

Abahlali baseMjondolo

Statements and Memoranda

Volume Two

2010–2013





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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 2010

Statement · Kennedy Road Development Committee

What is happening in Kennedy Road after the Attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo?

After the 26th September 2009 attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo in Kennedy Road by the shebeen owners and the ANC the life of the people has changed into misery. Everything is out of their control and some people are even abandoning the area due to a high level of crime activities making it unsafe. These activities are being started in the shebeens which are operating right through the night again.

The operation of evicting relatives, friends and very active supporters of the so called 'forum' and the K.R.D.C. is still continuing. They are under the severe intimidation and their shacks are being demolished mostly every weekend during the night. Our movement is banned from the settlement. But people are also fleeing from the shacks for the safety reason as substantial criminal behaviour is happening during the night.

What is very surprising for this saga is that there is now a group of people calling themselves the new Kennedy Road Committee of the ANC. This committee was selected by the Ward Councillor, Yacoob Baig, and the chairperson of the ANC in the ward, Jackson Gumede, together with the Provincial Minister of Safety & Security, Mr. Willies Mchunu. Mr. Mchunu is also a prominent member of the ANC in the province but nothing has been done to get this situation into order.

What we have perceived is that their intervention was not intended to get the solution in this matter. They were one sided. Even today nobody speaks about a peaceful solution where everybody can be accommodated. Nobody speaks about the fact our homes have all been destroyed or that we have been driven from our community. Soon after the attack Mr. Mchunu declared a commission of inquiry to investigate and interrogate with the intention to find out what was the source of the violence which left two people killed and numerous people injured. The only result that we can see from that inquiry is that five

members of the Kennedy 12 continue to be unlawfully detained without a bail hearing or a trial. None of the people who attacked us, threatened to kill us and destroyed our homes has been arrested.

On the 25th of December 2009 there was another violence that occurred in one of the shebeens. Two people died on the scene and 3 were injured seriously. The late news said that even those 3 were later died in the hospital. This was not a political violence. Mr. Mchunu told the world that we were ‘criminals’ and Mr. Baig said that ‘harmony’ had been returned to the settlement after we were evicted. But now they say nothing about these deaths. These deaths show the wisdom of the closing hours that had been put on the shebeens.

The community mandated us to put a closing time on shebeens because the shebeens were running all night and that was making the community unsafe. We negotiated that closing time with everyone, including the shebeen owners and the police, and discussed it in mass meetings. Every community has a right to make sure that it is safe and to make its own decisions about how to organise itself. But for this we were presented as criminals by the politicians! Now they say nothing as people are killed in the shebeens.

There is also a lot of rumour since Abahlali baseMjondolo has been displaced from Kennedy Road – even in the court of law. During the last appearance of the detainees the prosecutor could not appear in court to attend the case and so it was delayed once again – for the 7th time. What was very surprising was that sooner after the magistrate remanded the case the prosecutor was found sitting outside the court. When our advocate asked him about his absence from the court he said that he wasn’t aware that the case was on that day.

What we observed to the whole situation is that there is a lot of political conspiracy against Abahlali baseMjondolo in order to discredit what the movement has done for shack dwellers in this country. This movement has given poor people a voice at every level of society from our communities, to the media and even the constitutional court. Those whose power and money depends on the silence of the poor will never forgive us for this. But most poor people know the truth about our movement and about this country and so we are confident that our movement shall prosper.

As the K.R.D.C. we are still regarding ourselves as the legitimate representatives of the settlement because we were democratically elected by the people

of Kennedy Road. We were removed by violence and force – we were not removed democratically. We are still determined to continue to work together with the Project Preparation Trust and the Municipality to move forward with the victory won by Abahlali baseMjondolo for Kennedy Road which was the agreement to upgrade the settlement where it is in a participatory and democratic way.

Written by the K.R.D.C.

Mzwake Mdlalose

3 MARCH 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Third Force is Gathering its Strength

The goal that our attackers wanted to achieve when they ambushed us on the night of 26 September 2009 has not been achieved. A surprise attack was launched against our movement, the spontaneous resistance to the attack was broken by the police, our office was destroyed, hundreds of our members and supporters were chased from Kennedy Road, thirteen of our comrades were jailed and illegally detained and we have been banned from openly organising in the settlement where our movement was founded. But our movement was never just in Kennedy Road. Before the attack there were fifteen settlements affiliated to our movement in Durban and more than 50 branches across Durban, Pinetown, Tongaat, Howick, Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town. The goal of the attack was to destroy our movement to punish us for our victory against the Slums Act, to deny us the victory that we had won to have the Kennedy Road settlement upgraded where it is and to neutralise us before 2010. But our movement still exists. In fact it continues to grow. Since the attack we have launched four new branches and we will launch another four new branches soon.

In Kennedy Road there is no political freedom now. Abahlali is banned from the settlement and if you are thought to remain loyal to the movement there is still a risk that you may be assaulted and that your home will be broken down or burnt. We have always allowed political freedom. When we organised No Land! No House! No Vote campaigns we allowed those residents who wished to support political parties to do so. You are either a democrat or you are not and the only real test of your commitment to democracy is whether or not you allow different views to express themselves. No one can deny that we passed that test. No one can deny that the ANC has failed that test.

All of the services that we provided in Kennedy Road are no longer provided. There is no more Drop-in-Centre for people living with HIV and AIDS, there is no more community crèche, there are no more food parcels for families that are starving, there is no more collectively organised care for the sick. Bread is no longer baked for the hungry. There is no more Operation Khanyisa. Now

people just connect how they feel without regard to safety – and now people sometimes have to pay for a connection. Even the hall that we fixed up and maintained so carefully after it had lain desolate for years is sinking back into desolation. The grass has not been cut. Rubbish is rotting everywhere. Those who cannot afford to send their children to private crèches now leave them with gogos who are also busy with fetching water, baking and making beer. The care is not the same. At our crèche we taught English and counting, we gave pills to the children that needed them. We had a full time teacher from the community who took her responsibility as a serious job. She had been on courses on how to teach the small children. It is a strange thing that when we as the poor are allowed to govern ourselves we can do all this. But when the political party that has all the money seizes control of our community because to them it is a rebel community they can't even run a crèche. It is clear that their agenda starts and ends with maintaining political control over the people.

On 19 February 2010 the Kennedy 12 appeared in court again. This time the magistrate openly admitted that there was massive political interference and pressure on this case. He failed to give details of this interference and pressure. We will look for ways to force this into the open.

The case was remanded until 4 May 2010. If the case does go to trial on 4 May the 5 comrades who are still in Westville prison will have spent 7 months in jail without any evidence being presented to the court to indicate that they are guilty of any crime. They spent two months in prison without a bail hearing. Detention without a trial or a bail hearing is a crime. When they did have a bail hearing at the end of November last year no evidence was brought against them other than that they had been identified in a line-up. That means nothing. Their accusers had been to court six times and had seen them in the dock each time. Before that they were neighbours, some were team mates in the same soccer teams. Some had known each other for twenty years. The issue was never whether or not the accusers could recognise the accused. The issue was whether or not the accusers could bring any evidence against the accused. They have failed to do this. There is still no evidence.

It is clear that we are heading for a political trial. When there is open intimidation in the court – including death threats – when politicians are openly advising the prosecution, and when there are repeated delays that keep people locked up because the IO has 'forgotten to come to court', because 'the typist

is unavailable' or because the prosecutor is 'unavailable' (when in fact everyone can see her smoking outside the court) you know that you are not dealing with anything that can be called justice. The police investigator has missed court 4 times. He says that he has forgotten to attend the court but if he cannot even be relied on to remember a court date how can he be relied on to investigate a complex situation like the attack on AbM in Kennedy Road? In the constitution of our movement it says that if someone is elected to a responsible position in the movement and they miss three meetings without an apology then they must lose their position. Surely a police officer who fails to attend the case that he is investigating must be removed from that case?

The normal rules of justice have not been applied in this case. It is no different to how the normal rules about evictions or the right to march are not applied in our case. It is clear that the normal rules are never applied to the poor.

The police and the prosecution are supposed to be working for the public. We are, as we have stated many times, especially when we are arrested for 'public violence' when we exercise the basic rights promised to us in the constitution, very clear that we are also the public. If this idea of the 'public' has to have any useful meaning it has to mean everyone. But it is very clear that the police and the prosecution are not working for us – they are working for the politicians – for Willies Mchunu and the thugs that were deployed against us. It is clear that the poor in this country are supposed to accept that the normal rules do not apply to us. It is also clear that in this country the mobilised poor, those who have organised themselves to speak and act for themselves, are taken by the politicians to be enemies of this society – the same society that we are expected to guard, clean and build in silence.

It is a disgrace how this case has dragged through 12 appearances. Perhaps they are trying to ensure that we have no money left for a good lawyer when the trial comes.

How are we expected to abide by the law when the state does not? What are we supposed to do when citizens are compelled to respect the law but the state does not? How are we supposed to protect our struggles when the state has no respect for the law? How are we even supposed to get the money to pay lawyers to argue that we too deserve to be treated within the law?

Last year we won a great victory in the Constitutional Court. That victory has forced the state to admit that it cannot 'clear the slums by 2014' and

to promise to meet our demand and to access land and to build houses in the cities. But while we can get a fair hearing in the Constitutional Court there is no fairness lower down. Despite this we believe that power remains with us. When the law can't be a remedy for us we will use our political power.

The guys in prison are suffering a double victimization. They must endure imprisonment and they must endure the assaults that they are suffering in the prison. Once again their visitors are being chased from the prison at visiting hours – both comrades and family. We have asked Bishop Rubin Phillip to contact the prison authorities on this matter. On Tuesday a group of priests from South Africa and abroad visited the prison.

Things are still difficult for the people displaced in the attacks. They all lost the infrastructure that a person needs for a sustainable life. Many of them lost everything. Many of them are still looking for a safe place to stay.

The attack was meant to destroy our movement -to frighten us back into the dark silence from which our movement emerged. Well we have a very bad news for our attackers and those that have supported them – for people like Jackson Gumede, John Mchunu and Willies Mchunu. The bad news is that since the attack we have formally launched four new branches. We have launched new branches in:

- Hillary
- Cato Crest (Umkhumbane)
- Lindelani (Ntuzuma)
- Port View (Diakonia Avenue, CBD)

We are also preparing to launch three new branches in:

- The Ridge View Transit Camp (Chesterville)
- New Dunbar (Mayville)
- Albert Park

There is also underground organising that we cannot yet speak about.

We don't go to shack settlements, or blocks of flats, or to the old tin houses or the new amatinis to mobilise people. People come to us. They mobilise us to come and share our experience of struggle with them. All we do is to allow ourselves to be mobilised. It is the condition of people's lives that recruits them to this struggle.

On Sunday we launched a new office in the transit camp in Siyanda B. A few weeks ago we opened our new head office in the CBD. We lost a lot of books in the attack but our library is running again.

Since the attacks we have carried on the work of fighting evictions. Evictions have been stopped in:

- Tumbleweed (Howick)
- Hillary (Durban)
- Motala Heights (Pinetown)

In all these areas the battles are ongoing.

On 17 March 2010 it will be one year since the High Court issued an interdict against the Department of Transport giving them one year to provide permanent housing to the people that it evicted from Siyanda and into the Richmond Farm Transit Camp. But there are no plans yet for housing these people. The court also issued an interdict that forced the Department to provide basic services. But almost a year later there is still no water, there are still no toilets. The court also ordered that there would be a report to the court every three months but there has been no report. The Department of Transport is in contempt of court. We will take this battle up in the streets and in the court. We will demand that the Department be held accountable to the people forced into the Richmond Farm Transit camps like fish into tins and to the High Court.

We are well advanced with plans for more mass action. This will include things like public protest and, in one area, a rent strike. We will announce these actions soon.

About 150 of the people displaced from Kennedy Road are meeting once a week with the exiled but democratically elected Kennedy Road Development Committee. They have formulated the following demands:

1. The right to safe and permanent return to the Kennedy Road settlement.
2. The right to access to nearby land if someone else has built on their land in the interim.
3. The right to full and equal protection from the SAPS for everyone.
4. The right to have the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between the Kennedy Road Development Committee and the eThekweni Municipality in February last year recognised and honoured as a legally binding document.
5. The right to free political activity for all within the settlement.

6. The right to have the ANC coup recognised as a coup that has no standing. The ANC committee should be set aside and a credible outside organisation should hold a free and fair election for a new committee.

7. The right to have our right recognised to land and housing in the upgrade that was won by our struggle.

8. The right to continue to struggle for the realisation of these legitimate demands in and out of the courts.

9. The right to have the attack and the blatantly unfair and unlawful judicial process that followed it investigated by a credible and independent commission of inquiry.

The situation in Kennedy Road is very bad now. There is no longer any leadership – there is just political control. The demolishing of homes of AbM supporters continues. The outside ANC is no longer in Kennedy Road. The settlement has been left in the hands of the local shebeen owners and the local ANC that perpetrated the attack. It is disgracing how the ruling class overlooks the social needs of people and is just interested in politics – in controlling the people from the top down. The crime rate is now very high in the settlement. The situation is particularly dangerous for women. It is also affecting people outside of the settlement. The middle classes near to the settlement are becoming very concerned about the increase in crime.

There are serious debates going on in the settlement. People are asking where Willie Mchunu is now when the community has no leadership and is not safe. In February he promised that he would house people but he can't fulfil those promises. In fact after we were attacked John Mchunu said that the people would be taken from Kennedy Road to the transit camp in Chatsworth. People are now wondering if in fact it could be that we were attacked so that the land that we had won could be taken back from us.

The state has failed to respond to the worldwide call for an independent commission of inquiry. On Friday Abahlali baseMjondolo will meet with Church Leaders to take forward the proposal for the churches to conduct their own inquiry.

Perhaps because of the escalation of crime in the settlement, and because of how this is now affecting the middle classes nearby the settlement, or perhaps just because some police officers really do want to do their work properly the local police are now, at last, starting to act against the leaders of the coup. On

Thursday last week two people – a shebeen owner and well known criminal who were both involved in the attack – were arrested for demolishing a house of an AbM supporters. This is an important break through. Up until now the police have just refused to open cases for people whose homes have been demolished. S’bu Zikode was the only person who succeeded to open such a case. Others were just chased. Mashumi Figlan was badly insulted when he tried to open a case. Mondli Mbiko was promised that a case would be opened but nothing happened. Therefore we welcome these arrests and commend the police. They are a sign that the local police are starting to resist the political pressure and to obey the law rather than the politicians. They are not the first sign. Last week two others, both members of the new ANC committee in Kennedy Road, were arrested for assaulting one of our comrades. If the police can follow the law rather than just taking orders from the ruling party then there are some small but important signs of hope.

The arrested people are:

1. Sizwe Motaung (shebeen owner)
2. Linga ‘Mnqundu’ Hitsa (well known criminal)
3. Zibuyile Ngcobo (Member of the BEC of the local ANC and part of the new ANC committee installed after the coup)
4. Nana Ngcobo (Member of the BEC of the local ANC and part of the new ANC committee installed after the coup)

It is interesting to note that, while we have been rebuilding our movement and looking after the displaced and the jailed, people have been struggling all over South Africa. If we are the third force then it is clear that the third force is everywhere. And if the third force is everywhere then it is clear that the third force is just another name for the organised poor. There is no doubt that the poor will rise again and again. Nothing will make Lansdowne Road or the Golden Highway safe for the business of the rich for as long as the poor are kept poor. The only question is what will the poor rise for? Will we rise against each other or we will rise against injustice? It is so sad that in Uganda and Kenya the rich and their priests and Maulanas are trying to turn the people against each other. Here in South Africa we commend those who, like Sikhula Sonke, have taken a clear stand against xenophobia and for a struggle that empowers the poor to take back our dignity from the rich in and out of government.

It is also interesting to note that while we have been rebuilding our movement Haiti has been devastated by this terrible earthquake. It is clear that from Haiti to Kennedy Road the poor are not allowed to choose their own leaders and to build their own power. From Haiti to Kennedy Road we are only allowed democracy if voting means that we support one faction of the rich against another. From Haiti to Kennedy Road our political weakness leads us to be vulnerable to disasters like fires, floods and earthquakes. And from Haiti to Kennedy Road disasters are misused to seize even more control over our communities in the name of helping people who have been made to be desperate. From Haiti to Kennedy Road the solution, the real solution, is the political empowerment of the poor by the poor and for the poor.

Our struggle began in 2005 with marches against Yacoob Baig, the Ward 25 councillor. We have heard that his house was recently repossessed by the bank. Two days later one of our members saw him at the Suncoast Casino. The rich think that only they are fully human. They think that only they are real citizens. They think that we are dirty and stupid and that we like living like pigs in the mud. But in fact the only difference between the poor and the rich is that the rich have money and the poor do not. There is no other difference. Some poor people wake up one day and notice that they are rich. Some rich people wake up one day and notice that they are poor. Money can come and it can go but you were still born to the same mother and you still have the same mind. We are issuing a public invitation to Yacoob Baig to come and speak to us if he needs a place to stay. We can show him how to get some pallets from the dump and arrange for some land where he can build a jondolo for his family.

We want to thank all those people around South Africa and around the world who have supported us after the attack. Their investment has not been wasted. Our struggle continues.

Any popular movement that is serious about building the power of the poor and that is serious about demanding the full recognition of the equal humanity of the poor will face many challenges and tests. We have confronted and passed many challenges and tests since 2005. The attack on our movement in Kennedy Road has been the greatest test that we have faced so far. But we have passed it.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu

Mazwi Nzimande

For further information about the specific situation in Kennedy Road

Mzwake Mdlalose
Support for the displaced

To offer support of any kind to the people displaced or arrested in the attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo in Kennedy Road please contact the Kennedy Road Development Committee via Mzwake Mdlalose. The solidarity fund managed by Bishop Rubin Phillip is still active and open for donations. The details are online at: <http://abahlali.org/?p=5783>

11 MARCH 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Mike Sutcliffe Bans another Abahlali baseMjondolo March

The notorious Mike Sutcliffe has banned another Abahlali baseMjondolo march. We have, as always, scrupulously followed the laws that govern protest and we have informed the City in good time that we intend to march on Jacob Zuma on 22 March 2010. Yesterday the march convenor, Troy Morrow from the Hillary AbM branch, was verbally informed that permission to march has been denied. The excuse that has been given this time is that the City does not have enough police officers to be able to ensure security at our march.

We know that all decisions about marches in Durban pass through Sutcliffe's office. We also know that he has a long history of illegally banning our marches and of endorsing violent police attacks on our peaceful marches.

As always the excuse that has been given this time has no legal basis. The Gatherings Act does not allow City Managers to ban marches. In fact it does not even allow them to issue permits for marches – that was only allowed under old apartheid legislation. The Act only requires us to inform the City of our intention to march. They have no right to ban our march. Public protest is a cornerstone of democracy and democracy is not negotiable. It is a permanent and non-negotiable right for everyone. The job of the City is in fact to facilitate our right to march.

The City uses all kinds of tactics to undermine our right to march. They create long delays before responding to us when we inform them of our intention to march. Often they only issue their permits (a practice that has no basis in law) the day before a march or on the same day of the march. This is a tactic that is used to undermine our mobilisation.

