Lesufi announced his war on the poor while releasing the final report of the Usindiso Commission of Inquiry. The report found that the fire that took 77 lives when the Usindiso building burnt down in Marshalltown, Johannesburg, on 31 August 2023 was a result of “extreme poverty and a severe lack of affordable housing”. It also found that the failure to provide services made many buildings in downtown Johannesburg very dangerous.

Politicians and much of the media constantly say that the abandoned buildings in Johannesburg in which poor people are living have been hijacked by dangerous ‘criminals’ and are occupied by ‘foreigners’. Immediately after the fire the City blamed ‘criminals’, human rights organisations and ‘foreigners’ for the fire. But the report of the Commission shows that in fact only 5% of the city’s buildings “had allegations of rent collection by non-owners”. The vast majority of people living in these buildings are South African citizens. As Lesufi himself explained at the press conference “The commission has made it clear: the root cause is not criminal syndicates, but extreme poverty and a lack of affordable housing.”

But despite this Lesufi then went on to criminalise shack dwellers and to falsely claim that the majority are undocumented whereas the statistics show that 81% of people living in shacks in Gauteng were born in South Africa. Many of the other 19% are documented.

The growing number of people who are building their homes on occupied land in the cities is not due to 'criminal syndicates'. It is due to four factors. The first is the crisis of mass unemployment. Millions of people who cannot find work and livelihoods in rural areas or smaller towns make their way to the cities in search of work and livelihoods. The second is that mass unemployment makes it impossible for millions of people to be able to buy or rent housing in the cities via the formal market. The third is that the government never built public housing at sufficient scale to meet the needs of the people and that its housing programme has now mostly collapsed. The fourth is that the government has never understood the need for an urgent and massive programme of urban land reform to guarantee people the right to the cities.

Instead of presenting us as 'criminals' and 'foreigners' and telling the media that our modest homes will be destroyed in the middle of the night with militarised force the ANC should be leading a programme of massive and rapid urban land reform followed by support for people to build safe and flourishing communities.

Lesufi is a reckless, authoritarian and self-promoting right-wing populist. The notorious AmaPanyaza which he unleashed on the people in 2023 are not about protecting our communities. These recruits are not properly trained and are not accountable to the people. They do not keep us safe. In fact they oppress us. They are used alongside other militarised forces in violent evictions and they regularly and openly harass and extort migrants and the poor.

Lesufi has also presided over escalating corruption and the rapid decline of services, infrastructure and institutions in Johannesburg. Things are now so bad that even the middle classes are regularly without water and electricity.

Lesufi is scapegoating migrants and the poor because the ANC is in crisis and is about to lose all power in Johannesburg. In the May 2024 provincial election the ANC received 34.76% of the votes cast in Gauteng. In the 2021 municipal elections the ANC received 33.6% of the vote in Johannesburg and 28.2% in Ekurhuleni. Because most people don't vote for any of the existing parties the actual support for the ANC is much lower than these numbers show. The ANC received just 16.5% of the votes among eligible voters in Gauteng in the 2024 provincial election.

The ANC's own research shows that they are currently on track to only win 20% of the vote in Johannesburg in the next local government elections which will probably be held late next year. Instead of taking responsibility for their own failures in government – for the extreme corruption and collapse in services and institutions – the ANC is now scapegoating the poor, along with migrants, to distract attention from their own failures.

Lesufi's comments show a government leader who is both extremely arrogant and extremely detached from reality. Sometimes we wonder where these politicians live because they clearly don't understand anything about the realities of South Africa. Lesufi's arrogance will be the end of the ANC in Gauteng.

For thirty years the ANC has thought that it should think for the poor and not with the poor. If the Gauteng government and the Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni metros worked with the poor we could, together, easily find solutions to ensure that people could have homes and that we could, together, plan a good future for our cities. But Lesufi does not want to talk. He wants to send armed militias to attack us and destroy our homes at 2:00am.

Lesufi's language was always authoritarian but is now starting to include fascist elements. His promise to destroy people's homes at 2am sounds just as brutal as Donald Trump's use of ICE to terrorise people. Lesufi's declaration of war on the poor is not only an attack on the Constitution that his party claims to be the custodians of. It is also a betrayal of the Freedom Charter. Although the ANC has taken a progressive position on Palestine the ANC is now a completely anti-poor right wing party at home.

We will work to ensure that, as a matter of urgency, the ANC must be voted out of power in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, and other metros across the country, next year. It must be completely voted out from government in the 2029 national elections. We have suffered enough.

We will continue to fight against unjust evictions in the occupations, on the streets and in the courts. We will protect our homes against the mafia state run by ANC. We have defeated every wave of attempted evictions that has been thrown at us over the last twenty years. We will still be here long after Lesufi is gone.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Melita Ngcobo

17 OCTOBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo in Court to Oppose Mass Eviction on the Dolphin Coast

Today at 9:00am Abahlali baseMjondolo will be in the Pietermaritzburg High Court to oppose an attempt at a mass eviction orchestrated by the Dolphin Coast Residents' Association and brought to court by the ANC led KwaDukuza Municipality. This attack on the poor is an alliance between rich residents of the area and the ANC municipality who say that the poor people should not be able to live on what they call "prime land".

It is clear that they do not see poor black people as human beings, as human beings who have the same right to live where they live. They see us as human waste, waste to be taken to the human dumping grounds in the wastelands outside the cities and far from the new urban forms of gated communities and malls that are developed up the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. They also see us as 'criminals', as a new kind of 'Swart Gevaar'.

They want us to build, clean and secure their homes and businesses, and to care for their children and old people, but they do not want us to live near them.

The cities were built by poor black people, and now we are building the new urban forms outside the cities and yet just as we were driven away from the cities under apartheid, and again in the first decades after apartheid, now we are pushed away from the new urban forms. Today a black government acting with a multi-racial elite is trying to destroy our homes and communities and drive us into human dumping grounds which are far from work and schools, and without basic services such as water and sanitation or subsidised transport. They want to reduce people – living human beings – to mere statistics.

We are appalled by the way in which private security and the police – using drones and helicopters – work together to intimidate and repress us. They have failed to break the spirit of resistance and now that they have taken this battle onto the courts we will defend our homes and communities on that terrain.

The fact that a black government is being used to perpetuate these injustices is a betrayal of the struggles of our forefathers and mothers who did not fight for freedom and democracy for us to be subjected to the same brutal treatment by those who now claim to represent us.

This country was formed through the dispossession of land and every attempt by the dispossessed to find new land for living was met with violence and evictions. Black people were denied the right to the cities. We had hoped that a black government would understand that history. However, the sell-out leaders of the ANC – amabhunu amanyama- are perpetrating a modern form of apartheid. The rich of all races can buy land in gated communities but the poor – who are overwhelmingly black – are still deemed unfit to live near work, schools, clinics etc and are still deemed to be people who should be dumped on wastelands in the middle of nowhere. The ANC are doing to the poor what Verwoerd did to our foremothers and forefathers.

We call on all progressive forces, community organisations, and individuals to stand in solidarity with Abahlali baseMjondolo and resist these evictions on the Dolphin Coast. We will not be silenced. We will not be intimidated. We will continue to fight for our right to land, dignity, and decent lives.

You have the wealth, but we have the numbers.

You have guns, drones and helicopters but we have the power of the people.

We will not be intimidated.

We will not be moved.

We will not be silenced.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

20 OCTOBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Victory for the Poor: The High Court rules in our favour

On Friday the High Court in Pietermaritzburg delivered a landmark judgment in favour of Abahlali baseMjondolo, ruling that the KwaDukuza Municipality can only evict our members from ERF 1410 Shakas Head if certain conditions are met. The court has directed that the eviction be suspended pending an order that it is satisfied that the eviction will be just and equitable.

There were two draft orders before the court, one drafted by our lawyers and the other by the municipality's lawyers. The court ruled in favour of our order.

The municipality is required to meet a number of conditions, including providing basic services such as roads, sanitation, waste removal, water, and temporary electricity; demarcating stands for each household; relocating our members to a suitable area with access to schools, healthcare, and transport; providing transport and building materials; and engaging with our members and relevant government departments. Importantly, the municipality must also report to the court on the steps it has taken to meet these conditions before any eviction can proceed.

The judgment means that either the municipality cannot move ahead to evict or it must meet the demands that the community developed to accept moving to a new site. Either way this is a victory.

This judgment is a testament to the power of collective action and the importance of standing up to the arrogant leadership of the municipality, who continue to use taxpayers' money to take us to court instead of using it to develop the people. It is a reminder that the poor and marginalised are not alone in this struggle, and that we will not be silenced or intimidated.

We commend the court for its courageous and just decision, and we call on the KwaDukuza Municipality to respect the ruling and to work with us to ensure that the rights of our members are protected. We will continue to mobilise and

organise to ensure that the municipality complies with the court's order and that our members are treated with dignity and respect.

This judgement is a landmark as it will ensure that the rich do not treat the poor like trash that needs to be removed into human dumping areas without any infrastructure or services. It recognises that human beings must be treated with dignity no matter their social conditions.

We were displaced by colonialism and denied the right to live in the cities by apartheid regime. Our place in society has not been recognised by the elite and this government and the rich are actively trying to prevent us from living near the new nodes of wealth and power in the gated communities, office parks, malls and hospitals along the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. We will continue to fight for our dignity and equality in the streets and in courts. For 20 years we have been calling for access to land, decent housing and dignity for the poor. We will continue to fight for our recognition.

We note that the municipality has issued a statement claiming that they won in court. They did not. They were denied what they asked for while we were granted what we asked for. Their statement implies that they now have the right to move to evict. They do not.

The struggle continues!

Resist evictions!

Land, wealth and power must be shared!

Solidarity forever!

Thapelo Mohapi
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

31 OCTOBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Human Rights are Under Attack by the Johannesburg ANC

South Africa is in a deep and worsening social crisis. There is mass unemployment, systemic impoverishment, widespread hunger and terrifying levels of violence. Right-wing forces are increasingly scapegoating migrants and the poor – especially street traders and shack dwellers – for the crisis. At the same time they are also targeting the human rights organisations that support vulnerable people to access the law.

These right-wing forces include outright fascists in military uniform who openly engage in thuggery on the streets. They also include a growing number of political parties. There are also reckless and dangerous right-wing populists within the ANC. The situation in the ANC in Gauteng in general and Johannesburg in particular is cause for very serious concern.