Using verbal bans is another tactic that they use to try and demoralise us. By issuing verbal bans they hope to set us back without committing their illegal action to paper.

We have taken Sutcliffe to court before after he issued an illegal ban of an AbM march. We won that court battle. We are prepared to return to court again and to, once again, ask a judge to interdict Sutcliffe from his ongoing and systematically unlawful attempts to deny us our basic democratic rights. We are also prepared to engage in serious and sustained political mobilisation against Sutcliffe and in defense of what is left of our democracy.

We are calling for Sutcliffe's immediate dismissal from his post on the grounds that he has made himself a determined and ruthless enemy of our democracy. We are calling on our alliance partners, the movements with which in are in solidarity around the world, all progressive organisations, and anyone who feels that our democracy should be defended, to join the call for Sutcliffe's immediate removal from his position. We are calling for our comrades to picket any meeting or organisation that hosts Sutcliffe if he visits their city – whether it is Johannesburg, Cape Town, Rio, Istanbul, London, Miami or New York. Let there be no shelter anywhere in this world for the enemies of democracy. We are very clear that the enemies of democracy are also the enemies of the poor.

After the violent state backed attack on our movement last year this banning of our right to march makes us wonder if we are now a banned organisation?

Our memorandum of demands is attached to this statement.

Troy Morrow, march convenor
Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo spokesperson
The Abahlali baseMjondolo Office

16 MARCH 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo Press Conference on Friday 19 March 2010

Venue: St Paul's Church, 161 Pine Street, Durban

Date: Friday 19 March 2010

Time: 10h00 a.m.

There is a deep corruption at the top of our society and a deep anger at the bottom of our society. As the dirty deeds of the tenderpreneurs are being dragged into the light by the media and as the police become ever more violent the poor are taking to the streets across the country in ever greater numbers. We continue to believe that the only way for this country to heal itself is for the poor to organise the poor so that we can increase our power and decrease that of the politicians, the rich and their civil society. Since the attack on our movement in September last year we have expanded into eight new areas despite ongoing repression and harassment. Now is the time to unite all our branches, the old areas and the new, to defy the ongoing campaign of repression, and to take our demands to the streets of our city.

The purpose of the press conference is:

1. To alert the media that we will be marching on Jacob Zuma on 22 March 2010. The March will start at 09h00 a.m at Botha's Park in Berea Road and move to the offices of the eThekweni Municipality at the City Hall. We will explain the purpose of the march and make copies of our demands available.

2. To reveal to the media that we have proof of corruption in the provision of government houses including misallocation. This includes instances where people have all the necessary documents to prove that they were given houses but other people are corruptly staying in their houses. We will also make public our correspondence to various meetings with the Housing Department – meetings that have never borne any fruit.

3. To alert the media to the fact that the notorious Mike Sutcliffe, the eThekweni City Manager, has once again unlawfully denied us our constitutionally

protected right to march. We will not accept this ban on our basic political rights and are prepared to mobilise to defend democracy in Durban.

4. To alert the media to the ongoing the political repression in the case of our comrades arrested after the attack on our movement in the Kennedy Road settlement last year.

Abahlali office

Movement Spokesperson: Mnikelo Ndabankulu

Troy Morrow

Zodwa Nsibande

19 MARCH 2010

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Sutcliffe Continues His War on the Poor

The notorious Michael Sutcliffe continues to launch illegal attacks on our basic democratic rights.

He has now given in to our pressure and removed his illegal ban on our right to march but he has issued a permit that only allows us to march from Botha Park to Albert Park. Our march on Jacob Zuma, scheduled for 22 March 2010, was planned to go from Botha Park through Pixley KaSeme Street and to the City Hall. But Sutcliffe's unilateral imposition of unreasonable restrictions on our right to protest means that we will only be able to march about 600m and that our march will be kept far away from the centre of the city – it will be hidden away, just like a transit camp.

Our members from across this city – from Lamontville, to Pinetown and Umlazi – are determined to march because it is essential that we demonstrate our dignified anger and our mass support in public. We are the people who are being swept out of the cities like dirt. We are the people who are being hidden away in transit camps. We are the people who are supposed to suffer in secret in the human dumping grounds like Park Gate. If our protest also has to be hidden away and contained on the outskirts of the city then there is no point in having a march. The whole point of having a march is to show our power and our determination to assert our right to the city in the city. We cannot and will not accept that we must hold our protests in secret.

It is clear that we who are from the jondolos have to pay a very high price for our rights. When we ask for what is promised to all citizens we are attacked, driven from our homes, slandered, beaten, tortured and jailed. A simple procedure like arranging a legal march becomes a complicated game that takes all of our time and energies. Now it is clear that we will have to go to court to ask a judge to defend our basic rights against Sutcliffe. We are briefing a lawyer right now. But why do we have to pay such a high price to realise our basic rights? The only logical answer seems to be that these rights are no longer intended for

us – that we are the people that don't count and who must be silent as we are driven out of the cities.

When the media first reported on Sutcliffe's illegal ban of our march the police spokesperson said that all marches would be banned due to the World Cup. If it is true that our basic democratic rights are being removed as a result of the World Cup then we say, very clearly, that the World Cup is a new kind of colonialism that every person who is right in their mind must reject and resist with all their force in their mind and in their muscles.

Sutcliffe insults Human Rights Day, he insults our democracy and he insults Pixley KaSeme and the memory of the struggle for our democracy when he bans us from marching down Pixley KaSeme Street and taking our anger to its rightful home – the City Hall – on the national public holiday to celebrate Human Rights Day.

We strongly recommend that journalists and the police familiarise themselves with the legislation governing the right to march. The system whereby permits had to be granted for marches to be legal was struck off the statute book in 1993. These permits have had no basis in law since then. And the Gatherings Act prohibits the authorities from imposing unreasonable conditions on our right to protest. Our right to protest is not negotiable. There is a good summary of the Gatherings Act available online at: <http://fxi.org.za/PDFs/Publications/RGAHandbook.pdf>

For further information and up to the minute updates on the legal battle to have Sutcliffe's attack on our basic democratic rights overturned

S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo President

Troy Morrow, Chairperson of the Abahlali baseMjondolo Hillary Branch

Zodwa Nsibande, Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary

22 MARCH 2010

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Sutcliffe's Dirty Tricks Will Not Keep Us from Marching in Our City Tomorrow

Sunday, 21 March 2010 – Human Rights Day

Our political rights are always taken from us with technical arguments.

When we are evicted we are always told that it is because the land is 'too steep', the soil is 'not right' and so on. Of course once our shacks are demolished flats or businesses for the rich are quickly built on the same land that we were told was 'unsafe' for us.

When we are denied bail we are always told that it is because the police 'need time to complete their investigations', or even to 'type documents.' This is how it goes.

Technical arguments are always used against us because it is assumed that technical questions can only be answered by experts. The state has their own experts on their payroll and so by making important social questions into problems to be resolved by experts they seize the right to answer these questions on their own – they expel the people from any chance to debate these questions. The Freedom Charter said that 'the people will govern'. It didn't say that the experts will govern. It didn't say that there will be democracy if the city managers decide to allow it.

Today we went to court to ask the judge to interdict Sutcliffe against his attempt to limit our right to protest by keeping us away from the City Hall and the main streets. We have won similar cases against Sutcliffe twice before. But this time the City played a dirty trick. They told the court that they could not allow us to march through the main streets and to the City Hall because the City Hall is being repaired and it would be 'dangerous' for us to come too close to it. They argued that our basic political rights could be stolen from us because of a technical issue.

Our lawyer pointed out that yesterday SADTU marched to the City Hall. Their response was that Abahlali baseMjondolo is a mass movement and that

our march will be much bigger than the march organised by SADTU. This is true but it remains clear that the repairs to the City Hall are just being used as an excuse to prevent us from protesting freely in our own city. We would have been happy to keep a safe distance from the building. Anyway even if it was dangerous to come close to the City Hall that would not make it dangerous for us to protest in the main streets.

Unfortunately the judge allowed the City to use a technical argument to take away a basic democratic right. We have asked our lawyers to explore the option of launching an urgent appeal first thing tomorrow morning.

But irrespective of the outcome of that legal process we will be marching tomorrow. The marchers will decide, democratically, when we are all together, how to respond to this attack on our basic political rights. But one thing that we are very clear on is that amandla remains with us. We go to court to confirm the rights that have been won in prior struggles but we are very clear that the only real defence for these rights, and the only way to win new rights, is through the power of the organised poor. For example everyone can see that organised communities are not evicted. Unorganised communities are evicted, illegally, every day.

Many of us spent today with our comrades in the Rural Network in eNkwalini where farm dwellers who have been subject to a reign of terror by a farmer called Mark Channel mourned Human Rights Day. Their homes have been demolished, they have been shot and their cattle have been impounded. They live on this land but they do not live in any Republic of South Africa. They live outside of the protection of human rights and the law. We spent the day listening as they shared their stories. It is clear that from the flats to the shacks and the farms there is no place for the poor in this democracy.

Sutcliffe has decided to protect the name of the City Hall by using dirty tricks to keep us away from it – to keep our protests as hidden as a transit camp. But tomorrow we will be coming into the city from the townships, the farms, the flats, the shacks and the transit camps. We will be coming into the city from the townships of Inanda, KwaMashu and Lamontville. We will be coming into the city from the farms in eNkwalini, New Hanover, Howick, KwaMjlokazi, Melmoth, Utrecht, Baba Nango and eShowe. We will be coming into the city from the flats of Hillary, Russell Street, Mayville, Wentworth and Dunbar. We will be coming into the city from the shacks of Joe Slovo, Foreman Road, Clare

Estate, Palmiet Road, Quarry Road, Motala Heights, Siyanda, Umkhumbane, New eMmaus, Pemary Ridge, Arnett Drive and, yes, Kennedy Road. We will be coming into the city from the transit camps of Richmond Farm, eNsimbini, Ridge View, Cato Manor and New Dunbar. We will be joined by representatives of some churches and NGOs. All of these struggling communities will bring their own demands to Jacob Zuma. We will also issue our collective demands to Jacob Zuma.

Many journalists have been phoning us and asking if our 'service delivery protest' will be going ahead tomorrow. We appreciate the interest of the media but we really want to stress that this will not 'be a service delivery protest'. We have never organised 'a service delivery protest.' In fact our first marches were to announce that we rejected top down rule by the councillors and that we would, as we have done for the last five years, begin to rule ourselves. The language in which people's struggles are turned into 'service delivery protests' is a language that has been imposed on our struggles from outside – it is not our language. Of course we are struggling for land and housing, water and electricity. But we do not accept the limited way in which these 'services' are 'delivered'. Often an important part of our struggles is to reject that the way that services are delivered. For example we do not accept transit camps. We are struggling for the full recognition and realisation of our humanity in a society that denies our humanity at every turn. We are struggling for real equality. We are struggling so that the world that God gave to humanity is shared fairly by all of us. To call our struggles 'service delivery protests' is a way of making them safe for our oppressors.

We appeal to the media, and to other groups too, like academics, NGOs and churches, to please exercise an important discipline when talking about struggling communities and movements. That discipline is a simple one but it is a very important one. That discipline is to speak to people before speaking about them or for them. As we have said so many times before we are poor in life, not in mind. If you want to know why we are struggling just ask us and we will tell you. If you want to know why people are protesting in Mamelodi, Orange Farm or anywhere in the country you don't need researchers or analysts or spies – you just need to ask them.

We have a clear message for all those who believe that they have a natural right to rule the poor from above be they in government, civil society or

the left. We have a clear message for all those big men like Willies Mchunu, Michael Sutcliffe or Ashwin Desai who believe that they have the right to ruin any organisation of the poor that they cannot rule. Our message is this:

We have been evicted, forcibly removed, beaten, slandered, publicly threatened with death, arrested, jailed, tortured and driven from our homes. Some of us have lost everything that we ever owned in this world. But we will not give up. We will not be turned against each other. We will work and work and work to unite the poor against the politicians and the rich. The problem in this society is the deep political disempowerment of the poor and we will solve this problem by organising ourselves to build our political power. Struggle is hard and it is dangerous. But struggle is the only way to defend our humanity and the humanity of our children. We have a deep responsibility to continue with this struggle until we achieve real equality and a fair sharing of this world.

The march will be supported, with a physical presence, by the Rural Network and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance. It will also be supported, without a physical presence, by our comrades in the Poor People's Alliance – Abahlali baseMjondolo Western Cape, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and the Landless People's Movement in Gauteng.

For more information on the march

S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo President

Troy Morrow, Chairperson of the Abahlali baseMjondolo Hillary Branch and march convenor

Zodwa Nsibande, Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary

Representatives of the following organisations that will be in solidarity with Abahlali baseMjondolo can also be contacted for comment:

Reverend Mavuso Mbhekeseni, Rural Network

Des D'sa, South Durban Community Environmental Alliance

Ashraf Cassiem, Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign

Mzonke Poni, Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Maureen Mnisi, Landless People's Movement (Gauteng)

22 MARCH 2010

Memorandum · Joint statement

A Memorandum of Demands to President Jacob Zuma

We, members and supporters of Abahlali baseMjondolo and the Rural Network in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, are democrats committed to the flourishing of this country. We speak for ourselves and direct our own struggles. We have no hidden agendas. We have been mobilised by our suffering and our hopes for a better life. We believe that it is time to take seriously the fact that South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

We come from the townships of Inanda, KwaMashu and Lamontville. We come from the farms in eNkwalini, New Hanover, Howick, KwaNjobokazi, Melmoth, Utrecht, Babanango and eShowe. We come from the flats of Hillary, Portview, Ridge View (Cato Manor), Wentworth and New Dunbar. We come from the shacks of Joe Slovo, Foreman Road, Clare Estate, Palmiet Road, Quarry Road, Motala Heights, Siyanda, Umkhumbane, New eMmaus, Pemary Ridge, Arnett Drive, Lindelani, Richmond Farm and, yes, Kennedy Road. We come from the transit camps of Richmond Farm, eNsimbini, Ridge View (Transact Camp), Cato Manor and New Dunbar.

We are all agreed that there is a serious crisis in our country. The poor are being pushed out of any meaningful access to citizenship. We are becoming poorer. We are being forced off our land and out of our cities. The councilor system has become a form of top down political control. It does not take our voices upwards. The democracy that we won in 1994 is turning into a new system of oppression for the poor.

We are all agreed that this country is rich because of the theft of our land and because of our work in the farms, mines, factories, kitchens and laundries of the rich. That wealth is therefore also our wealth. We are all agreed that the democratic gains that were won in 1994 were won by the struggles of the people and that we, the poor, are part of the people. Those victories are therefore also our victories. We are all agreed that we can not and will not continue to suffer

in the way that we do. We are all agreed that we can not and will not give up our hopes for a better life and a fair world.

We have had meetings in all of our areas to discuss this march. Each area has developed its own set of demands which we are presenting to you. We have also taken all the demands that are common to many areas and put them together into this statement of our collective demands. We offer it to you as a statement of our demands. We also proclaim it to ourselves and to the world as a charter for the next phase of our struggle.

For too long we have been subject to evictions from our homes, be they in shack settlements or farms. These evictions are often unlawful, they are often violent and they often leave the poor destitute. Therefore we demand an immediate end to all evictions so that we can live in peace and with security.

For too long our communities have survived in substandard and informal housing. Therefore, we demand decent housing so that we can live in safety, health and dignity.

For too long those of us living in shacks have suffered without enough water and without toilets, electricity, refuse collection and drainage. Therefore we demand decent social services in all our communities so that we can live in safety, health and dignity.

For too long many of those of us who are formally connected to water and electricity have not been able to afford the costs of these services and face disconnection. Therefore we demand that these services be made free for the poor.

For too long the promise of housing has been downgraded to forced removal to a transit camp. These transit camps are more like prisons than homes. If they are 'delivery' then they are the delivery of the people into oppression. Therefore we demand an immediate and permanent end to all transit camps so that the dignity of the people that have been taken to the camps can be immediately restored.

For too long the housing that has been built has been built in human dumping grounds far outside of the cities and far from work, schools, clinics and libraries. Therefore we demand immediate action to release well located land for public housing. Where necessary land must be expropriated for this purpose. The social value of urban land must be put before its commercial value.

For too long people that are already languishing in human dumping grounds have been unable to access the cities. Therefore we demand the immediate provision of safe and reliable subsidised public transport to these areas.

For too long there has been rampant corruption in the construction and allocation of housing in transit camps, RDP housing and social housing. Therefore we demand complete transparency in the construction and allocation of all housing and an immediate end to corruption. We demand, in particular, a full and transparent audit into all the activities of the social housing company SO-CHO – including its CEO, general manager and board of directors. We demand a similar audit into all the activities of Nandi Mandela and her associates.

For too long poor flat dwellers have suffered from unaffordable and exploitative rents. Therefore we demand the writing off of all arrears and the institution of an affordable flat rate for all.

For too long the poor have been forced to sign exploitative rental agreements under duress and threat of eviction. Therefore we demand the cancellation and collective renegotiation of all rental agreements signed under duress.

For too long farm dwellers have suffered the impoundment of their cattle, demolition of their homes, the denial of the right to bury their loved ones on the land, the denial of basic service and brutality, and sometimes even murder, at the hands of some farmers. The bias that the justice system has towards the rich has meant that it has systematically undermined farm dwellers. Therefore we demand immediate and practical action to secure the rights of farm dwellers.

For too long a fair distribution and use of rural land has been made impossible by the fact that land – a gift from God – has been turned into a commodity. Therefore we demand immediate steps to put the social value of rural land before its commercial value.

For too long the attack on our movement, its leaders and well known members, their family members and its offices in the Kennedy Road settlement in September last year has received the full backing of the local party and government structures. Therefore we demand

- a serious, comprehensive and credible investigation into the attack and its subsequent handling by the local party and government structures. This must include a full investigation into the role of the South African Police Services.

- the right to return for all the victims of the attack, including the Kennedy Road Development Committee and all its sub-committees. This right must be backed up with high level protection for the security of all the residents of the settlement.
- full compensation for everyone who lost their homes, possessions and livelihoods in the attack.
- a full and public apology by Willies Mchunu for the attack and its subsequent handling.
- the immediate release of those members of the Kennedy 13 who are still being held in detention.
- that immediate steps be taken to ensure that Willies Mchunu, Nigel Gumede and Yacoob Baig are not allowed to interfere in any police or judicial processes resulting from the attack.

For too long our communities have been ravaged by the cruelest forms of poverty. Therefore we demand the creation of well-paying and dignified jobs.

For too long the right to education has been reserved for the rich. Therefore we demand free education for the poor.

For too long we have not been safe from criminals and violence. We are especially concerned about the lack of safety for women in our communities. Therefore we demand immediate practical action to secure the safety of everyone and, in particular, the safety of women.

For too long the poor have been turned against the poor. Therefore we demand an immediate end to all forms of discrimination against isiXhosa speaking people (amamPondo) and people born in other countries.

For too long the legal system has been biased against the poor. Therefore we demand serious practical action to ensure that access to justice is no longer distorted by access to money.

For too long the councillor system has been used to control the people from above and to stifle their voices. Therefore we demand the immediate recognition of the right of all people to, if they so wish, organise themselves outside of party structures in freedom and safety.