On the 5th of September we had to take a clear and strong position against Panyaza Lesufi, the ANC Premier of Gauteng, for his extreme xenophobic and anti-poor positions including his threat to destroy poor people's homes at 2:00 am. Now we have to take an equally strong position against Dada Morero, the ANC Mayor of Johannesburg.

Following Lesufi's lead Morero has launched an illegal and brutal attack on the poor. While Lesufi promised to launch illegal and brutal attacks on shack dwellers Morero is targeting street traders in the name of 'cleaning' and 're-claiming' the city.

Of course we all want the city to be clean and we all want it to be safe. However human beings are not dirt and an attack on poor people making a living as traders in the city – which courts have repeatedly confirmed to be legal – is just an act of cruelty to deflect attention from the failures of the ANC and its coalition partners to govern Johannesburg properly. They are trying to scapegoat the poor to distract people from their own corruption, arrogance and incompetence – to distract people from their own failure.

As the ANC in Johannesburg faces devastation in the coming local government elections its leaders are becoming desperate and their turn to unlawful

and violent forms of right-wing cruelty are escalating. This situation has been worsened by the rush to drive the poor out of the city before the G20 meeting in late November. Morero's campaign is not just cruel. It is also unlawful.

Street traders, like everyone else, have a right to use the courts to ensure that they are not treated as if they are beneath the law. Instead of accepting this Morero and the Johannesburg ANC have launched an attack on their pro bono human rights lawyers, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (Seri).

In July when Seri came under attack from the fascists in Operation Dudula we defended Seri in principle and in practice. We confronted them in the streets. It is extremely dangerous to allow fascists to threaten human rights organisations in the way that Operation Dudula has done. It is even more dangerous when the right-wing forces in the ANC do the same.

We are disturbed to see that the ANC in Johannesburg is now joining this attack on human rights and is mobilising its supporters to come to the South Gauteng High Court today to oppose what they call 'the Seri court case'. Seri will be representing street traders in their approach to the court to ensure that their rights, guaranteed in law, are protected from Morero's ongoing attack.

It is disturbing that Morero as the mayor of Johannesburg has been leading an attack against Seri on his personal social media. It is deeply disturbing to hear that outside the court the ANC will be joined by Operation Dudula, an outright fascist organisation, and March on March, an extreme right-wing xenophobic organisation. It is true that neither Dudula nor March on March can mobilise more than a few people. However these organisations are able to engage in serious intimidation, including death threats, and appalling forms of online abuse, including threats of murder and rape. They also get massive media coverage and are able to spread their poison through the media.

Seri is the leading pro bono law firm in the country, which has a brave record of supporting the poor and other vulnerable people to defend their rights in the courts. They operate according to the Constitution of the country, a Constitution that the ANC played a leading role in designing and adopting. For the Johannesburg ANC to join the attack on Seri, which has been driven by fascist right-wing mobs on the streets and bot-driven campaigns online, is disgraceful.

Like all people of good conscience, we support the progressive people in the ANC when they stand for the rights of Palestinians. The ANC has correctly won global respect for its positions in support of Palestine and for giving leadership to a growing collective position in support of Palestine by countries across the

Global South. We acknowledge that there are still some principled and courageous people in the organisation.

However, it is disgraceful that the Johannesburg region of the ANC is allowed to attack the poor, openly violate human rights and mobilise its remaining supporters against the leading human rights organisation in the country. It is disgraceful that they have not condemned Operation Dudula and that they will allow a fascist and openly criminal organisation to join their members outside the court today.

The South African government is hosting the G20 summit under the slogan “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”. If the world sees ANC supporters standing together with the fascists of Operation Dudula to attack a human rights organisation and defend an unlawful attack on the poor neither that slogan nor the South African government’s hosting of this important event will have any credibility. This image of crude hypocrisy will be a gift to the forces that oppose South Africa’s position of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Johannesburg is not falling apart because poor people are doing what they can to find a place to live and a livelihood. The city is not falling apart because of migrants. All the great cities of the world are home to migrants from all over the world. People trade in the streets in many of the great cities of the world. We need to stop being so small-minded, stop being so cruel, and focus on the real reasons for the crisis in Johannesburg. The deeply corrupt, cynical and increasingly right-wing ANC structures in the city and the province are a central cause of the crisis in Johannesburg.

Lesufi and Morero must be removed from office as a matter of urgency and the province and the City must cease their attacks on human rights and human rights organisations.

We are working to build a united front against the attacks on human rights and human rights organisations by Lesufi and Morero, backed by the general collapse into right-wing populism by the ANC in Gauteng and Johannesburg. We invite all progressive organisations and all people of good conscience to join us.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
S’bu Zikode

31 OCTOBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Adriaan Basson is Invited to Lunch at the Ekuphumleni Settlement

News24 has done excellent and brave work in exposing the extreme corruption at the Tembisa Hospital and reporting on the assassination of Babita Deokaran, a hero to us all. We welcome and support this work. However, some of their reporting on poor people is extremely unethical, inaccurate and prejudicial. This cannot continue.

We have taken note of the extreme anti-poor article published by News24 on 28 October under the title “Ballito shack dwellers to be kicked off prime property meant for business park”.

The article can be found here: <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/ballito-shack-dwellers-to-be-kicked-off-prime-property-meant-for-business-park-20251028-1078#>

It refers to this matter: <https://abahlali.org/node/18532/>

There are many serious problems with the article. The first problem is that the headline brazenly misrepresented the outcome of the case heard in the KwaZulu-Natal High Court in relation to the attempt by the KwaDukuza Municipality to evict people from the Ekuphumleni settlement. The headline falsely claims that the residents will be “kicked off prime property” whereas the court order makes it clear that the eviction order is suspended and the municipality must still return to court. This is a serious problem as most people do not have a subscription to News24 and are only able to read the misleading headline.

The second problem is that the article allows the municipality to claim the court ruling as a victory without noting that there were two draft orders before the court, one drafted by our lawyers and the other by the municipality’s lawyers. The court ruled in favour of our order. This was not a victory for the municipality and to allow them to claim so is a material misrepresentation of the facts.

The third problem with the article is that it quotes representatives from the KwaDukuza Municipality, the Caledon Estate – a gated community for the very rich – and the Dolphin Coast Residents' and Ratepayers' Association. Not a single resident of the settlement is quoted, nor are their lawyers or anyone from our movement, to which the settlement is affiliated. This is a basic violation of journalistic ethics and professional standards. Everybody knows that to be fair one must hear both sides of a dispute.

The fourth problem with the article is that it presents the residents as dangerous criminals, as drunkards and as dirty and unhygienic. These are the same stereotypes that have been mobilised against poor African people in cities for more than a century, and they have always been used to legitimate state violence. No evidence is given for any of these claims, and they are made against the residents in general. Rich people are just allowed to express their extreme anti-poor prejudices as if they are facts. It is very disturbing that News24 has allowed very rich people to openly vandalise the dignity and humanity of poor black people in this way. If News24 allowed white people to vandalise the dignity of black people in this way it would correctly be a huge scandal. We as poor people have the same right to dignity as all other people and it should be a scandal for our humanity to be vandalised like this.

This is not the first time that News24 has treated poor black people living in shacks in this way. On 29 July 2021 Zamekile Shangase, a member of our movement who had held a leadership position in her branch, was shot dead by the police in the Asiyindawo settlement in Lamontville in Durban during one of the notorious 'show your receipt' police raids. She was unarmed, of course. Some stones were thrown at the police and a few young men banged on the side of a police van during the raid but nobody fired on the police.

At the time we issued this press statement: <https://abahlali.org/node/17334/>

On 31 July News24 published an article on this matter: <https://www.news24.com/investigations/exclusive-unrestsa-durbans-stolen-ammunition-used-to-attack-cops-20210731>

The article does not even bother to name Zamekile Shangase, she was as disposable to News24 as she was to the police. Not a single person from the settlement was quoted, including any of the many eyewitnesses to the shooting. It was only the police and two experts who were quoted. Neither of the experts had any knowledge of the events. The article presented false claims by the police

as if they were facts, as did the two experts. The article falsely claimed that the police had to return fire after they came under fire from a dangerous criminal gang and that a woman was killed in the crossfire.

Both of these articles are in clear violations of multiple provisions of the press code. They do not report the news “truthfully, accurately and fairly”. They do not “present news in context and in a balanced manner, without any intentional or negligent departure from the facts whether by distortion, exaggeration or misrepresentation”. They do not ensure that “opinions, allegations, rumours or suppositions” are “presented clearly as such”. They do not “seek, if practicable, the views of the subject of critical reportage [in this case whole communities] in advance of publication”. They do not “avoid discriminatory or denigratory references to people’s... social origin” and they do “refer to such status in a prejudicial or pejorative context”. The article on Shakas Head is a clear case of “advocacy of hatred” – class hatred.

This cannot continue.

We want to resolve this situation and are issuing a public invitation to the News24 editor Adriaan Basson to spend a day with us. This will include a visit to the Ekuphumleni settlement where he is invited to share a meal with the residents, get to know them as human beings and discuss their experiences and their views on their situation. We look forward to a constructive and respectful discussion.

Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana
S’bu Zikode

5 NOVEMBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Victory Against Operation Dudula in the High Court!

On 27 July our movement confronted and humiliated Operation Dudula on the streets of Johannesburg. Yesterday, acting with others, we defeated them in the Gauteng High Court. The Gauteng High Court ruled that Operation Dudula's conduct is unlawful, unconstitutional and xenophobic. The court interdicted Dudula and its members from harassing, intimidating or assaulting anyone they identify as foreign, and from blocking access to schools, hospitals or workplaces.

This follows the ruling on Monday ordering the City of Johannesburg to verify, register and allocate trading spaces for street traders who had been unlawfully removed from the inner city. Both victories were won by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI) acting on behalf of our movement, as well as other organisations. The organisations represented by SERI in these two cases included the South African Informal Traders Forum (SAITF), the Inner City Federation (ICF), and Kopanang Africa Against Xenophobia (KAAX).

Operation Dudula and March on March have repeatedly claimed that they are acting to enforce the law. We have always known this is not true but the media have often openly or tacitly supported Operation Dudula – or just allowed them to lie to the public without challenging them – leading to confusion among the general public. Today the court was clear: Operation Dudula are not enforcing the law — they are breaking it.

The ruling raises serious questions about the conduct of the police, private security firms, the government, the ANC, hospital and clinic management and health workers' unions who have all allowed Operation Dudula to openly block access to hospitals and clinics.

We need to be clear. Operation Dudula is not, as some in the media have called it a 'civil society organisation'. It is a militarised fascist organisation. Its actions have brought cruelty, violence, fear and division to poor communities. We note with serious concern that on Monday Operation Dudula was joined

outside the court by the MK Party, the Patriotic Alliance and members of the Johannesburg ANC. It is very disturbing that the ANC in Johannesburg has now gone beyond right-wing populism and allied itself with outright fascist forces. It is very disturbing that there has been no condemnation of this from the national leadership of the ANC who claim that when they host the G20 meeting later this month they will be doing so in the name of “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”.

The attacks on SERI by Operation Dudula and their friends in the Johannesburg ANC along with MK, ActionSA and the Patriotic Alliance are disgraceful. The ANC mayor of Johannesburg Dada Morero has directly participated in these attacks.

SERI is a progressive pro bono law firm that takes instruction from and represents oppressed and marginalised people — street traders, residents of shack settlements and others living in poverty, some of whom are migrants but most of whom are South Africans. To attack a law firm for representing poor clients is to attack the poor themselves. An attack on SERI is an attack on us. It is also to attack the Constitution and the rule of law. This means that Dada Morero is not fit to hold public office and must be immediately removed from his position.

Poor South Africans and migrants are being scapegoated for the failures of the state. The crisis in our hospitals is not caused by migrants seeking care — it is caused by austerity, mismanagement and massive corruption. The crisis of mass unemployment is not caused by migrants — it is the result of an economy built on extraction, casualisation and exclusion, an economy that has never fully broken with its colonial origins.

We must build a united front of all progressive forces against rising fascism — against Operation Dudula, March on March, and every organisation that uses violence, xenophobia and lies to divide the poor. We are in the process of working to build an anti-fascist coalition.

The struggle for democracy and dignity must be taken forward in communities, on the streets, in the courts and in the all spaces for public discussion. We need to build a powerful progressive bloc that can make clear the real causes of the mass suffering facing our people, show real ways to build a just and decent society, and organise the popular democratic power needed to move forward.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

6 NOVEMBER 2025

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity with the People of Sudan, Tanzania and Cameroon

There is a deepening crisis across Africa. In Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, the Congo, Swaziland, Cameroon and elsewhere, governments and armed forces backed by corrupt elites and imperialist powers have turned their weapons against the people. Thousands have been massacred for demanding democracy, a way forward for young people, and a fairer economy.

In Sudan, horrific massacres are taking place in the cities of El-Fasher and Bara, and across Darfur and Kordofan. Reports from within Sudan, confirmed by the United Nations, journalists and human-rights organisations, describe atrocities committed by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF): mass killings, executions, the burning of homes, abductions of civilians and the deliberate starvation of whole communities.

Thousands have been killed. Following the fall of El-Fasher, where more than a quarter of a million people were trapped, civilians — including the sick and wounded — have been executed. Hospitals and mosques have become sites of slaughter. The city has been under siege for more than a year, its people forced to eat animal fodder to survive.

The RSF was formed from the Janjaweed militias that terrorised Darfur in the 2000s and now acts as a weapon for elites fighting over wealth and power. The United Arab Emirates has armed and financed the RSF through the gold trade, while European governments have worked with the Sudanese military to block migration from Africa into Europe. Egypt and Saudi Arabia also back the army.

The uprising that began in December 2018 was a democratic revolt of workers, women, students and the urban poor. It was sparked by austerity measures imposed under IMF direction — when bread prices rose beyond the reach of the hungry. That uprising gave rise to new grass-roots forms of democracy through the resistance committees, which continue to provide food, medicine and mutual aid amid war. But the transition that followed betrayed the revolution's

goals. The elites compromised with the military, deepened inequality and allowed the counter-revolution to regroup. Today's massacres are the result.

The Sudanese Communist Party has called for urgent international action: to end impunity, stop the flow of weapons, open humanitarian corridors and hold perpetrators accountable. These demands must be supported everywhere that people stand for justice.

The general election held in Tanzania on 29 October 2025 was stolen. In the period before the vote, the state systematically cracked down on journalists, activists, and opposition parties. Two major opposition parties were excluded from participation, and Samia Suluhu Hassan was declared the winner with nearly 98 percent of the vote.

In the lead-up to and on election day, the state imposed curfews, shut down internet access, deployed security forces, and expelled election observers. Ballot stuffing and the absence of party agents were widely reported.

During and after the election, there was a brutal crackdown on protest and dissent. Estimates of the death toll exceed a thousand, with many of the dead being young people and women killed while protesting against this fraud. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the real number may be even higher, with young men especially targeted in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya, and Songwe.

Police and soldiers used live ammunition and tear gas. Entire neighbourhoods were placed under curfew. Hospitals filled with the wounded and the dead. A message from a close comrade in Tanzania earlier this week described how "all the big cities and some villages are under curfew and the majority of people have no supplies of the basic needs because all the roads have been militarised and people aren't allowed to get out for anything."

Abductions and disappearances have been widespread. The UN has confirmed credible reports of killings in Dar es Salaam, Shinyanga and Morogoro. Activists and journalists have been arrested or forced into hiding. For nearly a week, the internet was shut down to hide the scale of the repression. Various organisations, including the SADC Observer Mission, have concluded that the elections were neither free nor fair. There have also been calls on the ICC and the UN to investigate the mass killings. Today our comrade told us that there are "Lots of funerals across the streets and the police are still searching and arresting people". Many people are still missing.

The current uprising has been led largely by young people from poor and working-class neighbourhoods who are refusing to accept a future of corruption and inequality. Their anger has been fuelled by years of privatisation, corruption and authoritarianism. The government's decision to hand control of the Dar es Salaam port and bus system to the UAE company DP World was seen as selling out the country's sovereignty. The ruling party has also lost the limited legitimacy it once had after eliminating real opposition and relying on military power to govern. The people of Tanzania are fighting for their right to live free of fear, hunger and lies.

We are mindful of the recent massacres of protesters in Kenya, where more than thirty young people were killed by police between June and July 2025 while demonstrating against corruption and economic suffering.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there were mass killings after Rwandan-backed forces invaded the country. In Swaziland, the brutal monarchy continues to rule through fear, banning opposition parties and responding to protests with lethal force.

In Cameroon, at least 48 civilians were killed this week when security forces opened fire on protesters challenging the re-election of Paul Biya, who has ruled since 1982. According to the United Nations, most of those killed were shot with live ammunition in the city of Douala.

Across Africa, imperialism, austerity and corrupt local elites are crushing popular movements. The only solution is to democratise the continent — not only through elections but by putting its land, wealth and power in the hands of its people.

There have been youth-driven uprisings in Kenya, in Swaziland and now in Tanzania. Here at home, with mass unemployment and growing desperation among young people, we are also standing on the edge of an explosion. We do not know what direction it will take, because the anger of the poor can move in many directions. But the possibility of an explosion is high.

There is one humanity in one world. Abahlali baseMjondolo stands in full solidarity with the people of Sudan and Tanzania, as well as Kenya, the Congo, Swaziland, Cameroon, and everywhere people are resisting oppression. We call on progressive forces across the continent to unite in a common struggle for a democratic, liberated Africa.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

12 FEBRUARY 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The State of the Nation Address in a Time of Escalating Crisis

This evening the attention of the country will be focussed on the State of the Nation Address. As usual it will be a case of well-funded and well-organised lying.

The actual state of the nation is a state of crisis and social devastation. More than 10 000 children die from starvation each year. More than 40% of people are without work. More than 60% of young people are without work. The grants cannot sustain even a family of three for a month.

Around 8 million people live in shacks. We have one of the highest murder rates in the world, and a deeply corrupt police force that kills people at a much higher rate than the police in the United States. Most children and young people are failed by an education system that works to keep the rich rich and the poor poor. Healthcare is in crisis, cities and towns are falling apart and today even the rich don't have reliable access to water and are protesting in the streets. Decades of austerity, mismanagement, corruption – and the criminalisation of the ruling party and the state have left our country as ruined as a field after a plague of locusts has passed through.

Instead of facing and dealing with the scale and severity of the crisis the politicians try and blame migrants for our problems. They try to turn our anger towards migrants so that we don't hold them to account for their historic betrayal of the people and struggle that brought them to power.

There is no party in parliament that is genuinely on the side of the people. Corruption, xenophobia and arrogance run across party lines. All the parties are funded by different factions of the rich. There is no party that is present in the day-to-day struggles of the people. There is no party that sees its role as accompanying the people as they build their power in struggle.

The only way out of this long and deep crisis is to build the democratic power of the oppressed from below, linking, uniting and developing struggles as we

go. Unity must be built in struggle and organised around clear principles. We remain committed to building new forms of solidarity and democracy from below, and working with all principled forces of the left among the membership based organisations of the poor and the working class so that the historic betrayal of the ANC can be confronted from below.

As we head towards the local government elections the different parties will, as usual, be trying to infiltrate our movement and capture local leaders, and even whole branches. They must know that we are clear. Our dignity is not negotiable and our movement – *ibutho labampofu* – is not for sale. We have a very clear rule that nobody can be a leader in our movement while also being a member of any of the currently existing political parties.

We want an end to neoliberal policies and the criminalisation of politics and the state. We want an end to indignity, hunger and violence. We want an end to the contempt for the poor and the routine vandalism of our dignity.

We want a peaceful and just country, a country in which everyone is safe, nobody is hungry, everyone has a decent income and access to housing, schools and hospitals. A country in which democracy is participatory, government is run by honest people who understand that they are there to work for the people and land and wealth are shared. We want a world in which the humanity of all people is recognised and defended.

We have waged twenty years of struggle to defend our dignity and build a movement for democratic socialism. Many of our comrades have given their lives for this struggle. We are not going to back down now.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

20 FEBRUARY 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Land Mafias are Preying on the Poor

Zweli Mkhize, known as Khabazela, was assassinated in the eNkanini Occupation in Allandale, near Midrand in Gauteng, at around 6:30 pm on Thursday, 12 February. He was the treasurer of the local Abahlali baseMjondolo council.