Furthermore, just as people from around the city, the province and the country are uniting in support of our struggle we express our support for our comrades elsewhere. We have stood with, and will continue to stand with our comrades in Wentworth, our comrades in the Poor People's Alliance and struggling communities and movements across the country. We thank everyone who has demonstrated solidarity with our struggle including church leaders, students and our comrades in other countries. We will do our best to offer the same support to your struggles.

Handed over by:_____ on _____ at _____

Signature:_____

Received by:_____

Signature:_____

Mr. Troy Morrow
Mr. S'bu Zikode

5 APRIL 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity With The Cloverdean Community

A Solidarity Statement from Abahlali baseMjondolo for the Easter Monday Cloverdean Community Prayer Meeting

We wish to thank ESSET, the Cloverdean Community and all participating churches, organisations and individuals for making this call for solidarity with the Cloverdean Community in Benoni, Johannesburg. Abahlali baseMjondolo believe it is necessary and just that in any normal society people who have a duty to God and to their country will not be silent in the face of oppression.

We have been informed about what has been done to you. It is incredible that while the politicians are celebrating 'Human Rights Day' the rich continue to use the state to wage war on the poor. We have been told how 75 families were evicted from the Cloverdean Farm where they had been living for more than 20 years. We have heard that old people and small babies are among those who have been driven from their homes and their land. We know that one of the elderly women of your community had a stroke out in the open land where you are now living and that she was discharged from the hospital back onto that open land. We have been made aware that one of the women of your community has been raped in the bushes. The difficulties faced by your children have been shared with us. Some of us know very well how it is to wake up on a piece of open land after a night of rain and to then have to get children clean and tidy to go to school.

Thembela Njenga has told us that when the land that you were living on was sold a few years ago you were promised RDP houses but that this promise was broken. We understand that you responded to the breaking of this promise by occupying empty RDP houses in Chief Luthuli Extension 5. You were evicted from those houses by the court and had to return to the dirt and dangers of the empty lands. Three weeks ago good hearted well wishers who could not stand to see human beings living like cattle gave you tents. On Thursday last week the Municipality sent the notorious Red Ants to take the tents, and your money,

sentencing you, for the third time, to life out on the open land without water, without toilets and without, they believe, hope.

Many of us have experienced similar attacks on our security and our dignity. Many of us have been attacked by municipal security, driven from our homes and left, like wild animals, in the bush. We suffered and we suffered and we hoped in vain and then we suffered again. Then we said "Sekwanele!" Our comrades in the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, in the Landless People's Movement and in the Rural Network have also decided that enough is enough. Once we had decided that enough was enough we began to build our movements. Each community must decide for themselves when they have reached the point of saying "Enough!".

We are in solidarity with every community that is under attack. Your suffering is our suffering. We are being brought together by this shared oppression. But we are also being brought together by the decision to resist. It seems that you also took that decision to resist when you occupied the RDP houses after your first eviction. Therefore we greet you as our comrades in the new struggle – the struggle to build the power of the poor against the rich and against the politicians. The road of struggle is very hard. It is very dangerous. But what other choice is there when the government that many of us struggled for and voted for turns on us?

We affirm that your right to the city is your right to all socio-economic opportunities. We affirm that your right to the city is your right to decide your own future. We affirm that none of us deserves to be treated with such contempt in any of our hard won cities. We know of the hidden price that the poor must pay in all of our cities to keep our place in our cities and we condemn this attack on the poor by the Ekurhuleni Municipality in the strongest terms.

What has been done to you it is not just immoral but it is also criminal. Our legal system has strong biases towards the rich but even our legal system recognises that it is a criminal act to render someone homeless without the provision of any alternative adequate accommodation. The Ekurhuleni Municipality and the Red Ants are criminals. This fact must be confronted directly. We call upon people that are near to you – churches, community organisations, trade unions, academics and NGOs, to take a side with you – not for you but with you.

We have noted that there have been so many instances in which the poor have had to pay the highest price for the right to the cities – the same cities that

we build, we secure and we clean. It has become normal that the poor should have no place in our cities. Now it is the turn of the Cloverdean Community but it is clear that we will all have our turn to be evicted from our homes and our places of work and to be beaten when we demand what is ordinary and basic – the right to be taken as human beings, to be treated with dignity.

We reject, clearly, the idea that others should interpret our struggles for us and without us. So many academics, NGOs and journalists never speak to us but tell the world that we are struggling for service delivery. We have refused to be seen as poor people who only want service delivery, a service delivery without justice and equality, a service delivery without respect and dignity, a service delivery with Red Ants, transit camps and cracked RDP houses in the middle of nowhere.

If we do not resist and challenge our exclusion from the cities with all means necessary we will find ourselves out in the open lands or the transit camps. It is high time that we must take all our places in all our cities without fear. Taking our place in our cities means holding the ground that we already have and taking more too. This will obviously mean that we must prepare ourselves to pay the price which some of us have already paid – attacks in the night, police beatings, being jailed, always being watched, lies – even being driven from our homes with the support of the police.

While you were evicted from your homes in Cloverdean the eThekweni Municipality was trying to evict us from our main streets and important public building when thousands of us wanted to march for Human Dignity in Durban on Human Rights Day. But we were many, we were united and we were not intimidated and so despite the heavily armed police force we were able to successfully and peacefully take our place in our city on that day.

Abahlali have always been warning that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. We continue to make this warning as we witness that all around the country struggling communities are taking to the streets. People are resisting all over our cities and all over the rural areas. People are refusing to be evicted from their land. People are refusing to be excluded from our cities' planning and are demanding to be able to exercise full citizenship. We need, in this time, to be very clear about what we are fighting for. We are not fighting over the crumbs that are thrown at us by the rich and the politicians.

We affirm that South Africa belongs to all who live in it and that we all have a responsibility to do whatever it takes to protect the future of our children and to reclaim our citizenship with all its entitlements. We must refuse those who want to take our humanity away from us with little offers of service delivery and bribery. We must refuse those who want us to fight each other over the crumbs. We must all fight for land and production to be shared equally and fairly without any heavy price being paid by the poor while taking the same rights that the rich take freely and safely.

Furthermore, just as the people from around our cities, our country and our world are uniting in support of our struggle we express our support for our comrades elsewhere who are being crucified by the upcoming FIFA World Cup. We have stood with, and we will continue to stand with our comrades from the Mitchell's Plain Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association in Cape Town, all the street traders in Durban and the National Informal Traders Forum, the South African Street Traders Association, the Diepsloot Informal Traders Association, MTC Traders Berea Mall, the Mall to Mall and all the Task Teams formulated to resist any attempts by the City of Johannesburg to evict them from their trading spaces. We will continue to stand with the Taxi Associations whose routes are banned and whose taxis are being impounded because the Department of Transport cannot issue them with Operating Permits. All this is being done to exclude all poor South Africans from benefiting from the World Cup so that our politicians can impress international dignitaries with how well they can oppress the poor. The true meaning of 'a world class city' is a city that oppresses its poor with high effectiveness – removing us, hiding us and breaking our struggles.

We do not want world class cities. We want cities for all – real people's cities. We have decided to resist these attacks on the poor and we invite you and all struggling communities and their allies, their real allies, those prepared to work with and not for the poor, to take this resistance forward.

We say that these attacks on the poor must come to an end. We affirm that your struggle to resist eviction, crime, hunger, starvation and eviction from your homes, trading plots and operating routes is just. We will stand with you against all forms of repression in your struggle for land and freedom.

Amandla!

20 APRIL 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

ANC Intimidation Continues in Kennedy Road

On Sunday an ANC MP in the Provincial Parliament by the name of Dora Dlamini intimidated Nozuko Hulushe, a Kennedy Road resident and Abahlali baseMjondolo member, and demanded that she withdraw her assault charge against a local ANC leader before the case goes to trial.

The violent intimidation of AbM in the Kennedy Road settlement began with mysterious but very well organised and extremely brutal assaults on AbM leaders S'bu Zikode and Mashumi Figlan. Then, as the whole world knows, an armed mob, chanting ethnic slogans, went from door to door on the night of 28 September 2009 driving well known AbM leaders and members from their homes. Their homes were destroyed and looted while the police and local politicians looked on. The office of Willies Mchunu, the provincial MEC for Safety & Security, issued a statement that declared that Kennedy Road had been 'liberated'.

The intimidation of AbM members, including the demolition of people's houses, continued in the settlement for months after the main attack. There has also been extreme public intimidation, including the open issuing of death threats against various people, at the court appearance of the people arrested after the attack on the movement. One person who does not live in the Kennedy Road settlement was threatened with death and had to flee her home after she commented on our Constitutional Court victory against the Slums Act on the TV news.

One of the many ongoing incidents of violent intimidation against AbM in Kennedy Road occurred on the 7th of February this year. Well known AbM member, Nozuko Hulushe, was publicly assaulted, without warning or provocation, by Zibuyile Ngcobo and her sister Nana. Zibuyile Ngcobo is a well known ANC member and a member of the ANC BEC in Ward 25. She was part of the same group that attacked AbM on 28 September 2009 and she was also involved in the attack on AbM comrades from Siyanda while they were in the Kennedy Road settlement. She was made chairperson of the Kennedy Road ANC branch

after the elected leadership was violently driven from the settlement. She is also alleged to have received a cheque from the ANC IN December. There are strong allegations that some of the attackers were paid for driving AbM out of Kennedy Road. Ngcobo attended all the court appearances for the Kennedy 13 wearing a dress made from a Jacob Zuma flag and she engaged in highly threatening behaviour outside the court.

On 7 February Ngcobo and her sister attacked Nozuko Hulushe with sticks and a brick beating her to the ground and pulling out her hair. During the beating Nozuko was told that she was 'a problem in the community' as she 'did not attend ANC meetings'. Nozuko was severely injured in the attack and two of her teeth were knocked loose. It seemed that her attackers would have killed her if they had not been stopped. The attack was only stopped, as the main attack on 28 September 2009 was only stopped, when community members spontaneously intervened.

It has been very difficult and often impossible for AbM members who have been attacked, assaulted and driven from their homes in the Kennedy Road settlement to open cases with the police. This is not surprising in view of that the fact that the police and senior ANC politicians openly supported the attacks. However Nozuko was one of the few people who succeeded to open a case against her attackers. Immediately after she was beaten she went to the District Surgeon to complete the J8 form. There is therefore a good record of her injuries. There are a number of witnesses to the attack and she has a very strong case against Zibuyile Ngcobo. The case is due to be heard in court on 28 April 2010. This case will be very embarrassing for the ANC.

AbM has not been completely driven from the Kennedy Road settlement. Organising has continued in the settlement underground and more openly outside the settlement. There was strong support from Kennedy Road for the recent March on Jacob Zuma. Every Sunday the Kennedy Road AbM branch continues to have their regular meeting – but now they hold the assembly in a park in the city.

On Sunday Nozuko attended the weekly Kennedy Road AbM meeting in the park. When she returned to her home in the settlement she found that the Sydenham police were there with a woman, in a car with a driver. This woman was talking to her daughter. She told Nozuko that she is working in parliament and she showed an ID card with her picture and an SAPS badge. It was written

'Liaison Officer Member of Parliament' and that her name was Dora Dlamini. Dlamini told Nozuko that she was there to work on abused women and she said that the case that Nozuko has opened against Zibuyile Ngcobo is abusive. She instructed Nozuko to withdraw the case before it goes to court. Nozuko said that she knows her rights and that she refuses to withdraw the case. Dlamini said that she was 'giving a homework' to Nozuko and that she will come back later to check that the charges have been withdrawn. She was speaking as people who are having a higher position speak. She was very bold and refused to listen.

After Dlamini left Nozuko went to the Sydenham police station and tried to lay a charge of intimidation against her but they would not accept the case.

At 9:45 that night Nozuko received a threatening phone call from a private number. The caller warned her to drop the case. She received a further two phone calls before she switched her phone off.

We have known Dora Dlamini for a long time. She is from Ward 25 and has been living in Sydenham Heights for many years. When she got the position in parliament we were all very surprised. She was never useful to the community at all. She lived just up the road from Kennedy Road but we never saw her when the settlement burnt, when babies were dying of diarrhoea, when women were raped looking for a private place to go relieve themselves in the night because we are denied toilets or when we lived, year after year, with 6 taps for thousands of people. But as soon as we ask for justice, as soon as ask for the truth to be recognised, as soon as we ask to be safe from political violence, as soon as we make it clear that we will not be beaten back into silence she is at the settlement to intimidate us.

If we lose hope in the ANC and organise ourselves we are attacked. But, really, can we be expected to maintain hope in the ANC if people like Dora Dlamini are taken to these high offices?

We were attacked in the night and driven from our homes. Many of us lost everything. Our attackers had the full support of the police and the politicians. That is not democracy. There is no democracy for the poor in this country. A democracy that is not for everyone is not a real democracy therefore there is no democracy for anyone in this country.

No evidence has been brought against our five comrades that are still in Westville Prison six months after the attack. But when we bring real and clear

evidence against our attackers we are intimidated by powerful people who demand that we drop the case against them. When we are attacked and our homes are destroyed that attack is called 'liberation'. When we succeed to lay a charge against our attackers that charge is called 'abuse'. Words have lost their proper meanings in this country. They have just become more weapons to keep us, as the poor, in our place.

We have had to develop our own democracy. We have had to develop our own analysis of the truth of what is happening in this country. We concluded, long ago, that the only force that will win the poor a decent place in this society – a place in the cities, in the discussions, in the schools, in the universities, on the land and in the economy – is the power of the organised poor. We invite everyone who is prepared to talk to us and not for us or about us to join us in the struggle to make this democracy real for the poor. Right now that struggle has to start with concrete actions to defend people who are under attack, who have been chased from their homes and who are in prison. We are issuing a clear warning to the ANC that if anything happens to Nozuko Hulushe we will hold them accountable. She has the full support of the whole of AbM and we will stand with her in this difficult time and we will keep standing with her until she is free to live in Kennedy Road and to support what ever organisation and ideas she wants to support.

We strongly feel that either the ANC or Willies Mchubu have given Dora Dlamini a mandate to intimidate Nozuko. After the attack on AbM Mchunu and his team prepared a report on what happened. They took a resolution that AbM 'must be disbanded' and reported this to parliament. We are calling on the ANC to give us some clarity. Have they given Dora Dlamini the mandate to intimidate Nozuko? If it was not the ANC as a whole does the mandate come from Willies Mchunu? Will the ANC distance itself from Dora's activities?

We repeat our call for an independent and credible commission of inquiry into the attack and ongoing intimidation in Kennedy Road.

Abahlali baseMjondolo

25 APRIL 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Blue Ants Attack UT Section, Site B, Khayelitsha

Abahlali baseMjondolo condemns the continuation attack of our settlements by the City of Cape Town, Law Enforcement, Anti Land Invasion and it's private agency.

On Thursday a house of a member of Abahlali baseMjondolo at UT section at Site B was demolished by the City's Law Enforcement without any reason.

UT section has been existing for the past 15 years, but it came as a shock to most people within UT section when they saw Law Enforcement officers armed with guns, accompanied by the blue ants which were used to demolished the structures of Abahlali baseMjondolo at Macassar village last year.

According to the head of the operation from Law Enforcement, they were instructed by a member of the community who claimed to be the representative of the area, when the members of Abahlali baseMjondolo conducted their investigation within the area apparently it came as a shock to find out that the person is PETRIC who is linked to Shack Dwellers International (SDI), the same person has been collecting R7 from the community promising people that if they donate R7 SDI will relocate them within 6 months.

When he (PETRIC) was interrogated by the community members he said that, the houses he identified are housing izikili/ootsotsi (thugs) and he did this without any consultation of the community and the community executives.

As Abahlali baseMjondolo we condemn this kind of behaviour in our settlements, and we would like to note that no one may demolish anyone's structure without a court order and we further note that the law enforcement and anti land invasion unit are not welcome in our settlements and they are not our friends.

We're are confident to our elected leadership, and we do have our democratic ways to deal with our issues without any inclusion of the law enforcement, and if this is the program of the Shack Dwellers International we also condemn it.

Vuyani for comment contact Mzonke Poni

26 APRIL 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Are we Free or are We Being Blinded?

Again, like in other years, Abahlali baseMjondolo will be mourning the sad state of our country 20 years after independence from the apartheid government and 16 years after the so-called, 'freedom', which is really the freedom of the few. The majority of the people that live in this country are poor. They still living in the shacks that they have been living in even before we got the liberation, which raises the question of who this liberation that every one on the 27 April will be celebrating is really for?

Once again Abahlali this year will have the big reason not to celebrate this Freedom Day. In a really free country there would be freedom of association for everyone. But in South Africa this right is denied to the self-organised poor. Abahlali has been denied this right by those who believe that freedom only came because of them and that, therefore, no one has a right to organize the people without them. The world should remember that on the 26 and 27 September 2009, the Abahlali leadership and many ordinary members who are mainly Xhosa speaking people were chased out of Kennedy Road by a group of armed men. Later 14 Abahlali members were arrested and five of them are still in prison. We don't know how long they will be kept there as the Investigating Officer and State Advocate say that they are "still doing the investigation" even though it has been six months since this attack happen. The leadership of Abahlali is still living in exile in their own settlement, their own city, their own province and their own country.

Is this the freedom that our brothers and sisters died fighting for? The answer is clear and it is no. If a person is going to be threatened in order to intimidate her to withdraw her case against a person that attacked her, and if her children are going to be threatened by a politician that is abusing her power of working in the Provincial Parliament and is also a member of ANC, like it happened a week ago to Nozuko Hulushe who is an active member of Abahlali baseMjondolo who lives in Kennedy, then it is clear, again, that there is no real freedom in the country.

Is this a free country when grassroots organizations that have done everything that is required in terms of the Gatherings Act to organise a march find that their march is banned by Mike Sutcliffe just because he has power to do what ever he wants? Is this a free country when the police service who are supposed to protect us shoot to us? Is this a free country when the ANC can just decide to 'disband' our movement? Is this a free country when women are not safe on the streets after dark? Is this a free country when our children are chased from the schools because we don't have money? Is this a free country the people that live in the informal settlements are being dumped in the 'Transit Areas' which are situated 37 KM away from the City? Is this a free country when street traders are driven from the cities? Is this a free country when the taxis that are majority owned by black people will not be allowed to operate in the city center and only government buses will be allowed to transport commuters in the city? For example in the City of Durban the Public Taxis will end at Warwick.

In forty five days the world will be enjoying the so called,"African World Cup". The question is will the poor enjoy or benefit? The answer is No. Who will benefit? The same people who will be celebrating the Freedom Day on the 27 April. The poor are being denied the right to sell near the stadiums and forced to sell their things far, far away from the stadiums. The taxi operators are also in trouble. Who will buy there? How will poor people be transported? Has the BRT replaced the black led transport industry? Can we really say that anyone in Blikkiesdorp is free?