We held a memorial for Khabazela in the occupation yesterday, attended by leaders from our branches across Gauteng along with the President of Pudemo, Mlungisi Makhanya; the GS of SAFTU, Zwelinzima Vavi; the GS of GIWUSA, Mametlwe Sebei; the Executive Director of Seri, Nomzamo Zondi; and many other close comrades.

Khabazela will be laid to rest in Estcourt tomorrow. The funeral will begin at 10:00am.

Khabazela began reporting threats of assassination last year. On 20 January this year he phoned to say that he had received a call from an inkabi telling him to “stop what you are doing” or face death. The inkabi then told him that he had been promised R30 000 for the hit, and that if Khabazela could pay R40 000 his life would be spared. Khabazela responded by telling the inkabi that he should “do what you have been paid to do”. He did not stop what he was doing, which was, in accordance with the principles of our movement: to support the democratic organisation of the residents and to oppose the selling of land. At around 11:00 am on the morning of the assassination a call was made to our office in Durban threatening Khabazela and one of the other leaders in the branch council.

The eNkanini occupation and the land mafias

The eNkanini occupation was first formed on 23 August 2023 when the land known as Rabie Ridge was occupied. It is across the road from the Mayibuye settlement. It rapidly became a large occupation with around 4 500 households.

The residents tell us that five different mafias moved in to capture and sell land, each appointing their own local residents’ committee. They were selling plots of lands, each large enough to build one shack, for between R15 000 and R17 000. The leaders of these mafias were not living on the land.

The residents tell us that two of these mafias were more powerful than the others, and that both are still trying to control the land in order to sell it. One of these mafias is known as the 'izinduna'. They have a base in the eHlazeneni, Jeppe and Booysen hostels and are led by a man known as Sithole. He claims to be well known by amakhosi in KwaZulu-Natal, and there is an ethnic aspect to his claim to unelected authority. The other mafia is led by a very rich man known as Biza Shabalala who owns taxis and other businesses.

In the beginning of the occupation the 'izinduna' mafia and the taxi mafia were divided with each having their own section of the occupation, and their own office in the occupation. The occupation was attacked by the Red Ants who came heavily armed and started breaking down the shacks. The occupiers rebuilt but were then attacked by private security last year. Homes were destroyed again, and people lost belongings and furniture.

A razor wire fence was put up around the land and it was then said that anyone who crossed the fence was 'trespassing'. Some people were arrested for trespassing and kept in jail for three to four months simply for trying to have a place to live. Residents collected money for bail and transport to court. This is the point at which the residents began to organise themselves rather than just being ruled by committees appointed by the land mafias.

At this point the residents and the land mafias had a common interest in stopping the evictions. The two most powerful land mafias both contracted lawyers to oppose the evictions, and hundreds of thousands of rands were collected by the mafias to pay the lawyers. Although there were two law firms all five mafias were charging for lawyers as they had shifting alliances.

The mafias started charging R100 each time that they said that they needed money for the lawyers but then the amount being charged went up to between R500 and R600. Our understanding is that much of this money was not paid to the lawyers.

People organised shelter and toilets outside the fence to be able to live with some dignity but still faced harassment and demolition. Instead of being supported to access land and housing they were repeatedly met with violence and forced to start over again and again. In November 2024 they were able to return to the land and they still remain there although they are now fewer in number. People were told that the whole community was responsible for huge debts to the lawyers and that they must keep paying but they started to refuse to pay this

money, which they did not believe was all going to the lawyers. This is why the killing first started.

A new leadership is democratically elected

Our movement began to be approached by residents of eNkanini during 2024 at meetings in other branches in Gauteng, such as in Thembisa. We began discussions with them, at their invitation, and held the first presentation of the movement in the occupation on 22 February last year. We held the first political education workshop in the occupation on 13 April last year.

As always the discussions leading up to the decision to join our movement included the key principles of the movement – imigomo yabahlali – and building socialism from below. Democracy is a central principle of our movement. All leaders must be elected; there must be a 50/50 gender balance between leaders; leaders must conduct regular public meetings open to all residents; there must be regular elections and all leaders are subject to the right to recall at any time. Another central principle of our movement is that there can be no renting or selling of land or shacks. If any leader is found to be renting or selling land or shacks they are immediately removed from their position. If any branch council is found to be allowing this the membership of the branch is immediately suspended. We have always acted on these principles when necessary.

While the residents were considering joining the movement two of the people in the area who were very keen to join the movement were murdered. The first, known as Ntuli, was killed in eNkanini. The second, known as Freddy, was killed in Mayibuye. Another man from eNkanini, known as Phakathi, was killed in a car accident, which some people believe to have been a disguised murder. In October last year the court ordered that the City of Johannesburg must rebuild people's homes in Mayibuye, and pay them R1 500 each. The man whose name was on the court order, Nakampe Sehlale, was also murdered.

When it was clear that the residents were going to join our movement the 'izinduna' and the taxi association started to work together against the movement, and against an end to the selling of land. They said no to elections but the majority of the residents said yes.

The launch of the branch was scheduled for 7 June last year. On the day of the launch Sithole arrived with six armed men. He said that he was an induna from Mnambithi, that he was well known by the amakhosi, and that this area was controlled by the 'izinduna'. He was clear that in his view the fact that he is an

induna at home in KwaZulu-Natal also gives him the right to control land and exert authority in Johannesburg. He also said that he had appointed a committee to run the area and that there was no need for a new leadership to be elected. He gave us their names and told us that we must just swear them in as leaders of the movement. Biza Shabalala was parked close by in his very expensive Mercedes and watched what was happening.

Our General Secretary, Thapelo Mohapi, was running the launch. He consulted with the residents suggesting that the launch be postponed as the situation was dangerous but the residents insisted that it must go ahead: “guns or no guns”. It went ahead with more than 1 500 people participating in the open public election despite the presence of the six armed men. Biza only observed the election but Sithole decided to run for treasurer. He lost the election for this position to Khabazela, and he lost it decisively.

It was very clear that Sithole considered the open, public election of a local council as a direct threat to his power and interests. He was enraged by his loss to Khabazela.

That night Thulani Ngubane, an Abahlali supporter from Mayibuye who was working towards an election in Mayibuye was shot dead.

There have now been five murders in eNkanini between February last year and February this year. While we have our suspicions we don't know who killed these men but they were all killed in the same way. There have been no arrests and the local police have shown no interest in the killings.

After the branch council was elected in eNkanini they, acting with the support of the community and sustaining an ongoing process of political education, immediately put an end to the selling of land. They also moved, through the democratic structures and processes they had built, towards developing community infrastructure such as lighting and water. This also threatened the ‘izin-duna’ who became even more hostile to what they called ‘The Top Seven’ – the seven elected members of the branch council. The branch council called an assembly for the whole community each month, which was very well attended. The meetings called by the two remaining mafias were tiny, mostly only including their appointed committees. The assemblies show the legitimacy of the branch council, and the open public discussions gave people growing confidence in their own power. They were also a threat to the mafias.

The land mafias prevent an election in Mayibuye

Our movement was then invited to launch a branch at the Mayibuye settlement. We followed our usual slow processes leading up to the launch on 29 November 2025 but on the day of the launch the process had to be stopped after the church where the launch was being held was attacked, the windows broken and people threatened. Our General Secretary was directly threatened by a man with a large hammer shouting “We will not be ruled by women!” and had to be rushed to safety.

While it was not possible to hold an election in Mayibuye the elected council in eNkanini moved to abolish the sale of land. On Tuesday last week two stands were sold by the ‘izinduna’. In one case people had already built a shack and the ‘izinduna’ demolished it and demanded that the land be paid for before a new shack could be built. Khabazela told the family that they should rebuild and that they did not need to pay the ‘izinduna’. It was announced that the issue would be discussed at the branch assembly scheduled for Sunday 22 February. Our members believe that this is why he was killed.

The remaining eNkanini leaders are in real fear and have all moved out of the occupation. At around 6:00pm on Wednesday a Quantum taxi full of men, arrived at the home of the Mkhize family. One of them came to the house. He was hostile and said that they will be coming back.

The impunity of the mafias must be brought to an end

The seizure and sale of land by armed groups is extortion. Stealing money from desperate people under the pretext of paying lawyers is a particularly cruel form of corruption. These are both cruel ways of exploiting people’s desperation. We take a very firm stance against both of these forms of the increasingly organised abuse of poor people. We have previously worked with decent people in government to have key figures in the land mafias in KwaZulu-Natal arrested. In 2014 we had to expel a senior member of our movement, Bandile Mdlalose, for taking money from desperate people for non-existent lawyers.

The struggle for land is not only a struggle against the state and capital. The violence with which the private control of land is defended does not only come from the armed forces available to the state and capital. Land is also seized and commodified by various kinds of mafias who have their own capacity of violence. Our struggle is not only to win land for the people, it is also to manage it democratically and to abolish the rent and selling of land and shacks.

In many cases the land mafias are linked to political parties and the state but in this case they are not linked to any parties and we are not aware of any active alliance with the local state.

However, the space for these mafias to operate and the desperation from which they feed are a direct result of massive unemployment and impoverishment, the general abandonment of the poor, the collapse of the state's housing programme, endemic police corruption and the use of violence by the state to prevent land occupations rather than embarking on a massive programme of urban land reform.

If the state provided serviced sites for people to build, and ensured that there was no buying and selling of these sites and that they remained in public ownership, there would be no space for these mafias. Ultimately the government sees poor people with the same contempt as the mafias. Until our humanity is recognised the killing will continue and for the poor the price for land will continue to be paid in blood.

The growing power of mafias of various kinds – in and out of political parties – is a serious threat to democratic organising. These mafias do not hesitate to kill anyone who resists their attempts to exploit and extort the poor. Because their interests align with desperate occupiers in the early stages of occupations they can easily become embedded in a community during the chaotic early stage of an occupation. When land is held and their interests begin to diverge from those of the residents they will turn to intimidation, co-option and murder to prevent democratic organisations from emerging and for the sale or rent of land and shacks to be abolished. There is always a risk that our leaders will be killed, and that some residents – including those who have taken membership of our organisation – will be intimidated or co-opted by the mafias. Our movement was infiltrated by the ANC in 2014, and attempts at infiltration, which also include the mafias, will continue as the social crisis worsens.