We call upon all poor communities that live in the shacks as well as in rural areas to wake-up as we are heading to the local government election in 2011. The hyena that wears the skin of the sheep will be entering your communities to do door to door campaigning for their vote. Once you have voted for them you won't be able to speak to them. In order to speak to them you will have to make an appointment that is not shorter than a month. When that day comes you will be lucky if the meeting is not cancelled. And while you are waiting for that day to come the rats and the shack fires will be busy troubling you or the sheriff will be busy serving the eviction summons or the farm owner will have given you an ultimatum of ten days to evacuate his farm. Do not put your faith in the hyenas. Put your faith in yourself. Put your faith in your neighbour. Organise yourselves – build your own power.

This year Abahlali and Rural Network will be having our Unfreedom Day at Babanangu in Northern Zululand. All poor communities as well as all people that have a concern for our democracy that is under threat are invited to join hands and to defend it so that one day we will be able to celebrate the real democracy and freedom that is being enjoyed by everyone. The event will start at 10:00 a.m.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo spokesperson
Mr. Mbhekiseni Mavuso, Rural Network spokesperson

14 MAY 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Justice Delayed and Denied Once More for the Kennedy 12

The Kennedy 12 appeared in Y court today. The defence lawyer was finally given case docket. At the hearing the magistrate set down 12 July 2010 as the trial date.

The five who are still in Westville Prison will appear before the same magistrate who refused them bail last year. Their bail application has been set down for Thursday 20 May 2010 at Court 10. The only difference will be that this time the defence will have been able to have read the docket before the bail application. But the accused will have spent eight months in prison before they are able to have a proper bail hearing. If the magistrate refuses bail again the matter will go the High Court on appeal.

In the eight months in which these five men have been rotting in Westville Prison – unable to work to support their families who were made homeless in the attack on AbM last year – no evidence of criminality on their part has been presented to the court. Instead there has been constant and blatant political interference. If the five who are still in jail are granted bail on 20 May they would already have served a long sentence without being found guilty of anything.

This is a political case and it will be a political trial. Our movement has always argued that the legal system is deeply biased towards the rich because good lawyers cost money and the rich have money and we don't. We deeply appreciate the commitment of our comrade lawyers who have worked incredibly hard with us and for us. But we have always argued that the legal system must be freed from the rule of money. But now it is clear to us that there are two forces that are corrupting the legal system. One is money and the other is political oppression organised through the ANC.

There is no doubt that our comrades are political prisoners and that the trial that will begin on 12 July 2010 will be a political trial. We will do everything that we can to mobilise solidarity around this trial.

Mzwake Mdlalose of the Kennedy Road Development Committee or the Abahlali baseMjondolo Office

14 MAY 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Once Again the Name of Our Movement is Being Abused by the NGOs

On Tuesday this week we were shocked to read an article in The Sowetan by Patrick Magebhula in which Magebhula claimed that Abahlali baseMjondolo is part of the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) which falls under the control of the global NGO Shack Dwellers International (SDI). Benjamin Bradlow from SDI later sent the article to the press.

Last year, after our movement was attacked, we were invited to a meeting, in Durban, of all shack dwellers' organisations. We discussed the invitation and decided to elect two representatives from our movement to attend that meeting. At that meeting solidarity was expressed with us and a promise was made, by Mzwanele Zulu of the Joe Slovo Task Team (which has now joined SDI), to organise marches in support of us in Johannesburg and Cape Town. We accepted this offer of solidarity. In a time when a shack dwellers organisation is suffering violent state backed attacks it makes good sense for different organisations, with different politics, to unite around a shared opposition to these attacks and a shared commitment to the right of shack dwellers to organise themselves as they choose to. However at that meeting we never agreed to join the ISN. After the meeting we heard nothing further about the promises of solidarity that were made to us.

Our movement is organised on a completely different basis to the Federation of the Urban Poor (FedUp), which falls under SDI, and we have developed a completely different politics to SDI. Our movement falls under no one other than its members. We do not believe that progress will come by friendship and loyalty to an oppressive government. It is clear to us that the government gives so many millions to SDI because they believe that SDI will help them to control the poor. We believe that we have a duty to resist oppression. We believe that it is essential for the poor to organise and to build our own power against the rich, against the politicians and against that part of civil society that think that it has a natural right to represent the poor.

However we are a democratic organisation and we respect the right of everyone to choose their own politics. We work with shack dwellers' organisations that have chosen to affiliate themselves to SDI when they have good intentions and when we have areas of common concern. For example we are always happy to work with "General" Alfred Moyo in Makause in Johannesburg. The people in Makause have had to confront evictions and violence from the state as well as xenophobia. They understand very well the challenges that any shack dweller's organisation must face in South Africa.

But the fact is that we did not join the ISN, we have never joined the ISN and we are not even aware of their programmes and projects. It is simply untrue for Patrick Magebhula to claim that we, along with the Federation of the Urban Poor (FedUP) and the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) fall under the ISN. And it is simply untrue for Benjamin Bradlow to imply that, because we are claimed to fall under the ISN, we therefore fall under SDI.

We have seen no living solidarity from SDI or their ISN while we have been under attack. SDI did issue one statement after the attack but after that all we have seen is statements from SDI praising the government – the same government that evicts us, disconnects us, arrests us, beats us and supports a violent attack against us. All we see is that the notorious Lindiwe Sisulu, who abandoned Breaking New Ground and the Constitution to try and 'eradicate' us from the cities, is chair of the board of SDI. In our view it is a disgrace that an organisation that claims to be working in the interests of shack dwellers can have someone like Sisulu as the chair of its board.

We have paid a very high price to keep our autonomy from NGOs. We will never give up that autonomy. We will always be directed by no one other than our members and the discussions that we organise in our meetings. We are willing to work on areas of common concern with organisations that respect our autonomy but the fact is that there are very, very few NGOs that are willing to respect the autonomy of a poor people's movement. We, along with other movements, have had long experience of NGOs claiming that they represent us when they do not, claiming to be working with us when they are not, offering money and expensive presents to individuals to try and buy our support and so on. The NGOs on the left and on the right often behave in exactly the same way. We have also had long and bitter experience with NGOs that respond to us in exactly the same way as the state when we reject their money and their authority. Some NGOs have the same 'rule it or ruin it' strategy as the state.

Our advice to Patrick Magebhula is to be honest with himself, with his organisations, with the media and with us. You cannot claim to represent an other organisation just because you once attended a meeting together. You cannot claim to represent people that you never consult with. We would like to caution him to always remember that what ever nice things that SDI says about the government and what ever nice things that the government says about SDI people are still living and dying in the shacks. People are still being burnt and evicted and beaten and arrested. We continue to recommend that a politics that is of the poor, by the poor and for the poor must start from this reality and not from the nice things that the government and a government funded NGO are saying about each other.

We are not part of the ISN and we have never been part of the ISN. But we are part of an alliance and that alliance is the Poor People's Alliance (PPA). The PPA consists of Abahlali baseMjondolo (in Durban and in Cape Town), the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (in Cape Town), the Rural Network (in KwaZulu-Natal) and the Landless People's Movement (in Johannesburg). We started that alliance when we rejected the authority of the left NGOs and, without one cent of donor money, started an alliance by the poor, for the poor and under the complete control of the organisations of the poor. Our alliance was carefully discussed and endorsed in all our movements. It unites poor people in shacks, flats, township houses and on farms. It is based on a refusal of party politics and a commitment to people's politics. In this alliance we always aim to build a living solidarity between our organisations as we resist oppression and work to build the power of the poor. No one makes any decisions for the alliance except a meeting of representatives from all the organisations that make up our alliance. Sometimes this makes it hard for us to make decisions or to issue statements quickly. But when we say something it carries the real weight of all of our movements. This is our politics.

We do hope that both Patrick Magebhula and Benjamin Bradlow will issue a formal apology for misrepresenting our movement in this way. We have sent a letter to The Sowetan and asked them to publish a correction.

the Abahlali baseMjondolo Office

24 MAY 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Africa Day Statement by the Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

On 25th May 2010, the whole of Africa will be celebrating “Africa Day”.

Thinking about “Africa Day” we remembered the famous speech by Thabo Mbeki in 1996 when the new constitution was adopted – the speech when he said, “I am an African.”

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld.

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.

At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito.

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say—I am an African!

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result.

Today, as a country, we keep an audible silence about these ancestors of the generations that live, fearful to admit the horror of a former deed, seeking to obliterate from our memories a cruel occurrence which, in its remembering, should teach us not and never to be inhuman again.

I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me.

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done.

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.

My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the desert.

I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins.

I am the child of Nongqause. I am he who made it possible to trade in the world markets in diamonds, in gold, in the same food for which my stomach yearns.

I come of those who were transported from India and China, whose being resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human existence.

Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that – I am an African.

I have seen our country torn asunder as these, all of whom are my people, engaged one another in a titanic battle, the one redress a wrong that had been caused by one to another and the other, to defend the indefensible.

I have seen what happens when one person has superiority of force over another, when the stronger appropriate to themselves the prerogative even to annul the injunction that God created all men and women in His image.

I know what it signifies when race and colour are used to determine who is human and who, sub-human.

I have seen the destruction of all sense of self-esteem, the consequent striving to be what one is not, simply to acquire some of the benefits which those who had improved themselves as masters had ensured that they enjoy.

I have experience of the situation in which race and colour is used to enrich some and impoverish the rest.

I have seen concrete expression of the denial of the dignity of a human being emanating from the conscious, systemic and systematic oppressive and repressive activities of other human beings.

There the victims parade with no mask to hide the brutish reality – the beggars, the prostitutes, the street children, those who seek solace in substance abuse, those who have to steal to assuage hunger, those who have to lose their sanity because to be sane is to invite pain.

Perhaps the worst among these, who are my people, are those who have learnt to kill for a wage. To these the extent of death is directly proportional to their personal welfare.

And so, like pawns in the service of demented souls, they kill in furtherance of the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal. They murder the innocent in the taxi wars.

They kill slowly or quickly in order to make profits from the illegal trade in narcotics. They are available for hire when husband wants to murder wife and wife, husband.

Among us prowl the products of our immoral and amoral past – killers who have no sense of the worth of human life, rapists who have absolute disdain for the women of our country, animals who would seek to benefit from the vulnerability of the children, the disabled and the old, the rapacious who brook no obstacle in their quest for self-enrichment.

All this I know and know to be true because—I am an African!

Because of that, I am also able to state this fundamental truth that I am born of a people who are heroes and heroines.

I am born of a people who would not tolerate oppression.

I am of a nation that would not allow that fear of death, torture, imprisonment, exile or persecution should result in the perpetuation of injustice.

The great masses who are our mother and father will not permit that the behaviour of the few results in the description of our country and people as barbaric.

Patient because history is on their side, these masses do not despair because today the weather is bad. Nor do they turn triumphalism when, tomorrow, the sun shines.

Whatever the circumstances they have lived through and because of that experience, they are determined to define for themselves who they are and who they should be.

We are assembled here today to mark their victory in acquiring and exercising their right to formulate their own definition of what it means to be African.

The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes and unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender of historical origins.

It is a firm assertion made by us that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

It gives concrete expression to the sentiment we share as Africans, and will defend to the death, that the people shall govern.

It recognises the fact that the dignity of the individual is both an objective which society must pursue, and is a goal which cannot be separated from the material well-being of that individual."

This is the interesting part of his speech:

The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes and unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, and gender of historical origins.

It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

It is this idea, the idea that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, an idea that is also there in the Freedom Charter of 1955, that we have to hold on to when there is any discussion of who is an African.

This is the 5th year in which South Africa is holding the African Renaissance Festival in Durban. Africa and Africans have been discriminated for a long time and it is good that Africa and Africans are now celebrated. But can we speak

about an African Renaissance when some people are being excluded from what it means to be an African in South Africa?

As we speak there is a case that is pending in Durban whereby one ANC councillor was involved in the attacking of the immigrants that came to South Africa to seek refuge. Is South Africa the best place to host this event, bearing in mind the way people from the African continent are being treated in this country? Is our government doing enough to protect our African brothers and sisters? As far as we know we are not because even those who are supposed to protect them are the very first people to torture them and arrest them if they don't give them money. Where is Africa, where is the spirit of Ubuntu in all this? Is being African to be defined by colour, race, gender, class or nationality?

What happened to the idea that South Africa belongs to all who live in it? What happened to the idea that Africa belongs to all who live in it? What happened to the idea that our heroes should be those that fight for the full inclusion of everyone and never those that fight to exclude some people?

Right now two Malawian gays have been sentenced for 14 years for coming out. None of the African heads of state have stepped forward to condemn this doing of the Malawi government. When we ask why it seems that the answer is because they all believe that 'being Gay is unAfrican'. But there are many Gay people in Africa and therefore it cannot be 'unAfrican to be Gay'.

As the Youth of Abahlali baseMjondolo we are sending solidarities to that Gay couple who will face 14 years imprisonment for being who they are, having the courage to be open about who they are and to believe in what they believe in. It is so wrong that innocent people who have harmed no one are sent to jail while the criminals are being protected outside and allowed to continue abusing innocent people.

In conclusion we would like to argue to the poor community that we must be very aware of the price of our silence in these times.

Some will say that they did not speak up when they came for the street traders because they are not street traders. Some will say that they did not speak up when they came for the shack dwellers because they are not living in shacks. Some will say that they did not speak up for the people born in other countries because they were born here. Some will say that they did not speak up for the full freedom of women because they are not women. Some will say that they did not speak up for Abahlali baseMjondolo because they never wore a red shirt.

Some will say that they did not speak up for the Gays and Lesbians because they are not Lesbian or Gay.

The first price of our silence is that if we do not speak up for others then there will be no one left to speak up for us.

The second price of our silence is that an injury to one is always an injury to all. Gay and Lesbian people are our neighbours, our relatives, our colleagues, and our comrades. We must never forget that the struggle is connected in different ways.

Let us unite and defend the democracy that our forefathers and foremothers have fought for. Let us show the government and those who try to fight for their place in society by attacking others what real democracy is. Let us insist that Africa belongs to all who live in it.

Aluta Continua.....!!!

Zodwa Nsibande

10 JUNE 2010

Urgent press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

The Right to the City Campaign in Cape Town

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Count Down

The Right to the City Campaign

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape, 21 days ago launched it's 'the right to the city campaign'. Today the world and South Africans are counting few days before the kick off of the 2010 FiFa World cup, also Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape is counting few hours before kick starting it's campaign.

Part of the aim of the campaign is to build shacks outside Green Point soccer stadium at Cape Town, occupying governmental offices, invading open public spaces within the city and occupying unused hotels, flats and schools within the City.

Tomorrow, the 11th June 2010 is the first day of our campaign, about 100 members of Abahlali baseMjondolo will meet at Cape Town next to Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) at Keizersgracht Street at 10:00 from there we will proceed to where our protest is going to take place.

Our action in terms of South African Gatherings Act is viewed as illegal, as it suggest that we need to notify the police 14 days before such action but according to us our action is genuine and legitimate and we see no reason for us to notify them while we are going to occupy their offices because we refused to be controlled in any way in our actions.

All media agencies are invited to expose the police and governmental arrogance towards the poorest of the poor. We want the world to see how the poor are denied the right to well located land by South African Government and by the City of Toilets or the 'Shit City' (The City of Cape Town).

Mr. Qona
Nobantu Goniwe

PLEASE NOTE: AS WE SPEAK ABAHLALI BRANCH AT QQ ARE CURRENTLY BUSY BURNING TYRES AT LANSDOWN ROAD OPPOSITE QQ IN PREPARATION OF TOMORROW'S ACTION AND MEDIA URGENCIES ARE URGED TO RUSH TO THE SCENE.

Mbongeni Mkhaliphi

10 JUNE 2010

Press statement · Joint statement

The Return to Kennedy Road Campaign

Abahlali baseMjondolo & the Kennedy Development Committee

The truth remains. The truth frees. The truth cannot be hidden with lies for ever.

For lies to continue to hide the truth they must be constantly sustained and maintained. For truth to be able to emerge from under the lies we have to constantly remember what has really been said and done, by whom and for what purpose.

We have often said that the attack on our movement in the Kennedy Road settlement on the 26th and 27th of September last year was planned at a very high political level. It was planned outside of the Kennedy Road settlement.

The attack took the lives of two people; drove our leaders, their families, their friends and comrades out of the Kennedy Road settlement and left thousands of people homeless and displaced. Thirteen people were arrested for the crime that was planned after several meetings of the ANC structures in and outside the settlement. Eight months later five of those people remain in Westville prison without bail and without any evidence being brought against them.

We have warned that some of the people of Kennedy Road were made to be involved in the attack by turning their anger on their own brothers and sisters. This is something that happened elsewhere in the country in May 2008. It is now happening in eTwatwa. The residents of Kennedy Road who joined this attack had no idea of what was really going on, why they were being made to attack their own neighbours or who their real enemies are. Even those whose lives were lost may not have known the real reasons why they were fighting. The anger and desperation of people was exploited by those who remoted them to attack their neighbours. Those whose homes and belongings were destroyed or burnt still cannot explain why the poor were used to attack the poor. It makes no sense for any one of us. It only makes sense for those who wish to divide the poor.

The South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Metro Police were at the scene during the attack and can also not explain how they were remoted by the political authorities that instructed them which lives to protect and which lives not to protect. They must have feared to lose their jobs if they acted justly and lawfully.

For a long time now the Kennedy Road Development Committee (KRDC) have been receiving calls from several individual and groups in the Kennedy Road settlement asking them to return to the settlement.

The people and groups that are demanding the return of the KRDC are saying that the daily life in the settlement has become very threatening and frustrating without the self organisation of the settlement by and for its residents. The KRDC were elected by that process of self organisation. Since the KRDC, as the representatives elected by the self organisation of the poor by the poor and for the poor, were driven from the settlement everything that had been built up and achieved in the settlement has been butchered. There is no more crèche. There is no more care for the sick. There is no more ability to negotiate with the police and the state for a position of collective strength. The crime rate has increased enormously. Kennedy Road has become a settlement of fear and hopeless where there is no law and there is no order.

Willies Mchunu, the MEC for Safety and Security in KwaZulu-Natal, replaced our elected leadership with a Community Policing Forum. But this has not brought safety or security. The community is being abused in many ways.

Once again fires are being used as an excuse to force people into the amatin. The eThekweni Municipality is constantly disconnecting people from electricity. When people reconnect the connections are not properly organised and some connections are dangerous. The settlement has returned to darkness and fear.

Like they did in the old days, before we organised ourselves, the SAPS come to the settlement, kick in people's doors and sometimes steal their belongings and money.

Once again, like in the past, the politicians are making their empty promises and disrespecting the people. After the attack Nigel Gumede, the Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee in the eThekweni Municipality, together with Willies Mchunu, promised that the community will be housed by February

2010. Now Gumede and Mchunu are nowhere to be found. No one tells the community anything. Once again the people of Kennedy Road are on their own.

The community has begun to reorganise itself and to remobilise itself. An underground branch of Abahlali baseMjondolo has been running for sometime. Recently recruitment to the Abahlali baseMjondolo branch has become more open. In recent days there have been open discussions about the return of the KRDC, its families and others who were displaced. The KRDC has raised the issue of the safety of those who are being asked to return. They have also insisted that either everyone who was displaced will return or no one will return. Those who are calling for the return of the KRDC have said that they have suffered enough and that they will guarantee the safety of the KRDC. A petition calling for the return of the KRDC to the settlement has been openly circulated in the last two days and more than five hundred people have already signed it. Most of these people are women. They cannot guarantee the behaviour of the few people in the settlement who remain loyal to the local ANC councillor, Yacoob Baig, and the local chairperson of the Branch Executive Committee of the ANC, Jackson Gumede. But they have committed themselves to guarantee the safety of everyone that they have asked to return. They will not make this guarantee real with guns and knives. They will make it real with the right that every mother has to insist on the safety of her home and her family. Anyone who plans to attack the KRDC will have to face these women and the strength of their motherliness first.