A clear demand from the eNkanini residents

The eNkanini residents have a very clear demand to put to the state. Their demand is for a rigorous and independent police investigation into each of the five killings across the two adjacent occupations.

We have lost people – including a baby – to the police in the past, and often suffered severe repression – including assault, torture and wrongful arrest – at the hands of the police. However, we have also had one police officer, one local ANC branch member and two ANC councillors arrested by the police, tried in the courts and then convicted for the murder of our comrades.

When our movement was formed twenty years ago it was the state that repressed us the most at first, and especially the police. Then it was the ANC. In the last decade or so it is increasingly mafias of various kinds, in and out of political parties and the state, that are repressing us the most. Although our central strategy remains building the democratic power of the oppressed, and uniting the popular left, today we also find ourselves requesting the police to act against very well armed mafias who increasingly operate as local militias.

No society can tolerate a situation in which groups of armed men openly extort a community, threaten democratic organisation and murder people who do not give in to their threats. We fully support the demand of the residents for an urgent police investigation into each of the killings to deal with the mafia that has terrorised the residents of the eNkanini and Mayibuye occupations. This investigation must be independent, fair and professionally run. In these kinds of situations the local police can never be trusted to carry out investigations as they are very often captured by local mafias. In fact people will not give them information out of fear that they will tell the local mafias. We are told that Firoz Cachalia is a principled man and we are making a direct request to him to arrange an investigation in the extortion, intimidation and murders in the eNkanini and Mayibuye occupations. We are willing to share the information that we have with a credible police team.

Thapelo Mohapi
S'bu Zikode

1 MARCH 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Five Children Lost in Devastating Shack Fire

At 3 am on Saturday a fire broke out in the Ekuphumleni settlement in Shakas Head. The fire took the lives of five children from the same family. The devastation is beyond words.

The community tried to stop the fire and rescue the children but to no avail. The fire was too strong.

Being poor means living close to death. The structural violence of impoverishment and abandonment eats at our lives. When we stand up for our lives we are met with violence, and sometimes murder. You can die slowly or you can die quickly. You can die in a fire or from a gun but however you die it is certain that your life is given no value by this system of oppression. This is why we are in rebellion against oppression. We are in rebellion for life, to stay alive and to live flourishing and rich lives.

The previous Saturday we laid Zweli 'Khabazela' Mkhize to rest after he was assassinated for standing up for our lives. Now we have to confront this devastation. Death is everywhere.

For twenty years we have been struggling to get the crisis of the regular fires in shack settlements across the country recognised as a crisis. But our lives do not count to this society and so we have been left to burn for twenty years. We will not be ground down by all this suffering and death. We will continue to resist.

The Shakas Head community are facing eviction as a result of pressure from the very rich people living in gated communities along the coast. They are supported by the ANC. Their militarised security company, which has drones, a helicopter and automatic weapons, works closely with the police. The rich, the ruling party and the state are aligned against the poor. They all agree that we should not be living on this land, near to the sea and close to the rich. We are treated as human waste, as people who should be taken to human dumping grounds, to places where we will not be seen by the rich. They want us to work for them but not to live with them.

A week ago we were devastated with the family of Khabazela. Now we are devastated with a family that has lost five children.

Our leaders rushed to the scene as soon as we received the news, and the movement held a prayer in support of the family on the site of their suffering. We remain in support of the family. We thank the Gift of the Givers for their support to the family. We thank our comrades in the Durban Coalition for their continued support.

Our struggle is in defence of life but it moves from funeral to funeral, from political funeral to political funeral.

Our children are as precious and beautiful as all other children and we will fight with all we have for their future. Nothing short of revolution, a revolution to recognise the humanity of all people, is good enough for them.

We mourn Asamkele Somntsewu, who was 19, Sonwabise Noyila who was 14, Amila Menemene who was 4, and Sokhula and Solulele Somntsewu, one year old twins.

We hold Ntombovuyo Menemene, the mother of Amila, and Yana Menemene, who are both in hospital, in our hearts.

We will defend our lives, the lives of our children, and the lives of their children still to be born, with all that we have against this system of oppression.

Thapelo Mohapi
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana
Ongama Mncameni

8 MARCH 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Women's League Message for International Women's Day

International Women's Day emerged from the working-class socialist women's movement in the early twentieth century. For more than a century it has been a day to honour the struggles of women across the world and to affirm feminist socialism and internationalism.

Today, as we commemorate International Women's Day, we remember our heroes who have fallen in the struggle, including Nqobile Nzuza, Thuli Ndlovu, and Nokuthula Mabaso. We also honour women across the world who have fallen in struggle, including Marielle Franco of Brazil, Berta Cáceres of Honduras, and Fikile Ntshangase and Babita Deokaran of South Africa.

The struggle for land and housing is also about confronting patriarchy. Patriarchy shapes our lives through interpersonal violence, economic injustice, and the exclusion of women from decision-making and leadership.

South Africa has terrifying levels of interpersonal violence, including murder and rape, and women and girls carry a terrible burden within this crisis. The state has repeatedly failed to respond to this crisis with the seriousness. The middle classes retreat behind private security while poor communities are left exposed to violence every day. Across our country women continue to face extreme levels of gender-based violence, sexual assault, and femicide. At the same time the justice system repeatedly fails women. Powerful men such as Timothy Omotoso, Thabo Bester, Shepherd Bushiri, and Cat Matlala have all been linked to serious allegations or crimes, yet justice remains slow or incomplete. Everyone can see this, and it deepens the sense that powerful men can abuse women with impunity.

Even today we still do not have justice for Nokuthula Mabaso.

The conditions in shack settlements deepen these dangers. Poor lighting, overcrowding, and the absence of safe infrastructure expose women and girls

to daily risks. In many settlements there are no safe toilets, and women must walk to unsafe places at night. This places them in constant danger.

Land continues to be controlled by the rich, by the state, and increasingly by criminal mafias, while the poor are pushed to the margins and face extortion from these criminal networks.

The austerity policies imposed by the ANC for almost thirty years have weakened the institutions that people rely on. Hospitals, schools, and public transport are denied resources. These conditions place enormous pressure on poor households, and it is women who are expected to carry the heaviest burden.

In our communities we organise to defend life and dignity and build systems of care. We have communal gardens that produce fresh, healthy food. We organise community kitchens to ensure that no one goes to bed hungry. We run projects for skills development and a choir that gives women a space for art and collective expression through uBuhlalism. Through this work we build solidarity and togetherness.

We call on the government to stop taxing sanitary towels. Menstrual necessities are a basic need and must be freely available in schools, clinics, and communities. They must also be safe and non-toxic so that women and girls are not exposed to harmful chemicals.

Women must be able to own and manage land. Women must be able to participate in decision-making and leadership at all levels of society. Women must be safe in their homes, in the streets, and in all aspects of their lives.

We are women enough even when we are not married. We are women enough even when we are poor. We are women enough even when we face very difficult situations.

We are committed, and will remain committed, to socialist and internationalist feminism that builds the power of impoverished and working class women in struggle, across organisations, and across borders.

Zipho Maphela
Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

13 MARCH 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Welcome the Inquiry into the Crisis of Hunger

Abahlali baseMjondolo welcomes the inquiry into the food system by the South African Human Rights Commission. It is a long overdue inquiry as many people in the country often go to sleep on an empty stomach, and many more cannot afford healthy food. We all know people who boil weeds to at least be able to give their children something to eat. Not being able to feed your children is extremely painful.

We face a severe and growing food crisis. Around 25–26% of the population — roughly 15 million people — are food insecure, meaning they do not have reliable access to enough food and experience hunger. Around 11% of people experience severe food insecurity. Approximately 30 young children die every day — around 11,000 each year — due directly or indirectly to hunger and malnutrition. About 29% of children under five are stunted as a result of chronic malnutrition.

The country produces more than enough food to ensure that all its people have access to sufficient nutritious food. The crisis of hunger is therefore a crisis of distribution and not production. In structural terms it is a result of massive unemployment, low-wage precarious labour, the concentration of land ownership and the capture of the food system by the supermarkets. A small number of large corporations exercise enormous power over what food is produced, how it is distributed and what it costs. Food is treated primarily as a commodity for profit rather than as a human right.

In ethical terms the crisis is also a result of the fact that poor people are not counted as fully human. We are treated as disposable. Our suffering is not taken as a crisis. Our children can starve to death.

Things must change. Food cannot continue to be treated as a commodity to enrich a few while millions go hungry. While all measures to ensure that people do not go hungry and have access to healthy food must be welcomed, we must

aim to resolve the crisis by supporting moves towards food sovereignty rather than charity.

We cannot separate the poverty and high unemployment that exist in our country from hunger. We cannot separate the inequalities that exist in our country from the millions of people who go to sleep hungry. We cannot separate hunger from the dispossession of land and the injustices of colonialism and apartheid. The same history that made the rich to be rich has made the poor to be poor. It is the weight of this history that results in the primary weight of hunger falling on impoverished black people. The ANC has failed to address the history, and the bitter reality is that poverty and hunger are now worse than 30 years ago.

The Constitution recognises the right of everyone to have access to sufficient food, and the right of every child to basic nutrition. The persistence of widespread hunger therefore represents a profound failure to realise rights that are already guaranteed in law.

The reality is that hunger is a political crisis that will only be resolved if there is sufficient political will.

Abahlali are part of the Union Against Hunger which is building a broad alliance of popular forces to address the crisis of hunger. Together we are struggling to generate the political will to resolve this crisis. The Union Against Hunger is making a submission to the inquiry.

Our view is that the following measures need to be urgently taken to address the crisis of hunger:

1. We need a universal income grant of R1 500 for the unemployed and working poor.
2. Basic food items need to be subsidised.
3. The social value of land must be placed before its commercial value and there must be a massive programme of urban and rural land reform – along with support in terms of seeds, tools and irrigation – to allow people to grow their own food.
4. There must be strong support for rural and urban communes and cooperatives.
5. There needs to be a system of state supported markets so that people can grow and sell healthy food outside of the control of the supermarket system. People must be able to use SASSA cards at these markets.

6. There must be a massive public education programme warning people about unhealthy foods such as sugary drinks.

7. Unhealthy foods must be taxed and the money used to subsidise healthy foods.

8. There must be strong measures against corporates that are colluding in order to make food expensive.

9. There must be an end to evictions from occupied land that has been de-commodified and is being used for social purposes.

10. There must be extra tax on supermarket profits, and the hugely excessive salaries of their bosses, to subsidise healthy food and grassroots cooperatives.

Thapelo Mohapi
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana
Mqapheli Bonono

17 APRIL 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We stand with Cde Tsetse Nkambule

Abahlali baseMjondolo joins comrades and organisations across Swaziland, South Africa, and around the world in condemning the false accusations made against Comrade Nontsetselelo ‘Tsetse’ Nkambule by the absolute monarchy in Swaziland.

Comrade Tsetse, who serves as Treasurer General of the Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO), has been falsely accused by the police of kidnapping and attempted murder. These ridiculous fabrications are part of a sustained pattern of repression directed at youth leaders and democratic activists.

The brutal Mswati regime, legitimated in the name of culture, is in reality an absolute monarchy marked by severe authoritarianism and gross corruption. For decades, activists in Swaziland have faced arrest, beatings, torture, imprisonment, exile and assassination for standing up for democracy and justice.

Comrade Tsetse is a courageous youth leader committed to the struggle for democracy and accountability. Her only “offence” is her refusal to submit to a system that denies the people of Swaziland their basic political rights. Our movement has worked with her over many years, and she is widely respected in the broader democratic movement in the region.

The use of fabricated criminal charges to silence political dissent is a familiar tactic. It is intended to intimidate, isolate and discredit those who organise against oppression. We reject these lies and stand firmly with our comrade.

We know that the monarchy is preparing lavish celebrations to mark 40 years on the throne, and that the police are acting to ensure that no voice of dissent is heard. These celebrations will add no value to the transformation of our people or the development of our society.

While the people of Swaziland face deepening unemployment and poverty, the monarchy continues to expend public resources on spectacle and the consolidation of its power.

We join progressive forces across the region in demanding the immediate withdrawal of these false allegations and an end to the targeting of Comrade

Tsetse. We express our full solidarity with SWAYOCO, PUDEMO and all those struggling for a free and democratic Swaziland.

We call on the South African government and all governments in the SADC region to break their silence, condemn this repression, and demand the immediate withdrawal of these false charges.

We call on the governments of South Africa and Namibia, which have taken a principled position in support of Palestine, to take the same kind of principled position in support of the people of Swaziland.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

23 APRIL 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The struggle of the poor against fake freedom continues

Thirty-two years into democracy, millions of people remain without land, without secure housing, and without a dignified life. Every year, around 11,000 children die from hunger and malnutrition in this country. Supermarkets continue to make large profits from the suffering of the poor. There is mass impoverishment and South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. The dignity of the people is denied every day. Political violence and repression remain a reality in South Africa.

For the poor, this so-called freedom has not brought access to land, secure housing, or safety. Every year, more and more people live in shacks, facing fires, floods and eviction. In the cities, business, politicians and the rich are united against the poor.

The crisis is deepening. Mass structural unemployment continues, and young people carry much of its weight and pain. In many communities there is a growing addiction crisis. Murder is widespread and women face frightening rates of violence. Some political parties are driving an increasingly violent xenophobic politics to distract people from the real causes of the crisis.

People occupy land because there is no land available to them, no affordable housing, and no public housing. In conditions of mass unemployment, occupation is how people secure a place to live. Land occupations must be understood as a form of grassroots urban planning by the poor themselves. The social value of land and the social function of land occupations must be recognised. Where there are real challenges around land use, they must be resolved through negotiation, not state violence.

The PIE Amendment Bill, gazetted by the GNU Cabinet on 16 April 2026, is a declaration of war against the poor. The original PIE Act provided important, although limited, protection for the poor. It required a court order before eviction and required courts to consider what is just and equitable, including whether people would be left homeless. These amendments weaken those protections and shift the law against the poor. Communities have resisted evictions and forced the state to account for itself. The state is changing the law to make evictions easier.

Courts will be able to grant eviction orders even where there is no alternative accommodation. Where the state says it has no resources, people will be put out with nowhere to go.

The Bill is also a direct attempt to criminalise the struggles of the poor. It will make it a crime to organise the struggles and organisations of the poor. It will make it a crime to organise land occupations. People acting in direct solidarity with communities in occupations will be at risk. The penalties will include fines of up to R2 million, prison sentences and the seizure of assets.

Membership fees, contributions for services and money used to build basic infrastructure will be treated as criminal. These are the ways people organise their lives.

The Bill will also target organised action. Courts will be required to consider the pace, scale and frequency of occupations when deciding urgent evictions. Being organised will count against you. Temporary accommodation will be limited in time, after which people will be removed again.

Our movement has faced unlawful repression and assassination for many years. This Bill attempts to legalise that repression. It is an outright attack on democracy.

We will oppose this Bill in the public consultation process, on the streets and in the courts. We will build an alliance against this Bill with progressive organisations of the poor and the working class, including trade unions. We welcome the statements by GIWUSA and SAFTU opposing this Bill. We will work together with radical lawyers and intellectuals willing to stand with the people in struggle.

This weekend, as part of UnFreedom Day, thousands of people will participate in political discussions in three provinces:

- In Gauteng, on 25 April 2026 at 09:00, at the Lindokuhle Mnguni Occupation in Johannesburg
- In KwaZulu-Natal, on 26 April 2026 at 09:00, at the Shakaskraal Occupation on the North Coast
- In Mpumalanga, on 26 April 2026 at 09:00, at Othando Hall in Perdekop

We continue to build the democratic power of the poor and socialism from below.

We will resist the war that has been declared on the poor. The PIE Amendment Bill will be defeated.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

6 MAY 2026

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo is NOT Participating in the ‘Conference of the Left’

Important Statement from Abahlali baseMjondolo

We want to warn our members and the public about a misleading poster circulating online about a Conference of the Left being hosted by South African Communist Party. The poster uses the name of our movement and our logo without our permission.

Abahlali baseMjondolo is NOT participating in this conference and has never engaged with the organisers. Using our logo and name without consulting us is fraudulent and disrespectful to our movement, to our members and to the democratic processes through which we make decisions.

Thapelo Mohapi

15 MAY 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo Rejects the Repeated Inclusion of our Movement in the Programme for the ‘Conference of the Left’

Abahlali baseMjondolo condemns the opportunistic and disrespectful inclusion of our movement in the latest programme for the SACP-hosted ‘Conference of the Left’ without our consent. This blatantly disregards and disrespects our autonomy and democratic processes.

We first saw our name and logo on the poster allegedly released by the SACP. We released a public statement making it clear that the poster was misleading and that we will NOT be participating in the conference.

We have now seen that COSATU has included us in the programme for the conference circulated in advance of their Special Central Executive Committee meeting on 14 May 2026. We did not attend this virtual meeting as we refuse to attend the ‘Conference of the Left’.

We have repeatedly stated that we were not consulted or involved in the planning of this conference. The continued use of our name and logo is a clear attempt to co-opt and undermine our struggle.

We are aware of at least five organisations listed on the latest version of the programme that have taken a clear decision not to participate in this conference but nevertheless continue to have their names included on the programme.

We demand respect for our movement and our right to self-determination. We will not be used to legitimise events that are contrary to our interests, values and political principles.

We are a democratic grassroots organisation in which decisions about important matters are always taken by our members through open public discussions. We will not be silenced, manipulated or disrespected by the organisers of this conference.

We call on all our comrades and allied organisations to reject this opportunism and to stand with us in our insistence on principled forms of unity in our struggle for justice and dignity.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

29 MAY 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Another Revolutionary has Fallen

Our movement stands shoulder to shoulder with activists across this country in condemning the brutal, calculated assassination of Comrade Mokoena Letsie in Potchefstroom.

Comrade Mokoena was cut down in a hail of bullets by the enemies of the poor and working class. This was an execution carried out by hired guns and cowards who saw in Comrade Mokoena a threat to the system of predatory politics tied to the system of capitalist plunder that keeps our people in chains. He was a threat to the tenderpreneurs, the extortion networks, the mafias that appropriate land to rent and sell it, the corporate bosses, and the corrupt officials who enrich themselves while our communities starve. He was also a committed internationalist who built grassroots support for Palestine.

We refuse to let his name become another statistic in a police docket gathering dust. We refuse to let his murder be washed away with empty statements and candlelight vigils. The state must investigate without delay. There can be no more delays, no more 'we are investigating'. The people demand the names, motives, and the full network behind this assassination. The killers and those who ordered the hit must be arrested and prosecuted, whether they sit in council chambers or backrooms. They must be brought to justice.

The state must also provide immediate protection for community activists. The blood of Comrade Mokoena will be on their hands if they continue to leave us exposed while our enemies operate with impunity.

To those who pulled the trigger and those who paid for it: you can kill a comrade, but you cannot kill the demand for freedom and you cannot kill a movement. Every bullet fired at us forges more revolutionaries.

To the state: you either investigate, arrest, and bring these killers to book, or you stand exposed as complicit in the war against the poor.

As right-wing forces advance in a pincer movement from parliament and the streets we will continue to work to unite the forces of the principled and

democratic left grounded in the membership based organisations of the working class and poor.

We send our deep condolences to Comrade Mokoena Letsie's family and comrades. He will rest in the honour accorded to all true revolutionaries, all true partisans of the people.

The struggle for freedom and justice for all people everywhere continues.

Amandla!

A Luta Continua!

Justice for Comrade Mokoena Letsie!

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

10 JUNE 2026

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Urgent Statement on Fake Poster Circulating Online

Abahlali baseMjondolo are not Xenophobic!

We note with concern a fake and xenophobic post currently circulating on WhatsApp and Facebook that falsely claims to have been issued by our movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo.

The post is fake. It is disinformation designed to incite hatred and violence. Those who created and shared this post must immediately cease circulating fake information. Spreading false content that targets migrants puts lives at risk and violates the law. We call on everyone who received this fake post to delete it and not to forward it.

Abahlali baseMjondolo has always rejected xenophobia and ethnic politics and we are NOT part of any anti-migrant or xenophobic movement that is currently attacking migrants. We believe in Ubuntu and we will remain the movement that represents all poor and marginalised people in our country and will defend and uphold the dignity of all African people. Abahlali baseMjondolo is a movement of shack dwellers founded on the foundation of ubuntu and the principle that every human life matters. We organise against poverty, evictions, and poor service delivery and for land, housing and dignity for all. We do not organise against our neighbours based on nationality, language, or name.