Along with being the chairperson of the ANC BEC in the area Gumede is a shacklord in the nearby Lacy Road settlement. After the attack he, with the support of Baig and the police, seized control of the settlement. He was chased out of the Kennedy Road settlement in February this year after the ANC failed to respond to the community's needs after the terrible fires in Kennedy Road.

The Abahlali baseMjondolo leadership and the KRDC have agreed and confirmed that they will return to Kennedy Road this Sunday and hold an open and public meeting with the Kennedy Road community.

We are willing to return to Kennedy Road. The community understands that the attack on our leaders and our movement was a political plot driven from outside and high up. The history of the truth in this beautiful settlement, beautiful because it became the ground of our hope, will not be wiped away.

We believe that the demand for our return is a democratic and legitimate act by the community to express their vote of no confidence in Baig and those who are trying to impose their authority in the settlement.

Our return to Kennedy Road on Sunday will be completely different to the violence and hatred that drove us out. We will not come with weapons and division. There is no need for the government to send in the riot squad, the water cannons and their helicopters. We will come with open discussion, with *isicathamiya* and with prayer. Bishop Dladla from the Zionist Christian Church, who was able to remain in the settlement after the attack, will open the meeting with prayer. The Dlamini King Brothers, who were also exiled in the attack, will sing at the meeting.

The meeting on Sunday will be shaped by people's discussions. We, as elected leaders, will be guided by those discussions. If those discussions conclude that we should return permanently then we will do so. If it is agreed that we should return permanently then the first item that we will have to discuss will be to set a date for an election for the 2010 KRDC. The current KRDC were elected for 2009 and then driven from office and their homes in September 2009. Therefore an election needs to be held to elect a KRDC for 2010.

Those few in the settlement who joined the attack on us need not fear our return. We will not be seeking any revenge. We will not be demanding compensation for our destroyed homes, our stolen goods and our time in exile. We wish to move beyond the tragedy of the poor being remoted to attack the poor and to unite the community behind its self organisation. Our duty is to unite the poor and to demand justice from the rich and from the state. We refuse to be made to fight each other. Those who wish to remain active members of the ANC will be free to do so. We will ask only that they respect the democratic process in the settlement.

The meeting that has been called for the return of the KRDC and the AbM leadership to the Kennedy Road settlement will be held at 10:00 on Sunday 13 June 2010 at the Springfield College Sports Ground which is right next to the settlement.

While the rich are in their stadiums waving their flags and watching football, a game that many of our members play and love, we will be taking forward the responsibility of building the real nation. The nation that excludes no one, the nation in which everyone counts, the nation in which a shack settlement

is a community to be supported and not a slum to be eradicated, a nation in which the self organisation of the poor is recognised as the foundation of our democracy and not a threat to society to be smashed by any means necessary.

The World Cup will go but our suffering will remain. Any responsible leader has a duty to concentrate on building the power of the people.

The meeting that will be held this Sunday will, as always, be open to all. The media are welcome to attend.

We also wish to inform the media that yesterday the case of assault that Zibuyile Ngcobo had laid against Nozuko Hulushe was thrown out by the court. Nozuko is the AbM activist who was assaulted by Ngcobo after insisting, courageously, on her right to organise freely for AbM in the settlement. Nozuko's case against Ngcobo is going forward.

Nozuko Hulushe (from the internal Kennedy Road AbM Branch)

Mzwake Mdlalose (from the exiled KRDC)

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson)

13 JUNE 2010

Press statement · Joint statement

ANC Intimidation Tries to Prevent the Return of AbM & the KRDC to Kennedy Road

The intimidation from Jackson Gumede, Yacoob Baig and Zandile Mdletshe began very early this morning, from 6. People were threatened with having their homes burnt and with death if they attended the meeting today. In the end about 150 people, mostly women, had the courage to resist the manufactured politics of fear and to attend the meeting despite the intimidation. They spoke very well, very powerfully. The police were there, with their helicopter, but they played a very fair role just insisting on the safety of everyone. They were witness to some of the intimidation so if anything happens tonight they will know where to look for the perpetrators.

The police were at Kennedy Road throughout last night. They remained neutral and were just there to keep the peace.

But this morning ANC leaders from outside of the Kennedy Road settlement have arrived at the settlement including the notorious shacklord, Jackson Gumede, who is also head of the ANC BEC for ward 25. It was Gumede who seized control of the Kennedy Road settlement after the attacks last year.

The ANC are currently intimidating people in Kennedy Road not to attend today's meeting. This intimidation is serious. The ANC in the area have driven many people from their homes and, as they do around the country, they have the power to order to police to arrest people on false charges.

AbM has been told that the ANC have been phoning and mobilising all structures, up to provincial level, to try and stop today's meeting.

The Kennedy Road AbM branch are contesting the intimidation by using a loudhailer to encourage people to stand up for their rights. So far there have only been threats from the ANC. There has not been any violence. But this intimidation is a clear attack on the basic democratic rights of the residents of Kennedy Road.

4 JULY 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Shack Fire In Kennedy Kills Three; 3000 Homeless

At 2am in Kennedy Road last night, on 3 July 2010, approximately 3 people were killed after eight hundred shacks were destroyed in a fire. It is thought that one of those killed in the blaze was a young child.

An estimated three thousand people were left homeless, all their belongings burned. Now, they have nowhere to go. Emergency vehicles came to the scene but could not control the flames.

If people were given land, houses and electricity, there would be no fires. The only reason that there are fires in the shacks is because they are un-electrified. The only reason there are fires in the shacks is because of the failure of the Municipality to provide services.

We have said this since 2005. Meanwhile, the Municipality has made it illegal to electrify informal settlements. Since January 2010, the Municipality has been disconnecting shacks from electricity on a daily basis in Kennedy Road. Abahlali has been very clear that this policy contradicts the Constitution of the Republic.

After Abahlali was attacked in September 2009, Nigel Gumede from the eThekweni Housing Department came to Kennedy Road. He promised that houses and electricity would be brought to the people of Kennedy by February 2010.

The Provincial Minister of Transport, Safety and Security Willies Mchunu also came to Kennedy Road. He said, after the attacks, that the settlement had been “liberated.” He also promised that development would start anytime soon.

Instead of bringing houses or electricity, Gumede and Mchunu brought the Amatins, also known by the people as government shacks, or transit camps. Instead of bringing development, for the few months of the World Cup, the government spent billions of Rands on stadiums, fan parks, airports, and tollgates.

The government can bring the World Cup, but cannot bring housing, electricity, rubbish collection, water, toilets, or land for the poor.

Abahlali had a march in the city on 22 March 2010, which was initially banned by the Municipality. At that march, we raised our concerns. Up until today, there has been no response from government.

Abahlali condemns the Municipality for making these promises, and for failing to deliver. Abahlali calls for support for all victims of the fire, and for a fair distribution of relief.

When fires have happened in Abahlali areas in the past, it is only the Councillor's friends who first receive support. After a fire that left 2000 homes destroyed at Foreman Road, the ANC Committee demanded that the community show ANC membership cards before receiving blankets, food, or any relief.

Today, on 4 July 2010, Abahlali was asked to come to Kennedy Road after the fire. A delegation, including Abahlali President S'bu Zikode, went there. More than 700 people openly attended an Abahlali meeting in the settlement that was addressed by S'bu Zikode. The Municipality sent no one, as they were all too busy working on the World Cup.

Among the immediate concerns by Kennedy residents are the following:

- A demand for the supply of building materials, so that the people can rebuild their homes, for themselves.

- A demand for the reinstatement of the development project that was negotiated by Abahlali baseMjondolo and planned for Kennedy Road. An Abahlali technical team for this project met on the 21st of this month with the Municipality, calling for immediate action.

- The people of Kennedy Road are tired of the lies and promises from government. They are sick and tired of Nigel Gumede, the Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio in the eThekweni Municipality. They are sick and tired of their suffering being exploited.

- The people reject the Amatins as adequate housing. They also reject the tenders and tenderpreneurs that benefit from building the Amatins. It is the focus on the tenders to build Amatins instead of giving the people what they need – land, housing and electricity – that is giving rise to these shack fires.

Abahlali would like to remind the media that the Constitutional Court, in overturning the Slums Act, made a statement against the Amatins. These Amatins are unconstitutional, and undermine human dignity. Abahlali will not rest in peace until each and every shack-dweller is housed in decent housing.

We invite all the footballs fans and journalists who are in Durban for the World Cup to come to Kennedy Road and to see for themselves the human cost of misdirecting resources into stadiums and so on in a country where the poor are still suffering. We are dying while you are celebrating and we are dying because of the way in which you are celebrating. This tournament should have been organised in such a way that we could all celebrate together.

Abahlali would like to send condolences to the families who have died in this shack fire, and in past shack fires. There have been a total of five shack fires in Kennedy Road since January 2010. In all these shack fires, the Municipality has sent no one. Abahlali, lastly, would like to ask: Whose child must be burned before the authorities act?

Busisiwe
Nozuko
Bandile (AbM General Secretary)

12 JULY 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Kennedy 12 Go To Trial Today

Abahlali baseMjondolo will be at court in our numbers to support to the Kennedy 12 when their trial begins today, at 9 o'clock on Monday 12 July, in the Durban High Court.

On the 26th of September 2009 a group of forty armed men massed in the Kennedy Road shack settlement, chanted ANC and ethnic slogans and launched an attack on the elected leaders of the Kennedy Road Development Committee (KRDC), Abahlali baseMjondolo, their families, their comrades and all those who have associated themselves with our movement. They also declared their intention to drive Mphondo people from the settlement. They made it quite clear that their intention was to kill a number of named people including S'bu Zikode.

It was a well planned and violent attack. Intelligence personnel were present in the settlement when the attack was launched. All of the many calls to the police for help were ignored. People fled and people defended themselves as best they could. When the sun came up two people were dead, many more were injured and thousands were displaced. When the police did come to the settlement the attack continued in their presence. The leadership of the KRDC and Abahlali baseMjondolo were forced out of the settlement and their homes looted and destroyed.

The ANC leadership in KwaZulu-Natal publicly endorsed the attack on our movement. The MEC for Community Safety and Liaison Willies Mchunu said that the settlement had been 'liberated' and that a decision had been taken to 'disband' our elected structures. eThekweni Housing Committee Chairperson Nigel Gumede celebrated the attack at a press conference held in the settlement and told the media that the Kennedy Road community was the only shack community that had taken the government to the court. He also said that S'bu Zikode had been running his own authority. And he said that S'bu Zikode had gone against the State President when the President had said that shacks would have to be eradicated by 2014. Gumede said that 'people will have to be jailed' for

development to go ahead. In fact we had, after four years of struggle and more than a year of negotiation, signed an MOU with the Municipality for the participatory in-situ upgrade of the settlement. The way in which Gumede spoke made it seem that S'bu Zikode was the major threat to the development of shack settlements. He spoke as if S'bu Zikode was a person to be killed.

When Gumede referred to Abahlali baseMjondolo taking the government to court he was referring to our case against the notorious Slums Act in the Constitutional Court. Ten days later we won our case against the Slums Act and the attacks on our movement continued. More homes were demolished and the General Secretary of our Youth League had to flee her home, outside of the settlement, after she was publicly threatened with death when she commented on the judgment on the TV news.

After the attack senior ANC politicians moved quickly to impose an unelected ANC leadership on the settlement. Since then the settlement has never been stable. People have continued to be murdered and to be burnt to death in shack fires. There has been extreme party political corruption in access to grants and to the relief offered after the shack fire. Everything that had been built up by the movement, from the crèche, to the library, safe electricity connections, the community kitchen and organised care for the sick and was destroyed.

Abahlali baseMjondolo wishes to make it clear to the media and to all progressive individuals, organisations and movements in South Africa and around the world that the police investigation into the attack, and the judicial process that has followed it, has been blatantly political. It has not been aimed at finding the truth or achieving justice. It has had one aim and that aim has been to destabilise our movement and to give the ANC the freedom to continue to their criminal attack on our movement. The attackers have never been arrested. No one has been arrested for the demolition, burning and looting of our homes. The Kennedy 12 are among those whose homes were destroyed and possessions looted. No one has been arrested for all the public threats of death that were made against us. No one has been arrested for the banning of our movement from the settlement on the pain of death.

The whole process leading up to this trial has been blatantly political and therefore blatantly corrupt. This is one reason why we issued the call for an independent commission of inquiry that will, in the interests of justice and truth, carefully and fairly investigate the actions of everyone, including the local and

provincial ANC, the police, the intelligence services, the prosecutors, the courts and our movement, its various sub-committees and our supporters.

Abahlali baseMjondolo wish to express our deepest gratitude to all our comrades in South Africa, including, especially, our comrades in the Poor People's Alliance and the church leaders who have stood with us, for their solidarity. We also wish to express the same gratitude to our comrades in Russia, Italy, Germany, England, Turkey, the Philippines, the USA and elsewhere who have written letters of protest to our government and organised protests at the embassies of our government around the world. All of these different people and groups have insisted that there must be a fair investigation into all aspects of the attack (including the initial attack, the looting and demolition of our homes and the violent and police supported expulsion and banning of our movement from the settlement) and that the South African government must conform to its own laws, to international laws and to the basic principles of democracy and fairness in their response to the attack and its ongoing consequences.

In recent days the state has requested an adjournment of the trial. They have consistently used invented delays to distort the judicial process and to keep the Kennedy 12 in jail and to delay their access to bail. They have had ten months to prepare their case and if they are still requesting adjournments at this late stage it is clear to us that they have no case. We have instructed our lawyers to refuse this request for adjournment.

We are not alone in facing repression. All of the poor people's movements in South Africa have faced harassment from the police over the years. But the form of repression where a movement is attacked by armed civilians mobilised on an ethnic basis and backed by the police instead of being attacked by the police directly is a new form of repression. It is very similar to the way in which the apartheid state tried to undermine the UDF in the 1980s. Recently the Landless People's Movement has also been under a very similar form of attack in Johannesburg. We continue to seek support from everyone who believes in justice and in the right of the poor to organise ourselves for ourselves. We continue to reject all forms of ethnic politics and to insist on our right to build a politics of and for the poor, and of and for all of the poor, from the ground up.

Abahlali baseMjondolo has become the hope and home of so many in the world. Therefore Abahlali baseMjondolo vows that it will do all that it can to protect and to fight for the advancement of the interests of the shack dwellers

and the poor in South Africa and, when we can, to support the struggles of our comrades around the world.

We know very well that in the eyes of the state our real sin has been that we have been operating outside of state control. This is why we were attacked. The ANC refuses to accept the political autonomy of the poor. But everyone can see that the state has failed the poor in South Africa and so we will continue to organise outside of its control and its logic. We will continue to encourage the poor to organise themselves for themselves. Our lives and the lives of our children are at stake. We cannot back down.

Aluta Continua.

Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary
Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo President
Mzwake Mdlalose, Kennedy Road Development Committee Chairperson

12 JULY 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Kennedy 12 Case Postponed – the Jailed Comrades to be Released

The Kennedy 12 Case Postponed Until 29 November – the Five Jailed Comrades to be Released Tomorrow

The political interference around this case continued in the lead up to the start of the trial today. The prisoners were not brought to court and the state witnesses were not summoned to appear in court making it impossible for the trial to begin.

Neither the Investigating Officer nor the prosecutor could explain why the prisoners were not brought to the court or why the state witnesses had not been summoned to appear in court.

The magistrate could not understand this and she insisted that everyone has the right to a fair and speedy trial and that these endless delays are not acceptable. She set down the trial for the 29th of November and said that the accused and the witnesses must be summoned to appear in court on that day and that the trial will definitely go ahead on that day. She also said that the five prisoners must be brought to court tomorrow and that they will be released on a bail of R1000 each. The political interference in this case will cost them one more night in Westville Prison but tomorrow they will be free.

This is the first time, since this matter started ten months ago, that a magistrate has acted fairly and in accordance with the law. We welcome this and the fact that the five members of the Kennedy 12 that have remained in prison for ten months without a trial, or any evidence being brought against them, will be released tomorrow.

Our advocated read out a letter to the court from the Investigating Officer which said that the state witnesses had said that they would only be prepared to give evidence if they were given houses. It is clear to us that the state is trying to delay this trial by undermining the court process because they have no evidence against the accused.

We note that only seven members of the ANC, led by the shacklord Zandile Mdletshe, attended the court proceedings today. Slowly but slowly the lies that the ANC have told are being revealed and the truth is remaining. People are no longer interested in being bussed into court by the ANC to attack our movement. They have become aware that they are being abused by the politicians.

There were 150 AbM members in the court and the media was there in full force.

Once again we extend our warm and deep thanks to all the hearts and minds that prayed and struggled with us in the lead up to today.

We are busy organising a welcome ceremony for the five that will be released tomorrow. Bishop Rubin Phillip will be part of the welcoming delegation. Full details will be available from our office later on this afternoon.

Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary
Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo President
Mzwake Mdlalose, Kennedy Road Development Committee Chairperson

10 AUGUST 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League Holds Mass Prayer on National Women's Day

Our Oppressors Have Struck a Multitude of Rocks

As part of its annual women's day celebration the Abahlali women's body decided to hold a mass prayer at the St Paul's Cathedral in Durban central on National Women's Day. In opening the mass prayer ceremonial candles were lit as a symbol of our invitation to the Holy Spirit and the spirits of our ancestors to bring us strength, courage, unity and solidarity with all the women of South Africa, but especially with those who continue to suffer attacks on their human dignity in a democratic South Africa.

Abahlali women acknowledge that women and children are the most vulnerable group in our society; they are vulnerable in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, streets, and workplaces, even in their organisations. They are vulnerable wherever they find themselves. Women are the first hand victims when it comes to eviction. As it happened before in our history evicted women become the victims of rape and crime as well as exclusion. They are left without choices of their own.

But Abahlali women also acknowledge the courage and strength of women. Women are holding families, communities, organisations and movements together across the country. Fortunately enough the majority in our movement are women and they hold a 60% majority both in membership in general and leadership. The very same women are homeless, unemployed and often household heads and single parents. Yet they still have to play a leadership role in our movement.

Abahlali believe that a movement without a women's structure is like a non existing movement.

The Abahlali women's league decided to hold a prayer instead of holding another rally or march for the reasons that all these kinds of efforts to secure land and housing in our cities and rural homes remain unattended to by the

authorities. Women remain exposed to shack fires, living on flood plains and without basic services. Women in farm and rural communities remain in the brutal hands of farm owners. They remain living an undignified life because they have not earned the respect of the authorities and the general public. They do not count in this country.