We will be taking legal action against those who made and distributed this post which incites violence and deliberately tarnishes our name. Defamation, hate speech, and incitement to violence are criminal offenses and we have instructed our legal team to identify the originators and distributors of this fake content and to pursue all civil and criminal remedies available.

Xenophobia will not fix broken toilets, unemployment, or housing. It will not ensure a fair distribution of land and wealth. It will not restore the dignity of the oppressed. Xenophobia will lead to the loss of more lives like we saw in Bhambayi in the late 1980s and early 1990s. We refuse to allow the name

of our organisation to be misused for political opportunism ahead of the local government elections.

We urge communities to verify information before sharing and to defend each other – South Africans and migrants – against violence.

A person is a person wherever they may find themselves. A neighbour is a neighbour and a comrade is a comrade wherever they may come from.

Unyawo Alunampumulo.

Thapelo Mohapi
Nkululeko Ketelo
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

11 JUNE 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Nationwide Marches Against the PIE Amendment Bill

For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity.

– Frantz Fanon

On Friday 12 June we will march against the Bill in Durban, Johannesburg and the Pixley ISaka Ka Seme municipality in Mpumalanga. We will be joined by our comrades in progressive trade unions and other organisations of the authentic left.

We will march against the hard turn to the right by the Government of National Unity and against the attempt to criminalise our lives and struggles. We will march for land, freedom and dignity.

If passed into law the PIE Amendment Bill would criminalise poverty and the struggles of impoverished people. It would make it easier to evict people into homelessness while criminalising the collective efforts of poor communities to secure land, organise themselves and defend their rights. Activists, community leaders and social movements would face imprisonment and massive fines of up to a million rand for supporting land reform from below.

Since the intention to amend the PIE Act was first announced we have held meetings in shack settlements and villages across the provinces where we organise, as well as a General Assembly in Durban, to discuss this attack on the poor. We have organised local pickets and protests, and confronted the government when they have allowed public hearings to go ahead.

African people were impoverished and made pariahs in their own country by colonial land dispossession. The ANC has failed to heal this wound, and has left most of us impoverished and, when we come to the cities in search of education and work, treated like pariahs. The PIE Bill did not give us land but it did place some limits on how the state and private landowners could treat us, and did give

us some space to organise ourselves as we struggle for land reform from below. The attempt to amend the Bill is an attempt to remove the limited protections that were won by the mass struggles against apartheid and is part of a wider turn to the right by the ANC and the GNU.

The PIE Amendment Bill tells every shack dweller, every rural person planning to make their way to a city in search of a better life, every worker who sleeps four to a room, every young person who does not have a job but needs to form their own household and every woman without much money who needs to escape an abusive relationship that their life is worth nothing in the eyes of this government.

The PIE Amendment Bill is a new chapter in the history of repression that runs through the Native Land Act of 1913, the Slums Act of 1934, the Group Areas Act of 1954, and the Slums Act of 2009. Each of these Acts aimed to exclude the majority from access to land and the cities and to criminalise access to land outside of the state and the market. Each of these Acts was an act of war against the African people, an Act designed to make us poor, keep us poor and rob of us our dignity. Each of these Acts was an attempt to make sure that we were permanent pariahs.

Just as we defeated the Slums Act of 2009 we will defeat the PIE Amendment Bill. And just as we continued the struggle for land after we defeated the Slums Act of 2009 we will continue the struggle for land after we have defeated the PIE Amendment Bill. Our humanity is not negotiable and we will struggle to defend it, and create the material conditions for our lives to flourish, whatever the risks and costs.

Over the last twenty years our movement has won more gains and victories than we can count. Many thousands of people have won land and we have won gains that benefit all poor people. Our movement has also become a home for the oppressed, a space where our dignity is recognised and solidarity is built. If passed into law the PIE Amendment Bill would criminalise our movement overnight. It is a direct attack on our movement and on democracy and we will resist it with all out strength, and with the support of all genuine democrats.

It is important that the people of South Africa are very clear that the ANC, which is now in a coalition with the DA and FF+, is launching an outright attack on poor people in general and the organised poor in particular that is attempting to roll back the limited but important gains in rights won after 1994.

This Bill is unconstitutional, and if necessary we will confront it in the Constitutional Court. It is an attack on the Constitution from the right that aims to give property owners even more power than they currently have. When she announced the Bill, Thembi Simelane, the minister of human settlements was very clear about its purpose. She said that it will 'create a more stable and predictable environment for investment and growth'.

In Durban we will march from Curries Fountain to the City Hall. In Johannesburg we will march from Jeppe Park to the Gauteng Legislature, where we will make a submission on the Bill. In the Pixley ISaka Ka Seme we will hold a picket.

We are living through a terrible social crisis. Unemployment is at catastrophic levels, especially among young people, where it is over 60%. Hunger is widespread, with more than a quarter of families going hungry. Last year, more than 10,000 children died of starvation.

Public institutions have been hollowed out by organised corruption, often tied to criminal networks, as well as decades of austerity. Many municipalities are collapsing under debt, mismanagement and infrastructural decay. The rates of murder and rape are among the highest in the world, and more and more people have to live in shacks every year.

For many people, daily life has become increasingly precarious. Entire communities experience state abandonment while a small political and economic elite continue to accumulate wealth. The promise that democracy would bring dignity and meaningful social transformation was first broken and has now been abandoned.

Things cannot go on as they are. While our movement and the wider left struggle for a society in which land and wealth are fairly shared, a society in which the humanity and dignity of all people is respected, the forces of the right are moving fast to contain the crisis with repression. The PIE Amendment Bill is part of that turn to the right, that turn to repression. Those who tell us that the poor migrant is the cause of our problems and is our enemy are another part of that turn to the right. We will not be fooled into calling a poor migrant our enemy.

The migrant who comes to the city looking for work is not the one who stole our land, who sends out men with guns to evict us, who steals from the people via corruption and cuts budgets for social spending.

We know who our real enemies are, and they include the people who are trying to push this amendment to roll back the limited gains of 1994 and criminalise poverty and the self-organisation of the poor. The real enemies are the ones who want to amend our Constitution so that apartheid can walk through the front door again.

We will not be cowards hiding under the bed while the amabutho of capital and corrupt nationalism march past. We will fight. We will occupy. We will shut down streets. If the Minister of Human Settlements does not have ears to hear us and eyes to see us we will meet her in the Constitutional Court.

They want to make sure that we are permanent pariahs in our own country. We refuse to have our aspirations for land and dignity criminalised and we will not allow our movement to be criminalised. We refuse to be pariahs. We are the people of this land and we will continue the struggle of our ancestors, the struggle to make this a free and rich land, a welcoming land, a land where we can all flourish and live in peace.

We call on all progressive trade unions and organisations, and all shack dwellers and rural landless people, to stand with us in Durban, Johannesburg, and Pixley ISaka Ka Seme Municipality, in Durban, and in every corner where the poor are told to be quiet and to accept that our lives should not count the same as all other lives.

Thapelo Mohapi
Mqapheli Bonono
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana

11 AUGUST 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

This August we honour the women of South Africa

This August, in women's month, we speak of the comrades who are mothers, daughters, sisters and grandmothers, comrades who wake up every morning in the shack settlements and carry the weight of a country that has forgotten them.

We honour the women who keep their families going under conditions of brutal impoverishment and the women who resist oppression. We honour the women in our movement.

But this is not a month of celebration.

No woman is fully free in South Africa. All women are at risk of violence. Impoverished women remain profoundly oppressed.

There is no celebration when women continue to live under very dangerous conditions.

There is no celebration when a woman must walk to a communal tap after dark and risk rape or attack.

There is no celebration when there is no electricity, no running water, no toilets, and no safety for children.

There is no celebration when a woman does not know if her home will be standing tomorrow because of evictions, fires, or political violence.

For millions of impoverished women in shacks, tin houses and backyards, every day is a fight for survival.

To celebrate while all this is true is to lie.

This August we honour all the women of our movement who refused to accept poverty as fate.

We honour Nqobile Nzuza who was murdered by a police officer on a road blockade in Cato Crest on 30 September 2013. She was seventeen years old and doing her matric. She joined the road blockade in protest against the brutal attacks on the Marikana Land Occupation in Cato Manor by the eThekweni Municipality. She was committed to the struggle for land.

We honour Comrade Thuli Ndlovu, a leader of Abahlali baseMjondolo in KwaNdengezi.

She fought for land, for housing, and for the dignity of her community. She was assassinated on 27 September 2014 for confronting oppression.

We honour Comrade Nokuthula Mabaso, a leader of eKhenana Commune and of the Abahlali Women's League. She was a mother, an organiser, and a builder of a community that fed itself and governed itself. She was assassinated on 5 May 2022 while her community was under attack. She knew that poor people must seize the right to land and to live with dignity.

Our brave comrades refused oppression and insisted on land and dignity. Thuli and Nokuthula were leaders.

We also honour other women who have given their lives in the struggle for justice.

Fikile Ntshangase was a leading member of the Mfolozi Community Environmental Justice Organisation (MCEJO) which opposed the destruction of people's land and homes by coal mining. She was assassinated on 22 October 2020.

Babita Deokaran was an honest civil servant and a whistleblower in the Gauteng Department of Health. She exposed corruption and the theft of public money meant for the public hospitals and clinics that serve the poor. She was assassinated in 2021 for refusing to look away as powerful and dangerous men looted the healthcare system.

We have no interest in politicians who come with speeches and flowers and say nothing about the oppression we live today and nothing about our leaders who have given their lives in the struggle against this oppression.

Real honour means:

1. Secure access to land and decent housing so no woman sleeps in fear of eviction or fire.
2. Access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, and safe public lighting in every settlement.
3. An end to political killings and intimidation of women organisers.
4. An end to gender-based violence in homes, streets, schools and communities.
5. Decent work, healthcare and education so women are not forced to choose between feeding their children and their own health.

6. Reproductive healthcare and contraception available without humiliation or delay.

7. A livable guaranteed income in recognition of the unpaid care work that holds families and communities together.

8. Decisive action to reduce food prices on essential items.

9. An end to attempts to turn poor women against migrant and refugee women, since the enemy is landlessness, unemployment and state neglect, not our neighbours.

10. Accountability for the killings of Nqobile, Thuli, Nokuthula, Fikile, Babita and all the other murdered and assassinated women activists whose cases were closed and forgotten.