Despite remaining in the forefront of every march and protest our demands have fallen on deaf ears. We therefore decided to retreat from the streets in order to strengthen ourselves for the big struggles that lie ahead. As part of our way forward we as Abahlali women have vowed to hold a women's protest march to intensifying our struggle against the non-delivery of services, the continuing commodification of land, the law and decent housing, the failure to treat the women with respect and dignity and the failure of the state to address all issues affecting women with urgency.

For women to be successful in this struggle a call was made for unity, for education and awareness campaigns, for tolerance and for more work to build solidarity amongst women. As Abahlali women we are committed to provide leadership at all levels in our movement.

Women's day is held every year to celebrate the 20 000 women that marched on the Union Buildings in 1956 chanting "Wathint' Abafazi, wathint' imbokodo!" That march was in protest at the pass laws that tried to exclude black women from their right to the city. The struggle for the right to the city continues today. We defeated the Slums Act. But we still have to defeat the transit camps, the tiny leaking RDP houses in the human dumping grounds, the fires and the lack of basic services in the settlements. We still have to defeat the priority that is given to the financial value of urban land over its social value. We still have to defeat the priority that is given to projects for the rich, like stadiums, over the much more urgent need for decent housing for the poor.

The women's march on the Union Buildings was one step in the struggle for justice. We celebrate it but we also recognise that it is the responsibility of our generation to take the next steps. We also celebrate the neglected history of struggle by poor women. We celebrate the long history of brave struggles of poor women in Durban like the protests against the beerhalls in 1929 and the protests against beerhalls and evictions from Cato Manor in 1959. Our mothers and grandmothers have a rich history of struggle which we and our daughters and granddaughters must now take forward. Our struggle will continue until

every women is safe, free, respected and able to have her fair share of the land and wealth of this world where ever she may find herself.

We send our greetings to our comrades in the Poor People's Alliance and to struggling communities and movements everywhere. To our oppressors, all those who want to keep us in our place – and locked out of the cities, the economy and the political discussions and decision making – we affirm that our spirits will not be broken. You have struck a multitude of rocks.

Halala Izimbokodo!

Malibongwe Igama Lamakhosikazi!

Wathint' Abafazi, wathint' imbokodo!

Mrs Mdlalose

Ms Mkhize

Ms Zungu

25 AUGUST 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League to March on 27 August 2010

In commemoration of National Women's Day on the 9 August 2010 Abahlali Women held a mass prayer to unite ourselves and to build our strength for the next phase of our struggle. In our discussions on that day it was noted that the mainstream media only gives platforms to privileged women in senior positions to discuss women's issues and that nothing is said about poor women in shacks. We are supposed to remain silent while those who benefit from the system are the only ones to discuss its strengths and weaknesses. This is unacceptable to us.

We also felt that it was not enough just to pray for change but that we also need to take action to hold government accountable for our continued oppression under this democracy.

It was therefore proposed and agreed to that the women themselves will organise and lead a protest march to voice our concerns about our plight and the demands that we are making to the government. We felt that it was necessary to take this action now as August is Women's Month.

It was also noted that after numerous protest marches held by Abahlali that no results were forthcoming from Government. Therefore we have some of the same demands as we have expressed in previous marches.

Our main demand for this march is for the full restoration of the full dignity of all poor women in South Africa.

We also have the following demands that can give life to our main demand:

- An immediate end to all evictions. We note that while everyone suffers in an eviction women are the main victims.
- An immediate agreement to provide basic services to all shack settlements including enough water, electricity, toilets, refuse collection and lighting. In the meantime there must be an immediate end to all disconnections of community organised electricity and water connections.

- An immediate agreement to upgrade all shack settlements where they are and to negotiate any moves when upgrades are not possible.
- An immediate end to amathini [transit camps] as they undermine families, our safety and our dignity.
- Serious action to end all kinds of women abuse ranging from rape to domestic violence. This means that there must be fair and respectful policing, proper lighting and safe transport for the poor. An end to biasness of the law and women exclusion.

We are aware that for these demands to be met the government will have to ensure that:

- A law is passed that will ensure that the social value of urban land is put before its commercial value. There should be no more shopping malls, office parks and golf courses until everyone has a decent house. People have to count more than money.
- Serious action must be taken to end the biasness of the law towards the rich and the powerful. Poor people in general and poor women in particular must have the same right as anyone to use the law and the courts. Access to justice must be free.

The final demands will be made at settlement level by collective means.

Abahlali Women also note that Eskom has dedicated this week as the Electricity Safety Awareness Week. Part of their campaign is to get rid of all self organised connections of electricity. But no one is asking as to why the homes of the poor are not electrified in the first place. Eskom, like Durban Electricity, does not ask as to why poor women in Kennedy Road, Siyanda, eMagwaveni, Umlazi etc must weep all the times after shack fires that destroy their homes and often kill people. If the government will not electrify our homes then we will electrify them ourselves. We will not back down on this.

The March will take place on 27th August 2010 at 08:00-15:00. It will start at Botha's Park and proceed to the City Hall.

Bandile Mdlalose
Fikile Mangele
Zandile Nsibande

19 SEPTEMBER 2010

Memorandum · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Memorandum to Madikizela, MEC for Human Settlements

ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA (WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE)

Email: office admin

To: Provincial Department of Human Settlement

No 27 Wale Street

Cape Town

Attention: MEC for Human Settlement Bonginkosi Madikizela

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape would like your response on the following matters as a matter of urgency.

- The Western Cape had a crisis of housing, as this province already had a backlog of about 500 000 and this number is increasing about 20 000 per annum and the provincial department of human settlement only manage to build up to 16 000 houses per annum to respond to this crisis. In our view we believe that the departmental intervention will not solve the housing crisis in this province and it will take more than 50 years to solve the housing crisis in this province, if not then we demand to know from you:
 - a) If when do you plan to eradicate the informal settlements through out the province b) And how do you intend to do it, and we need a clear plan with time lines
- As part of the national standard, people residing within informal settlement are not suppose to access water on a distance more than 100 metre walking distance, and at least 1 toilet need to be shared by 4 dwelling and a bucket system was supposed to be phased out completely by 2004, and it is shocking to find out that there are people who use toilets which are even below the bucket system by not having toilets at all.

To many of our people these national standards are still a dream not a reality, as most of us still have to walk for a distance which is more than 100 m walking distance in order to access water, and toilets.

And we therefore demand to know from you:

c) if by when your department plans to better off this appalling conditions in which our people continue to live under off with no clear direction.

d) and when do you intend to phase out the bucket system through out the province, and we need a clear plan with all the areas that still use the bucket system and with a clear plan for each area and time lines.

– And most of our settlements continue to be the victims of evictions as most of our settlements are not recognised as legal occupiers And it is a shame for people who are evicted from their areas and sent straight to TRA's (temporal relocation areas) where people continue to live under worst conditions than those they were living under off.

And we therefore demand that:

e) declare all the temporal relocation areas (TRA's) as unconstitutional as they are not suitable for human habitant and we therefore call upon you to immediately relocate all those who are currently living in TRA's into proper houses and do away with TRA's through out the province.

f) We also call upon you do announce upgrading plan for all informal settlements through out the province with clear outlines.

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape has made a serious call of 'a week of informal settlement strike' and our alliance partners within Poor Peoples Alliance (which is Abahlali baseMjondolo DBN, Landless Peoples Movement Johannesburg, Rural Network KZN and Anti eviction campaign Western Cape are supporting the call and a Conference for democratic left (which is a affiliates of more than 10 community based organization and independent unions) and Jubilee South Africa are also supporting this call

We will await for your response within a period of 14 days, and should we not hear anything from you within this period we will be left with no choice but to announce the date of a week of informal settlement strike which will result to a complete stand still of the country's production.

While waiting for your response we will continue engaging with progressive community groups, unions, students movements, none governmental organization and churches to support the call.

On behalf of ABM WC
Mzonke Poni
ABM WC Chairperson

25 SEPTEMBER 2010

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Heritage Day Fire in Arnett Drive

At 9:45 last night a primus stove broke out starting a big fire in shack number 40 in the Arnett Drive settlement. This shack was completely destroyed and the next door shack was damaged. Gertrude Cele (65) was very badly burnt on her side and stomach and is now in Addington Hospital. She and her partner, Michael Morori, have lost their home and all their possessions.

The fire brigade were called but they came late. However the community was able to organise a chain to pass buckets of water from the river up to the settlement and we put the fire out ourselves. The police came quite quickly and they called the ambulance that took Gertrude Cele to hospital. We appreciate this. The councillor has not come although we phoned him and there has been no support from Disaster Management. We need building materials to rebuild the shack.

There have been fires in our settlement in 1992, 2007 and 2009. These fires are a result of having to use primus stoves and candles instead of electricity. When our self organised electricity connections are destroyed by the police they force us back to the primus stoves and candles and therefore to the fires. The denial of electricity to shack dwellers is the cause of shack fires.

When we first started to organise ourselves as Abahlali baseMjondolo the politicians would always say that shack fires are the result of drunkenness. Now they always say that shack fires are the result of 'illegal electricity connections'. They are always trying to blame us for the fires whereas they are the ones that have failed to ensure that we have access to electricity. Everyone knows that when self organised connections are done safely they protect us from fires.

Earlier this year the eThekweni Municipality lifted its 2001 ban on providing electricity to shacks. This was a direct result of the struggle of Abahlali baseMjondolo and we welcome this step forward by the Municipality. However we have still not been provided with formal access to electricity and until we are we will insist on our right to connect ourselves to electricity.

The Arnett Drive shack settlement was formed when this land was occupied in 1978. Since then the settlement has constantly been threatened with eviction. As a result of our struggle in Abahlali baseMjondolo we have now been promised that houses will be built for us here in Reservoir Hills and that we will not be forcibly removed to the human dumping grounds outside the city. We welcome this promise.

However we do fear that all these promises could just be to try and trick us into voting in the next election and that after that the bulldozers will come to destroy the settlement. We cannot relax until the promises that have been made to us are kept.

Our demands are that:

1. We are given formal access to electricity and that while we wait our self-organised connections are not destroyed.
2. We are given toilets and taps.
3. Our settlement is upgraded where it is.

We are also unhappy about the police raids. They come into the settlement during the night, waking us up, making us stand up while they look into our homes. They look for electricity connections and to see if anyone is selling beer. They often steal our money and insult us. Earlier this year they confiscated two crates of beer and two bottles of Smirnoff from one lady and stole R1000 from her. She was also made to pay a fine of R300. During these raids the police treat the poor as criminals. No middle class person has their home raided in the middle of the night. We have the same right as anyone to be protected and not vandalised by the people. However we wish to be clear that we are not fighting the police. We are fighting the municipality and the councillors.

We are not happy about Heritage Day. How can we be happy when Gertrude Cele and Michael Morori have lost their home and Gertrude is in a serious condition in hospital? Some of our parents came here after being evicted from Umkhumbane [Cato Manor] where they fought in the women's riot in 1959. This is the only heritage that we can take pride in – the heritage of the long and continuing struggles of the poor to have a dignified place in this city.

Nomhle Mkhetho
Clement Mtshali

26 SEPTEMBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Statement on the Anniversary of the Attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo

A year ago today our movement was attacked by an armed mob in the Kennedy Road settlement. The police refused to come to our aid and for months the homes of our best known comrades were destroyed and they had to flee for their lives. Two weeks before the attack the chairperson of the ANC in Durban, John Mchunu, publicly attacked our movement saying that it was a threat to the ANC. The day after the attack Willies Mchunu, the Provincial MEC for Safety & Security, said that a decision had been taken to disband our movement. He described the attack that drove us from our homes and our community as a 'liberation'. A few weeks later the Pemary Ridge settlement was brutally attacked by the police.

These attacks on our movement were political. We believe that the politicians decided to destroy our movement because they knew that they were going to lose the Slums Act case in the Constitutional Court and because we were exposing their corruption and stopping their evictions. We believe that they encouraged some of their supporters to attack us by offering them tenders and the power to allocate houses in the upgrade that we had struggled for and won. They tried to disguise what they were doing by mobilising people on an ethnic platform. It is no coincidence that the tension on the ground began after Jackson Gumede, the chairperson of the Branch Executive Committee of the local ANC, was given the tender to clean the toilets in the Kennedy settlement after our campaign for decent toilets.

The attack has caused real suffering for the people who were injured and the families of those who died in the conflict. It also caused real suffering for those who were displaced and had their homes destroyed and all their possessions looted. It damaged our movement in some ways but it has not destroyed our movement.

The people who were displaced are still suffering. They are scattered to their families or they are renting shacks in other areas. The government has done nothing for the displaced. After the attack we could not have large and open meetings as we always had before. For some months we had to organise underground.

But although our leadership was displaced they have shown more power and energy to be active from exile. They have not been intimidated. Our members have not been intimidated. They have shown real courage and determination in rebuilding their movement from the bottom up.

Our struggle has continued and the following new areas have joined our movement since the attack:

1. Hillary Flats
2. Lindelani shack settlement (Ntuzuma)
3. KwaMaphulelo shack settlement (Stanger)
4. K-Section shack settlement KwaMashu
5. Palmiet shack settlement (Clare Estate)
6. Portview Flats (Beach front)
7. Ridgeview transit camp (Chesterville)
8. Richard Farm A transit camp (Near KwaMashu)
9. Richard Farm B transit camp (Near KwaMashu)
10. Siyanda B5 transit camp (Near KwaMashu)

There is now also a Kennedy Road Exiles branch with 127 members in good standing. It meets every Sunday. And 1 365 new members have joined the movement in their individual capacity and are currently paid up card carrying members in good standing.

The following old areas that had branches in good standing or were collectively affiliated to the movement before the attack remain active and in good standing:

1. Arnett Drive shack settlement (Reservoir Hills)
2. Foreman Road (Reservoir Hills)
3. New Hanover shack settlement
4. Howick shack settlement
5. Kennedy Road (Reservoir Hills)
6. eMatinini (Siyanda)
7. Motala Heights A shack settlement (Pinetown)

8. Motala Heights B shack settlement (Pinetown)
9. New eMmaus shack settlement and decayed church houses (Pinetown)
10. Pemary Ridge shack settlement (Reservoir Hills)
11. eShowe Shack settlement
12. Tongaat shack settlement
13. Siyanda A transit camp (Near KwaMashu)
14. Siyanda B transit camp (Near KwaMashu)

We therefore have a total of twenty five active branches and affiliated communities in KwaZulu-Natal. The movement is also growing in Cape Town. We have not been defeated.

Our programmes have continued and we have taken some major steps forward. We have marched against the State President for the first time and the Women's League has organised a women's march for the first time. Our president S'bu Zikode was awarded the Order of the Holy Nativity. This is the first time that this award has gone to a non-Anglican.

Our demands with regard to the attack remain as they always were. They are that:

1. The government takes real steps to restore and to guarantee political freedom in the Kennedy Road settlement.
2. The government takes real steps to enable the free and safe return of the exiles and to guarantee their safety if they chose to return to Kennedy Road.
3. That compensation is paid to all those whose homes were destroyed and who had to flee the settlement on the threat of death without receiving any protection from the police.
4. That there is a free and fair election for a new committee in the settlement.
5. That the government set up an independent and credible commission of inquiry to look deeply into the attack.

If the government had nothing to hide they would have had no problem in agreeing to an independent commission of inquiry. But they are scared of the truth and our demands to the government have gone unheard. Therefore we are:

1. Continuing with the Return to Kennedy Road Campaign.
2. Launching a civil claim against the Minister of Police and Willies Mchunu for damages resulting from their failure to protect us against the attack. We all know that the lower courts are not free and fair but higher up the poor can get a

fair hearing. Mike Mabuyakhulu can tell Bheki Cele and Willies Mchunu what to expect.

3. Ready to give our full co-operation to the independent commission of inquiry into the attack that Bishop Rubin Phillip is setting up.

Our movement's strength has always come from our commitment to people's politics – a living politics that comes from the ordinary needs of ordinary people and which is firmly under the control of ordinary people. This is a politics of unity. The parties divide the poor in order to rule the poor but our people's politics unites the poor on the basis of our common problems. In all the fires that struck Kennedy Road after the attacks a people's politics re-emerged in the settlement in the midst of disaster. The return to Kennedy Road campaign was welcomed. The displaced people were welcomed in the settlement. But the people that were displaced still cannot return to the settlement without guarantees for their safety. The top down political influence that succeeded to turn the poor against the poor can do the same again. When night falls we cannot be certain of our safety in the settlement.

The politicians have been clear about their aim to destroy our movement. However some of the officials in the Municipality have continued to recognise the Kennedy Road Development Committee as the legitimate representatives of the settlement and have continued to negotiate with the KRDC on the commitment to upgrade the settlement that we won after years of struggle. Our last meeting with the officials was on 22 June 2010. It went very well and they promised to come back to us in four months with a full technical report.

Some cases were opened against the people that had destroyed our homes. They were opened with great difficulty and most attempts to open cases were refused. But we have heard nothing about the cases that were opened.

The area committee of the ANC is now running Kennedy Road. They were never elected by the people. They were just appointed by Willies Mchunu. Nomsa Dube and Nigel Gumede both went to Kennedy Road after the attacks and promised people houses. But now there is silence about these houses.

The arrests that followed the attack were political from the beginning. Justice was delayed and denied. The detainees were severely assaulted in prison. They were kept in prison for months and months without any evidence being brought against them. The fact that the witnesses didn't even bother to pitch up to court when the trial was due to start shows a lot.

For us it is very sad that the Human Rights Commission has reacted to the open toilets in Cape Town while they have failed to investigate the Kennedy Road attack. We ask ourselves why they put the right to have walls around a toilet before the rights to safety, a home and to political freedom. We ask ourselves which comes first: a private toilet or the right not to be attacked and driven from your home?

We see that Cosatu and the Human Rights organisations are taking a good position on media freedom. But it is very sad that Cosatu and some of the Human Rights organisations say nothing about the repression faced in Kennedy Road, in Pemary Ridge and in Protea South, in eTwatwa. We wonder why we don't count to them. We wonder why our politics does not count to them.

It is clear to us that for many people democracy is something for the rich, the middles classes and even the working class but not for the poor. It is clear to us that for many people our demand for basic dignity is taken as a chaos and a threat to society. It is clear to us that for many people our humanity is invisible. Just as many people are silent when we are forcibly removed from the cities many people are also silent when we are evicted from this democracy. But democracy means the rule of the people and we are a large part of the people and so no one can say that there is a real democracy in our country if the poor are not allowed to think, to speak and to organise for ourselves. No one can say that they are really a defender of this democracy if they do not also defend the right of the poor to organise freely.

We won the case against the Slums Act and yet the government continues to build transit camps. Corruption is everywhere. We can show anyone who is interested the live evidence that there is corruption in every development. Corruption exists at the bottom but it does not come from the bottom. It comes from the top.

Jacob Zuma failed to answer the memorandums that we sent to his office from our marches after the attack. We were thousands and yet he said nothing. We are always asking the politicians to come and sit with us and to talk to us but we only see them on TV or rushing past on the freeway with their blue lights. We see that any rich person can pay for the right to have dinner with Jacob Zuma. This is not democracy. This is the rule of the rich. In a real democracy a poor person would have the same right as a rich person to have the ear of the

president. We are preaching an unpopular gospel which is the truth about our democracy.

We are discussing some new strategies. We are talking about this in our branches and with our comrades in the Poor People's Alliance and we hope to announce a national week of action soon. We are hoping to see combined actions in Johannesburg, in Durban and in Cape Town.

As Abahlali baseMjondolo we will carry on focussing on our programme to defend the dignity and the rights of shack dwellers and poor people until the promised Canaan is reached. Even those who were used to fight against us are also poor and are therefore also part of our responsibilities. We will continue to preach the gospel of land and housing. We will continue to preach the gospel of a politics for the poor, by the poor and of the poor.

We thank all those who have shown us a living solidarity over the last year. We thank the movements, the church leaders, the lawyers, the academics and the activists around the world who have stood up to say that democracy and freedom are either for everyone or they are not real.

Mondli Mbiko: Co-ordinator, Kennedy Road Development Committee in Exile

Mzwake Mdlalose: Chairperson of the Kennedy Road Development Committee in Exile and Deputy President of Abahlali baseMjondolo

Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General

Mnikelo Ndabankulu: Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson

27 SEPTEMBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Fifty People Left Homeless after a Fire in the Ridge View Transit Camp

Governmentally Approved Shacks (Tin Houses) Burn Down in the Ridge View Transit Camp

A fire swept through the Ridge View Transit Camp on Sunday, 26 September 2010. It began at the hour of 23:00pm and eighteen (18) amatins (government shacks) were turned to ashes and +-50 people left homeless. It is assumed that the fire was started by the candle in one of the tin house.

The community that is being forced to live in the Ridge View transit camp was placed there five years ago with limited water standpipes, electricity, refuse collection and 6 toilets. One toilet is in good condition but the others are no condition to be used by humans. The residents of Ridge View have begged the Councillor of Ward 29 Lindiwe Ntaki several times for development but she has denied the residents wishes to be removed from the transit camps and be placed on proper houses. There are 852 government shacks (amatins) in this transit camps with +-5000 people being forced to live like animals in this filthy community. If this is 'housing delivery' we don't want it. It is an insult to our human dignity and a disgrace to the city and to the country.

Councillor Lindiwe Ntaki came at 11:45am today to the shack fire victims and promised to give them food parcels and blankets. But the only thing is that she claim a food parcels for one family is 2 tins of baked beans and 1 blanket per family. The questions that are raised by the community is how are they going to eat the baked beans alone and where are they going to sleep with one blanket as most of them are large families. They have no shelter to sleep on this cold night with their children and have absolutely nothing to eat other than the two tins of baked beans. They don't even have tin openers.

For a long time we always voted for a better life with a hope that the leaders that we vote for will always work for the people. But we have found that the leaders that came to power through our votes have no interest in the lives of

the people. We are just ladders for them. The only interest they have is for the people to vote and put them on the top positions. Once they are there they forget that they are where they are because of people. We've always said that the interest of the poor is not respected and considered but the shack fires that are happening with no help from the government prove that we are not respected as South African citizens.

Our biggest concern is that these same politicians are going to campaign for the people's votes in the next election while they have failed to even provide us with those basic services that we have been promised by those who were in power due to their hunger for our votes. We demand that an urgent action should be taken by Cllr James Nxumalo to all the councillors that don't do their work. We also demand that Mr Nigel Gumede get rid of all the transit camps and give people proper houses. We advise all communities to organise and mobilise themselves outside of the control of the councillors, the ward committees and the BECs.

We have always said that these transit camps must not be built for the people and that the people must rather be given proper housing because we've seen that these government shacks are no improvement from the shacks that we've built by ourselves.

As a movement we would like to stress out this fire was not caused by an illegal electricity connection (a people's electricity connection). The government must stop lying and blaming all shack fires on illegal electricity connections. We do not want to see the government diverting the focus from their failure to provide us with land and housing, and to electrify our shacks while we wait, by putting this false stress on illegal connection as they always do. People don't need to be work-shopped about fire safety. These workshops are an insult. Our problem is not that we are stupid. Our problem is that we don't have electricity and proper houses. People need to get electricity immediately and then to be housed in safe houses.

We urge all those who wish to help by donating what they can to call the office of the Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A.

Ms Bandile Mdlalose
Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General
Mr Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
Mr Bongi Tibe
Ridge View Resident

13 OCTOBER 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape Replies to the Treatment Action Campaign

As Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape we have noted the statement by the Treatment Action Campaign and its subsidiary organisations condemning our call for a week of informal settlement's strike.

We respect the important victories that TAC has won for health care over the years and we respect the work that they have done in solidarity with migrants and LGBT people. We are clear that our enemies are those who put the interest of the elites, be they in business or politics, before the interests of the poor and we are clear that we wish to build as much unity as possible between organisations of the working class. We have always organised on the basis that respects the autonomy of different formations.

However we are very disappointed that TAC chooses to attack our campaign in public without first meeting with us as a fraternal organisation to discuss any concerns that they may have had. We are always willing to meet with any fraternal organisations to discuss agreements, differences and ways forward.

We have our own critique of TAC, of its relationship to the ANC and thereby to a repressive, violent and often criminal government, of its political liberalism, of its internal organisation and hierarchies, of the way that it dealt with the internal revolt in the organisation in 2007 and so on but we do not use these critiques to attack the organisation in public. We will never support the state against TAC but they are supporting the state against us and setting the stage for repression against us to be justified. This is disgraceful.

There are some things that we agree with in the TAC statement.

- We agree with TAC that the government has failed the people and that the predatory elite have more freedom than ever.
- We agree with TAC that mass organisation is necessary and that people need to organise across the city to build their own power against the elites. We agree also that this is a long and difficult process.

We have called for an informal settlement's strike in Cape Town and we have welcomed the blockading of roads. It has been said that around the world the road blockade is the strike of the unemployed. We have explored all means of engaging the government over many years and have been continually ignored. We did not come quickly or lightly to the decision that it was necessary to cause disorder in order to force the government to take us seriously. We came to this decision after years of being ignored and repressed. We are not alone in coming to this decision. Communities and organisations across the country are blocking roads. This has been going on for many years now. Most of the protests in Cape Town are not by us.

TAC puts in its headline that we are calling for violence. We have never called for violence. Violence is harm to human beings. Blockading a road is not violence. We have long experience of the state calling protests in which no person is harmed violent. We did not expect a social movement to make the same mistake. TAC is being hysterical and dishonest when they say that we are calling for violence. We note that TAC has never issued any statement when we have been violently evicted from our homes by the Land Invasions Unit or when we have been assaulted by the police. This double standard on the part of TAC is very disappointing. They say that they are concerned about damage to property but they have never issued any statement when our property, our homes, are illegally demolished by the state.

It is an insult to say, as TAC does, that our struggle is not thought through and is not disciplined. Yes we have chosen a different form of struggle to TAC in this campaign. But that does not mean that we did not come to this campaign after careful thinking.

We disagree very strongly with TAC when they caricature the wave of protest that is sweeping Cape Town, and for years before that the whole country, as mindless violence. This is an insult to struggling communities everywhere. We know very well that the state only takes us seriously when we force them to take us seriously and this is what people are doing – forcing the state to take us seriously. We have learnt through years of struggle that this is what works.

It is dishonest and insulting for TAC to say that the leaders of these protests are self-appointed. This is the language of the state. Our leaders are all democratically elected.

It is dishonest to say that we are using young people to activate our campaign. This is also the language of the state. People choose to support our campaign because they think it is the right thing to do.

It is also just wrong for TAC to say that our campaign is being supported by elements in the ANC Youth League. We are very well aware that the ANC Youth League tries to support every protest in Cape Town because they want to undermine the DA. But we know very well that the ANC elsewhere has the same policies as the DA here and we do not allow the ANC to exploit our own struggles for their own gain.

There are three main differences between us and TAC.

1. We as Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape feel that it is legitimate to create a short period of disorder, just like a strike at a work place does, as a tactic of struggle. If TAC disagree with us on this they should engage us in a discussion of tactics rather than condemn our campaign in a way that can justify state repression.

2. We feel that it is essential that we are organised autonomously from the ANC. This is our democratic right and we will not be intimidated into accepting the leadership of ANC aligned organisations.

3. We are not a professional organisation with millions of rands of donor funding that can operate in the middle class world. We are a movement of, for and by the poor. We therefore have to struggle where we are and with what we have. If that means burning tyres on Lansdowne Road then that is how we will struggle. We will not be intimidated into accepting that only the donor funded organisations know how to struggle properly.

We invite TAC to meet us any time. In the meantime our campaign continues until 28 October when we march on parliament.

18 OCTOBER 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape Responds to the South African Communist Party

As Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape we have noted the statement by the South African Communist Party that declares that blockading public roads is “anarchy and reactionary.”

If road blockades are anarchistic and reactionary then it is clear that anarchy and reaction are very popular in South Africa. Communities, organisations and movements across Cape Town and across South Africa have been blockading roads for years. We are not the only people that have blockaded roads in Cape Town in the last days. Many of the road blockades in Cape Town in recent days are not organised by us. But our campaign does endorse the road blockade as a legitimate tactic. We think it is quite significant that new communities are supporting our campaign all the time. We have already been invited to visit four new communities that want to join our campaign during this weekend. The rebellions that use road blockades as an important tactic are spreading everywhere. There is real popular support for disrupting business as usual in a system that oppresses the poor. When the SACP condemn us they condemn the struggles of the people across the country. That philosopher called Karl Marx once wrote that communism is the real movement that abolishes the state of things. He didn't write that communism is the vanguard that disciplines and condemns the real struggles of the people.

We also note that:

When we have been evicted the SACP has been silent.

When we have been arrested the SACP has been silent.

When we have suffered in fires and floods the SACP has been silent.

Yet when we take to the streets the SACP condemns us!

What kind of communism is this? What kind of solidarity is this?

To make matters worse everyone knows that the SACP supported the struggles in Khutsong which were much more militant in their tactics than the struggle that we are now waging in Cape Town. Clearly for the SACP the real problem that they are having with Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape is not our tactics but the fact that we are organising outside of the ANC and that we refuse to vote for the ANC or for any political party. Local government elections are coming and the ANC is panicking about the fact that while there is tremendous popular anger and protest in Cape Town they have lost control of it. The popular anger and protest in Cape Town is under the control of ordinary people and no political party likes that.

The SACP say that they are on the side of the poor but we don't see them struggling with the organisations of the poor. We only see them trying to discipline our organisations from above and telling us to vote for the ANC!

Everybody knows that around the world Stalinist Communist parties always function to defend states against popular struggles. This was true in Budapest in 1956, in Paris in 1968 and its true right now in Calcutta. We are not anti-communist. We are for a living communism. We are for a communism that emerges from the struggles of ordinary people and which is shaped and owned by ordinary people. We are for a communism built from the ground up. We are for a communism in which land and wealth are shared and managed democratically. Any party or groupuscule or NGO that declares from above that it is the vanguard of the people's struggles and that the people must therefore accept their authority is the enemy of the people's struggles. Leadership is earned and is never permanent. It can never be declared from above. It only lasts for as long as communities of struggle decide to invest their hope in particular structures. Often there are many legitimate and democratic structures involved in the same broad movement of struggle at the same time. This is why we always insist that the autonomy of all democratic poor people's organisations must be respected and welcomed.

We know that many ordinary members of the SACP live the same challenges as us and that we have a common interest in the same struggles. Like everyone in their right mind we support some of the positions that the SACP has taken in the battles within the ANC – like their position against the tenderpreneurs and before that their position against AIDS denialism. But we are critical of their hostility to freedom of expression. We are also aware that some

people in the SACP, like Dominic Tweedie, have, in alliance with the most repressive faction of the middle class left, supported and propagandised for the repression against our movement. We have no choice but to condemn those members of the SACP that support the repression of autonomous struggles.

We are happy to meet with the SACP but our autonomy as an organisation is non-negotiable. That includes our autonomy to refuse to support the ANC in the coming elections.

We note that while they condemn our endorsement of the road blockade as a tactic they also say that they will support our march on parliament. We welcome their support on our march but they will need to understand that we do not allow political parties to take over our protests. We are very clear that we will be protesting and not voting when the local government elections come.

19 OCTOBER 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Urgent Call to All Struggling Communities in Cape Town

THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT HAS FINALLY SET UP A MEETING TO RESPOND TO THE MEMORANDUM OF ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO OF THE WESTERN WHICH WAS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT THREE WEEKS BACK.

THE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR TOMORROW

AT: WALE STREET, PROVINCIAL HOUSING DEPARTMENT OFFICES

TIME: 10: AM

WE CALL UP ON ALL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT CAPE TOWN TO SEND PEOPLE TO REPRESENT THEM IN THIS MEETING, AND ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING ARE WELCOME.

WE CALL ON COMMUNITIES TO ATTEND THIS MEETING IN NUMBERS.

LET'S ALL MEET AT CAPE TOWN STATION, FIRST CLASS AT 09:30 AND MOVE TO THE MEETING.

MZONKE PONI
MTHOBELI QONA

20 OCTOBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Water Pipe Bursts in KwaMashu K-Section

MAIN PIPE THAT SUPPLIES WATER BURST IN KWA-MASHU K SECTION

Early this morning at 1:05am, 20 October 2010, the main pipe that supplies water burst at KwaMashu K section. Mean while others watched their properties, concrete wall being washed away, houses and cars get damaged, furniture's, food and clothes were drawn away by the big flash of water that flows through inside their homes.

Not only the affected community members felt this pain but even their neighbour suffers, through the cuts of bottle while helping those who had this incident. Calls for help were made to everyone including, eThekweni Municipality, KwaMashu Police, Ward 41 Councillor Mr Linda Denzel Xaba, Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A, but sadly none of the above responded beside Abahlali baseMjondolo. This incident left a big question to the community members, why they are not being assisted by those who were ought to work for the community. The community were worried what if someone died or was badly injured; automatically the same would have happened because it always been the case of lack of services being delivered by officials. What was more surprising is the Councillor of Ward 41 Mr Linda Denzel Xaba where he was called for several times and did not even pick up, also did not even pitch at the scene until now, the only hope came when the Abahlali baseMjondolo leadership came to see the damage.

Community members felt that the councillor failed them at the most important time where they needed him the most, not only if it was the first time where the very same councillor failed his people but on several occasions even if they are being evicted he does not do anything, community members decided that it time they joined Abahlali baseMjondolo so they can fight with them as they realised that, the current political leadership have neglected them and so they will need to organise and represent themselves.

Therefore we demand the following:

- We call upon the eThekweni Municipality to immediately address the problem by replacing those rotten pipes.
- We call upon the eThekweni municipality to replace all damaged property including the vehicle and houses that were destroyed by the floods of the burst pipes.
- We demand the eThekweni Municipality to compensate all families who lost their belongings and who were traumatised by these incidents.
- We also demand the Municipality to guarantee all residents that such incidents of this nature will never happen again.
- We also demand that, the ward councillor of ward 41 to provides the necessary services to the communities he serves timeously and with fairness to all residents in his ward.

Ms Bandile Mdlalose
Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General
Mr Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Abahlali baseMjondolo Public Liaison Officer
Mrs Fikile Maphumulo
Kwa Mashu K resident

26 OCTOBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Right to Know

Abahlali baseMjondolo will support the Right to Know march in defence of media freedom in Durban tomorrow.

Mostly we have said that our struggle is for land and housing. But sometimes we also say that it is for land and dignity or that it is for land and freedom. Slogans are short and the world is big and time is long. We need all of these things. We need land, housing, dignity and freedom. These things cannot be separated. And dignity and freedom require more than just land and housing. We need electricity, we need libraries, we need good education, we need proper toilets, good and safe transport, crèches, decent work, health care and more.

As a movement we feel like the world is closing around us. There are many threats to our freedom. Poverty and abandonment are a threat to our freedom. What freedom does a person have when they are also busy trying to rebuild their shack after each fire, to rebuild their life after the burying of each innocent child?

Freedom is not only lost in the pain, uncertainty, danger and exhaustion of poverty. It is also taken away deliberately.

Freedom includes the right of every person to participate in all discussions without fear. It includes the right of every person to organise as they wish to organise.

Every time a political party, a ward councillor, a ward committee or a BEC threatens violence to stop open discussions or independent organisation freedom is under attack. Every time that people are driven from their homes because they do not obey a political party freedom is under attack. Every time that people have to show a party card and party loyalty to access what little development is given freedom is under attack. Every time that the police attack a peaceful march and then call that march 'violent' freedom is under attack. Every time that our struggles and movements are unfairly shown as if they are short minded, violent and criminal freedom is under attack.

The deliberate attack on freedom in our country started as an attack on the freedom of the poor. We felt it first. Now the attack is spreading to the rest of society.

As a movement we wish to express our full support for the Right to Know march which will take place in Durban tomorrow. We will be proud to march with our good and trusted comrades in organisations like the South Durban Community and Environmental Alliance.

Over the past years the media have been very helpful in telling the truth and revealing the unrevealed. Lots of people have been relying on the media to get help. For those who have been helped by the media for all this time it really does feel like the world is closing even faster now. Most of these people have tried to get help from the politicians and the politicians have failed them.

As an organisation of the poor, by the poor and for the poor we feel oppressed by this situation. We, as Abahlali baseMjondolo, will not relax and do nothing while people feel this kind of unnecessary pressure. Our biggest concern is why must there be things that must be kept secret? We are especially concerned about this because we have always said that there is huge corruption in housing. We have also marched several times sending memorandums to the State President Mr Jacob Zuma, to the Premier and to the Mayor but no response have been given till today. If there are things that must not be told while the poor have raised issues like this the question is what is being hidden from The People if politicians have vowed to work for The People? Who, really, do the politicians think that they are if they are demanding to be protected from The People all the time?

There must be no secrecy. Everything must be told and carefully discussed including the good and the bad. If politicians are not doing good in serving the interest of the people and taking forward the will of the people then they need to be exposed. If politicians are doing good in serving the interest of people and taking forward the will of the people then they should be praised. Why must people expect to be credited and praised while they do not deserve it?

If the media is to be oppressed it is the poor, particularly the shack dwellers, the farm workers and the unemployed who will suffer the most consequences. Because we are the most oppressed in this society we have the most to lose from any attack on freedom. Freedom is our space to know, to organise, to debate and to struggle. Freedom is the space of our safety. Freedom is the space of our hope.

The media deserve the right to write what is true and we as Abahlali base-Mjondolo will support them all through and through. There have been many times when the truth of our lives and our struggle has been shown in the media. Many journalists are hard working, honest and brave. There have been times when we have been unfairly attacked in the media. Mistakes have been made, lies have been told. But the solution is not to reduce media freedom. The solution is to protect what media freedom we already have and then to deepen it so that everyone can access the media.

We published a newspaper once. It was called Izwe Labampofu, the voice of the poor. We should have the support to publish Izwe Labampofu every month. All community organisations and movements should get this same support. But right now the only media that we have is under attack and we will defend it in the streets and in the courts and anywhere else where we have to go to defend the space of our hope for a world in which the dignity of everyone is recognised and respected.

We say PHANSI NGABA CINDEZELI PHANSI! PHAMBILI NGOKUB-HALWA OKUKHULULEKILE PHAMBILI!

There must be no oppression to the media.