Poor women are not asking to be celebrated. We are demanding to be safe, to be housed, to be heard, to be alive.

Until that happens, August cannot be a month of celebration. It must be a month of remembering, a month of organising, a month of struggle.

We honour Nqobile. We honour Thuli. We honour Nokuthula. We honour Babita.

We honour every woman in every shack settlement who continues to fight despite everything.

Aluta Continua.

The struggle continues.

Thabisa Maphela
Thembeke Shangase

4 SEPTEMBER 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March Against the Separation Wall in Cape Town

Today thousands of people are marching in the street of Cape Town against the building of a separation wall that repeats the logic of apartheid spatial segregation.

The City of Cape Town continues to entrench neo-apartheid laws in post apartheid South Africa by building a wall that segregates and hides the poor from the rich along the N2.

This wall is sign that the City of Cape Town under the Democratic Alliance does not recognise the poor, who are black in particular. The DA has always introduced and favoured laws that are anti-poor and anti-black.

Abahlali baseMjondolo supports the struggles of the people of Cape Town who continue to face segregation and racism under the DA led municipality. We support the march that is taking place today against this act of hatred and undermining of the poor in Khayelitsha, Langa, Dunoon and Gugulethu and Mitchels Plain. We will not support neo-apartheid segregation.

Thapelo Mohapi
Sinenhlanhla Mncanyana
Derrick Simelane

28 SEPTEMBER 2026

Memorandum · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Memorandum to the Station Commander at the Kempton Park Police Station

Date: 28 September 2026

From: Abahlali baseMjondolo & Ekurhuleni Community

DEMAND FOR URGENT ACTION ON FEMICIDE IN EKURHULENI

TO: THE STATION COMMANDER, SAPS KEMPTON PARK AND
EKURHULENI DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

We, the residents of Ekurhuleni, women, and members of Abahlali baseMjondolo, bring this memorandum with heavy hearts and deep anger.

Since July 2026, 11 women have been murdered in Ekurhuleni in GBV-related incidents. Many more have been raped, assaulted and threatened. Our communities live in fear. Women cannot walk at night, cannot work late shifts and cannot even sleep in our shacks without fear.

OUR COMPLAINTS AGAINST SAPS

- GBV cases are not taken seriously when opened. Victims are sent from pillar to post.
- Protection orders are not enforced.
- Dockets disappear and no feedback is given to families.
- Police response time in shack settlements is extremely slow.
- Women who report are not protected.
- Women who report are often not treated with dignity by the police.

Section 12 of the Constitution guarantees everyone the right to be free from violence. Section 205 says SAPS has the duty to prevent crime and protect inhabitants. The police in Ekurhuleni are failing in their duty.

OUR DEMANDS

We demand that within 7 days:

1. A public report be issued on the status of investigations into the 11 murders of women since July 2026 and presented at an open public meeting.
2. A well-funded and equipped women-led dedicated GBV Task Team be established for Ekurhuleni townships and shack settlements.
3. A 24-hour functional Victim Support Room be established at the Kemp-ton Park Police Station with trained female officers.
4. Women-friendly patrols and visible policing in high-risk areas be conducted every day, with extra patrols at night and on weekends.
5. A full public audit of all GBV cases reported in Ekurhuleni since July 2026 be undertaken.
6. That an open public meeting be held with all interested women in Ekurhu- leni at which the police must account for their failure to prevent GBV and femi- cide.
7. At this meeting a women's committee must be elected. The police must report to this committee on all police work in relation to femicide and GBV every week.

We are not here to fight the police. We are here to fight crime with the police. But if police fail to protect us, we will have no choice but to take to the streets and to escalate to the Provincial Commissioner, IPID, and the Commission for Gender Equality.

We expect a written response to this memorandum by 5 October 2026.

Enough is enough! Stop killing women in Ekurhuleni!

Signed on behalf of the community

1 OCTOBER 2026

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

We Welcome the President's Response to Femicide, but Much More Must Be Done

On 28 September 2026, after 11 women had been murdered in Ekurhuleni since July, Abahlali baseMjondolo and other residents of Ekurhuleni marched in Kempton Park against the killing of women and the failure of the police to adequately protect women from violence. We handed a memorandum to the Kempton Park Police Station and Ekurhuleni District Management.

We demanded:

- A public report on the investigations into the 11 murders, presented at an open public meeting.
- A well-funded and properly equipped women-led GBV task team for the townships and shack settlements of Ekurhuleni.
- A 24-hour Victim Support Room at Kempton Park Police Station with properly trained female officers.
- Daily visible and women-friendly policing in high-risk areas, with additional patrols at night and on weekends.
- A public audit of all GBV cases reported in Ekurhuleni since July.
- An open public meeting at which the police must account to the women of Ekurhuleni for failures in responding to GBV and femicide.
- The election of a women's committee to which the police must report every week on their work relating to GBV and femicide.

We therefore welcome much of what President Cyril Ramaphosa announced in his address to the nation on 29 September.

The investigation into the Ekurhuleni killings has been elevated to the national level, a specialised multidisciplinary investigation is under way and visible policing in Ekurhuleni has been increased.

The President also announced a national case-recovery operation for unresolved murders, attempted murders, rapes and serious sexual offences involving women and children. The commitment to audit unresolved cases, identify delays and establish recovery plans for stalled cases is in accordance with the demands that we made in Kempton Park.

He made a commitment to address forensic backlogs, give urgent priority to forensic evidence in cases involving the rape and murder of women and children, and report publicly on progress.

The President has also made it clear that women must not be turned away by the police, that protection orders must be enforced, that dockets must not disappear and that women reporting violence must be treated with dignity. These are all issues raised directly in our memorandum.

Along with all these measures we strongly welcome the announcement that every municipality must conduct a women's safety audit. Broken streetlights, unsafe transport routes, abandoned buildings and neglected public spaces all place women in danger. In shack settlements a lack of lighting, unsafe or absent toilets and unsafe routes through our communities put women and girls at risk every day. We need safe and reliable public transport, including at night and early in the morning, and safe routes between our homes, transport stops, workplaces, schools and shops.

We strongly support the President's recognition that harmful alcohol use is 'a significant aggravating factor in interpersonal violence', his call for the stronger enforcement of liquor laws and his instruction that a package of laws and enforcement measures to reduce alcohol-related violence be put before Cabinet within 60 days. This must include reducing the excessive concentration of alcohol outlets, restricting trading hours and enforcing clear closing times, tighter licensing controls, and much stronger regulation of alcohol advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Government must regulate the alcohol industry and resist corporate pressure to weaken, delay or block effective regulation. The long-delayed Liquor Amendment Bill should be revived and debated urgently. Serious regulation of the alcohol industry is a critical part of the struggle against violence in general.

But much more needs to be done.

Women cannot just be called to meetings to be informed about decisions that have already been taken for us without us. Women must have real power and working class and poor women, who are the majority, must have real power.

This is why our memorandum demanded an elected women's committee to which each police station must report every week. Democratically organised women must be able to demand information about investigations, police response times, missing dockets, failures to enforce protection orders and complaints against police.

Every woman must also have the right to know who is investigating her case, how to contact them, what has been done, what still has to be done, where the evidence is, why there has been a delay and where she can go if an investigation is being obstructed.

Women's own assessment of danger must be taken seriously. Police must respond urgently to assault, stalking, death threats, forced entry, threats with weapons and violations of protection orders.

Women reporting violence should have the right to be accompanied by someone they trust. We should not have to repeat traumatic experiences again and again to different officials. As far as possible, one properly trained person or team should take responsibility for a case.

We know from our own experience that police power can also be abused. We have seen police refuse to open cases, fail to act against politically connected people and use their powers against impoverished people and activists. Our movement has repeatedly confronted police repression and police violence, including assault, wrongful arrest, wrongful imprisonment, torture and murder. Our comrades killed by the police include Nqobile Nzuza, a seventeen-year-old woman shot in the back in Cato Crest in 2013, and Jayden Khoza, a two weeks old baby, who died after the police fired teargas into the Foreman Road settlement in 2017.

Visible policing and stronger action against gender-based violence must not become a licence to criminalise poor people, migrants, activists and other people already subjected to police abuse.

There must be genuinely independent investigation when police officers lose evidence, take bribes, protect perpetrators or obstruct investigations. This is especially important when police officers themselves are accused of domestic

violence, sexual violence, abuse of sex workers or femicide. Their colleagues cannot be allowed to protect them.

There must also be more women in operational and senior leadership positions in the police, with real opportunities for advancement. Gender transformation cannot mean putting some women behind victim-support desks while the culture and leadership of policing remain unchanged.

We need stronger obligations on the police, much stronger democratic control over the police and effective independent oversight. We need policing centred on protection, service and problem-solving, not an aggressive model of policing that criminalises vulnerable people and communities.

We propose the creation of an independent and feminist Women's Ombud for Policing. The Women's Ombud should have the power to obtain police records, inspect police stations, investigate corruption and misconduct, publish findings and refer criminal and disciplinary matters for action. Women must be able to approach the Women's Ombud directly, and the Women's Ombud must work with organised women and democratic community structures.

Women's safety goes far beyond policing. Women escaping violence need somewhere safe to stay. They need healthcare, counselling, legal assistance, transport and childcare.

Economic independence is also part of women's safety. A woman may know that she needs to leave a violent man but have no income of her own, nowhere else to live and children who depend on her. Women need decent work, decent wages, secure housing, childcare and social protection. We support a liveable guaranteed income. No woman should have to remain with a violent man because leaving him will mean hunger and homelessness.

We must also build democratic and feminist women's power in our own communities.

We need to support women who are in danger, accompany them when they need support, help them get somewhere safe and make sure that nobody is left alone because they do not have money or family support. We need to make sure that every woman has a space where she can speak freely about the problems she is facing and receive support.

We must confront perpetrators in our own communities. Families, communities and all kinds of organisations, including churches, can reproduce patriarchy. The struggle against violence against women must confront patriarchy

everywhere, including in our homes, communities, schools, workplaces, trade unions, political organisations and churches.

We as poor women refuse to be silent. We are mothers, neighbours, comrades and leaders and we are demanding to be safe, to be heard, to be alive and to build a socialist future together.

Womandla!

Snenhlanhla Mncanyana

Melita Ngcobo

Lerato Boloka