A Luta Continua

Ms Bandile Mdlalose

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A Secretary General

Mr Mnikelo Ndabankulu

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A Public Liaison Officer

Ms Zodwa Nsibande

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A Youth Secretary General

30 OCTOBER 2010

Press statement · Motala Heights Branch

Motala Heights Will be a Community for All

When we joined Abahlali baseMjondolo and started our struggle in 2006 the municipality, led by the ward councillor Derek Dimba, were trying to destroy the jondols up on the hill. They were coming with guns and tear gas and evicting the people and destroying their homes. They were doing this illegally.

In the tin houses down in the valley the landlords, led by the gangster businessman Ricky Govender, were also evicting the poor people. They were coming with thugs and they were also evicting the people and destroying their homes. They were also doing this illegally but the polices were supporting them as they supported the municipality.

Derek Dimba was always in Ricky Govender's house. The rich were united and we, the poor, were divided. Together they were trying to push all the poor people off this farm and to develop it for the rich. Govender was building the commercial housing developments for the rich himself.

Since 2006 we have had some ups and some downs in our struggle here in Motala. But we have faced a lot of threats and intimidation and united the poor in the jondols and in the tin houses against the power that the rich had over this community. We stopped the evictions in the jondols and in the tin houses. We electrified the jondols ourselves. We built a crèche. We organised all kinds of events and mutual aid. Through our participation in the larger struggle of Abahlali baseMjondolo we were also able to negotiate with the Municipality along with our comrades in the movement from other areas from the end of 2007 till the beginning of 2009. As a result of these negotiations we won an agreement from the municipality to provide more services to the poor in Motala and to build houses for the poor in Motala. This was a real victory. We went from a situation where all of the poor people were being driven out of Motala to a situation in which we brought the rich under some control and won an agreement that Motala would be a place for everyone and that we could all live here safely. That agreement is an agreement to put the social value of the land here before its commercial value and to put the right of an established community to remain

together before the rights of the rich to use their money to make more money by evicting us and developing the land for commercial housing.

Land & Housing

The Department of Land Affairs came with Zamo from the Housing Department and showed us where development could be done. They said that this year is the second year of the planning period and that next year will be the third and last year.

But after a while no one in our office could get to Zamo but Kalinca [Kalinca Copello –a PhD student from Brazil] could. Why is it always like this? Mike Sutcliffe will meet with any student from England or America and try to charm them but he'll never meet with us.

Zamo told us that Ricky Govender was working with Faizel Seedat of the housing department to do a private sector commercial development. Seedat and Govender call this 'low cost housing'. But Govender will rush you R600 000 for a house. This is not low cost housing.

Govender has built a show house that is priced at R595 000 and he says that he has a paper that states that the municipality has given him money to develop the area. A comrade working in a steel company told us that Govender recently bought enough steel to build 1 600 houses. We've heard that Ricky Govender is building low cost houses for the government in Phoenix and Verulam. Here in Motala he is telling the poorest people to make a list of all their income including child support grants and any businesses that they have. This is creating the impression that Govender is providing the houses that we have fought for. We took a copy of Govender's form to Zamo and Zamo was shocked. We can't risk our housing budget getting into Govender's hands. Money is a devil to anyone. It cannot go to Govender or to any other individual person. That money is for the community.

Govender's vehicles and bulldozers were all repossessed in December by the sheriffs. It is widely known that he is owing money everywhere. Govender continues to dump illegally in the community and Dimba is not fazed about this. Even the Highway Mail has written about this. This has been going on for years. But Dimba is not fazed. Govender remains above the law in Dimba's eyes. The poor are below the law and the rich are above the law. It seems that the law is only for the people in the middle.

Zamo has left the Housing Department and Nompilo has gone on maternity leave. We've heard nothing from the Department since Kalinca spoke to Zamo on the 8th of April and Nompilo told us on the 15th of April that the land assessment had gone to land affairs. Therefore we want clarity. The Municipality must come straight to the point and discuss everything openly with us like Zamo did. We are very angry.

Our demands to the Housing Department are that:

1. We want an urgent meeting to give us clarity on the status of the plans for our housing development and, also, clarity on what Ricky Govender is doing in Motala, on what land and with what money. We need to know what is his relationship with the Municipality.

2. We want regular meetings during the whole planning period of the development in Motala.

Some of our members are saying that instead of struggling all the time for the government to build us houses like they promised we should just demand that they just give the poor the land and then we can do our own mud houses. Some of us are old, we were born from here and we've never seen anything from the government. If they just give us the land and the paper to say that it is ours then we can see for ourselves. We are not hungry for their money. We are hungry for the land.

We read in the Daily Sun about that man that every day when we goes to look for work he also looks for bricks. Every day he comes home with three or four bricks and he is building his house solely three or four bricks at a time. If the government can't build for the people it must let the poor people build for themselves. It's like how they try to stop illegal electricity and water connections while they are failing to provide legal electricity and water connections.

Evictions

We stopped all evictions in the jondols in 2006 and there have been no more evictions since then. We stopped all evictions in the tin houses for a few years using various strategies including rent strikes, legal strategies and mobilisation. Most evictions are illegal and so legal strategies usually work very well. After a number of defeats Govender stopped intimidating people. He's very quiet these days although he has recently been coming with people who we do not know and filming in certain plots in Motala. We don't know why. But now the land lords are starting to get their confidence back. Ten families are threatened with

eviction in lot 6 and a number of families in lot 35. Govender is threatening five families in Lot 46. They have not received eviction letters yet. It is just at the verbal abuse stage now. Govender is also trying to evict two families from Lot 13. He has been trying to evict these families for years but he has always failed. We have successfully defended these families.

We have been to the deeds office to check who really owns the land from which people are being evicted. It costs R150 to get each file. This is another way of excluding the poor. But from what we have found it seems clear that Govender and other people arriving and claiming to be landlords are just stealing land. According to the deeds office lot 36 is owned by the National Housing Board. And lots 18 and 51 are owned by the Municipality. All these lots were set for public housing in 1986. We demand that all the land owned by the Municipality must go to the poor and not to private housing or other commercial developments.

In every eviction case the papers from our side are also served on the eThekweni Municipality but they have done nothing. Whenever government can't do anything for us we have to see what we can do for ourselves.

Since we started our movement we have only been unable to defend two families from eviction in the tin houses. We do not accept that people should be left homeless when there is a lot of empty land in Motala, some of it owned by the Municipality and some of it owned by the National Housing Board. Therefore we have identified and allocated land for these families so that they can build their own homes and stop being tenants of the rich. If government is not gonna take any steps to protect the poor who are made homeless then we have no choice but to take the law into our own hands. We will continue to do this. We demand that no one is made homeless in Motala. If government cannot afford to build us RDP houses now then they should just give us the land right now.

Services

We are still struggling for services. We tried to get the municipality to bring a grader to make the road to the jondols as this had been promised to us but then we were referred to Derek Dimba and so of course nothing happened. Everything that is supposed to be for the poor fails when it touches Dimba. If the Municipality is serious about working with all the people they need to work directly with the poor people and not with the councillors that are just

here to oppress the poor. The councillors represent the rich and not the poor and therefore we must be allowed to represent ourselves. This is basic logic and yet it is often taken as a crime for the poor to organise ourselves and to speak for ourselves in this country.

Two years ago Bongo Dlamini and Shamita Naidoo made a statement to the Water Department about the need for more stand pipes in the tin houses. This was agreed to in the negotiations with the Municipality and PPT. But Bongo is late one year now and the Water Department only came now, on Wednesday last week. At first they just asked if there was a tap for the tin houses and we said yes but one stand pipe for all the tin houses without their own taps is not enough. We were very clear on this point and they have now agreed to put in new stand pipes in all the places where there is no water. We also negotiated with Zamo and PPT that they would build toilets in three places in the tin section. This was the first promise that was made to us in the negotiations but it has not been kept. We want them to bring those containers with toilets and showers.

The people with taps inside their tin houses are paying R200 and upwards for water. This is unaffordable for many families. From August billing is coming with a sewerage tariff but they don't have a sewerage system. They are using the pit system.

There is a man called Steven (Duma) who has got an office in Pinetown which is called "Deprived Community Services and Helping Hands". He helps the deprived communities to get water connections in their houses. He charges a fee of R1000 and then R60 per month. But now the Municipality is saying that his water connections are illegal. They won't provide water connections but when someone else does they say it is illegal. Steven connections were like heaven to some of the tenants in the tin houses. Someone that is willing and able to do the work that the government is failing to do should be given the right to do that work.

Those that can't afford water through Steven are still going through their neighbours. Often there is one legal meter for twenty families.

When it comes to electricity Operation Khanyisa is operating very well in the jondols. We are gonna steal electricity until they put the electricity inside. If they disconnect again we'll just reconnect. They can't stop us. Some people in the tin houses have prepaids but the bills are still coming too high. When

electricity is unaffordable we have to go back to chopping wood. People have to wake up very early in the morning to chop wood.

We are also having a problem with the postal service. The tenants in the tin houses don't get their post. The letters for those of us that are tenants of Govender go to Govender at his supermarket or warehouse. Either we don't get the post or when we do get it it has been opened. We want our own cluster boxes with keys.

The Clinic

The clinic not only provides services to residents of Motala Heights but they also service nearby communities and the Westmead Industrial Area. However, the clinic here in Motala Heights is open only on Mondays and Fridays. Mondays from 9 till 3 and Fridays from 9 till 1. The nurses often arrive after 10am and take their own time for lunch while we are waiting outside. They have done away with providing services on Wednesdays.

They are supposed to give porridges and milk for the poor kids, pensioners and the sick, but they are not giving it. In Reservoir Hills the clinic even gives hampers for the very sick but not here.

Condoms are supposed to be supplied for free but people are afraid to go and ask the nurses for condoms because they ask people a thousand questions. That's why we have had to organise condom distribution ourselves.

The blood pressure machine is not working and even our people with the killer virus are not getting their HIV medication. In fact they are not even getting porridge. Often the clinic just refers us to the hospital and then when we go to the hospital they refer us to the clinic. Sometimes the clinic refers us to Marianhill Hospital which is a semi-private hospital but you have to pay R150 to spend the night there and R360 for a scan and poor people just can't afford this. We prefer to go to Khan's Hospital because it is a government hospital.

One of the nurses is very helpful and she said that we have rights as people and that we must complain. But the other nurse is very rude to the poor people. She even refused to treat one very sick man who is living in an old truck because she said that he smelt. It is the job of nurses to treat everyone who needs treatment. This man is dying. He is in very critical condition. The hospice and the hospitals won't help. The clinic chased him away because he was smelling. He spends all day just sitting in the bus shelter. Before the owner of the truck

said that he could stay there, and put a plastic over the broken windscreen for him, he was living in the Post Box but it caved in under the rain. What kind of country are we where people must live like this? Where people must die like this?

The Health Department did set up a Health Committee here but it is not functional. There is no communication. It is the usual story with these top down structures.

As a movement we supported the Public Sector Worker's strike because everyone needs to be paid properly and because most public sector workers are supporting a lot of people who aren't working. But some of our people couldn't get their HIV medication during the strike and their health has really gone backwards. This is not right. Nurses and other public sector workers must understand that when you work for the public you work for the people and the people mustn't be forced to pay the price for the legitimate struggle of nurses against the greed and arrogance of the government.

We really need help with looking after some of the HIV ladies and their children here.

Budget

Every year the government makes the budget but there is nothing for us. It looks like nobody knows us. We are like the animals to them. But we are living people.

The municipality must come to all the communities and allow us to have input in the budget. We have two demands about the budget:

1. They must bring the budget to us and show it to us so that we can see where the money is going.
2. From next year and onwards there must be a participatory and democratic budget planning meeting in each community each year. Government must stop pretending that the councillors represent everyone in the meetings where budgets are decided. The councillors represent the rich. They do not represent us. We represent ourselves. Therefore the money for Motala should be allocated by an open meeting in Motala.

Schools

Every year we have the same struggle to get the poor kids into schools. Last year the poor kids were even stoned by the rich kids in Wyebank. We fill in the fee exemption forms for all the kids but some of them are rejected. Others are

not rejected but they are just ignored and nothing is done. While there is no feedback the fees are accumulating. The poor children are treated badly. Sometimes they are sent home for silly things like having their hair too long when there is no one at home to look after them. It's not right for a child to be roaming around on their own.

Councillors

Everything that touches Dimba fails.

Dimba says that there is no way in hell that he will come to Motala. He says that he feels threatened by us. But no one has ever got aggressive with him. All we did was to come to his meeting and ask him our questions through a loud hailer. If councillors think that questions are threatening that is their problem and not our problem.

When Shamita phoned him recently, on the speaker phone at the Minister's Fellowship, he took off with her and put the phone down.

He won't even give us the proof of residence.

Like in most areas where Abahlali baseMjondolo organises, Dimba, like most councillors, refuses to give us the proof of residence forms that you need to get a bank account, to make your cellphone legal and to get grants. This is one of many ways that the councillors try to control the poor from the top down. We have had now made our own arrangements to get proof of residence certified for people on a regular basis without having to go through Dimba. In Kennedy Road Abahlali baseMjondolo just started issuing proof of residence forms on its own. We are looking into this.

In 2007 the PR councillor, Mr. Narenjee from the IFP, said in the paper that he assisted in the provision of low cost houses in Motala. But where are these houses? When we ask him he runs away.

We have noticed that in fact councillors and officials don't understand about land and housing. They don't even understand about schools. We have to learn them. We are willing to keep learning them. But we as the poor shouldn't have to be learning them all the time. They are paid to do their jobs. We are paid nothing to organise in our communities.

Solidarity

We meet on the roadside every Saturday. The government treats us like we haven't got hands, like we haven't got minds, like we are babies. But we stand together even though finance kills us all the way.

We get most of our solidarity through all our comrades in Abahlali base-Mjondolo but here in Pinetown we are also getting support from the Minister's Fellowship. We want to thank them for their living solidarity, a solidarity with dignity.

Sipho Khanya
Louisa Motha
Shamita Naidoo
Krinesh Rajah

7 NOVEMBER 2010

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

We Call on TAC Comrades to Stop Making Divisive Statements and Accusation of ABM WC

The Treatment Action Campaign, Social Justice Coalition and Equal Education have accused Abahlali baseMjondolo in the Western Cape of promoting violence and disrupting their meetings. I would like to make it clear that Abahlali baseMjondolo does not condone violence, meaning harm to persons. Our week of action in October was a strike by shack dwellers, by means of direct action common to protests in other countries. Moreover the accusation that we have disrupted meetings of these organizations is a complete falsehood. Those responsible for disrupting the Irene Grootboom lecture by Comrade Vavi in Site B, and those who disrupted a more recent meeting, are associated with the ANC Youth League in Khayelitsha and not with Abahlali baseMjondolo. We ask these organizations to stop making divisive statements and to publicly withdraw their accusations.

Mzonke Poni,
Abahlali baseMjondolo (Western Cape)

11 NOVEMBER 2010

Statement · Soshanguve Branch, Pretoria

AbM is Resisting Illegal Evictions in Block R & KK Settlements, Soshanguve, Pretoria

ABAHMALI BASEMJONDOLO (SOSHANGUVE CHAPTER), ARE FIGHTING TO STOP THE UNLAWFUL EVICTIONS OF THE POOR IN BLOCK R AND KK INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS.

Abahlali baseMjondolo under the auspice of the Soshanguve concerned Residents Group (SCRG) have been involved in a protracted struggle to stop the City of Tshwane from arbitrarily evicting the poor people living in Block R and KK informal settlements without following proper lawful channels.

In a memorandum handed to the former speaker of the council (Councillor Khorombi) and the former City Mayor (Dr. Gwen Ramokgopa), the Concerned Resident's group acting on behalf of the residents, stated that Since July 2009, the Counselor have been overstepping his mandate by acting contrary to the dictates of the law. It is their believe that the Counselor is acting ultra vires and looking down upon the rights of the people as enshrined in the 1996 constitution and the PIE Act. The people of Block R and KK informal settlements pointed out that while their area was regarded as an informal settlement, they are the formal citizens of the Republic and deserve to be treated with respect, fairness and justice. Not so long ago, like the rest of the South Africans, they bought into the promises pledged by the ruling party of a "better life for all" and joined in the long queues to vote for them. "Our vote is not in any way different or inferior to the one cast by the people from formalized areas" they said.

They requested the mayor to instruct Counselor Ngwenya to refrain from abusing his power and acting outside his jurisdiction. They also charged that Ngwenya is failing them by practicing divide and rule tactics where he cunningly corner the vulnerable people (especially the elderly and illiterate) and told them to leave their homes permanently. He then come back and claim that these people left voluntarily. The place they sent the people is block SS, Ext. 5, an uninhabitable piece of land without basic infrastructure. (There are few

taps of water there and the entire community has to rely on about five mobile toilets).

On other instances, Mr. Ngwenya has send sms's to the residents instructing them to leave and those who refused to go were threatened that their homes will be demolished by Makaleng Joint-Venture, a company believed to be owned by a senior official in the Housing department of the Municipality. All this was done without considering the economic impact on this people who, most of them are not even employed. A lot of families had children who are attending school nearby and the relocations would obviously bring hardship to these families and their children with regard to their travelling expenses to and from School.

The mayor was also reminded that in her state of the City Address during May 2009, she mentioned that Block KK would be formalized within the current financial year. After the memorandum was given, the speaker arranged a formal meeting with the concerned residents committee and the problems were discussed at length. An in- loco inspection of the area concerned was also undertaken. The speaker ordered that while the matter was being investigated, the council should put the evictions into abeyance.

It was then that the council stated that the reason for removing the People out of Block KK is that they are located very close to a solid waste dump and in terms of the certificate from the Department of water Affairs, a buffer zone of 800m should be observed from the dump to the nearest human settlement area.

With regard to Erf 1939 Block R, they stated that the area was earmarked for Business.

Further, the Council stated that they have a court order which empowers them to evict this people.

In conclusion, the council passed a resolution that the people would be evicted anytime from the date that the last meeting was held.

In reply, The Concerned resident's committee representatives stated that:

- i. The Mayor had promised that Block KK would be formalized;
- ii. The people lived in the area before the Solid waste dump was established;
- iii. The waste dump is located close to human settlement in contravention of the license to observe the 800m buffer not vice versa;
- iv. Other than the informal site at Block KK, There are other established formal settlements in the surrounding including a live- in reformatory School and a place of safety for destitute children.

v. The Stench and flies that come from the dump is posing a health hazard not only to the people at the informal settlement but to the entire area;

vi. More than 1000 households and the schools are affected by the dump that is placed without considering the license requirements;

vii. The municipality was further informed that the Court order that they claim to be an authoritative base for their action was inappropriate because it was not meant for the residents of the informal settlements. This was an order that was granted to the municipality to stop the people from illegal invasion of municipal owned land. However, in this case, we are talking of the people who are already living in the area for a considerable period of time, not does who intend to invade as stated in the order;

viii. Even if the order was appropriate to be used as a authority for evictions, it would not apply to the people of block KK informal settlement because they were not cited as respondents in the application.

ix. Further, Even if you can remove the people who occupy the land informally at Block KK, the problem of environmental health affecting the lives of many other people who live in the vicinity where the solid waste dump is unlawfully located will continue: this is in violation to section 24 of the 1996 constitution;

x. With regard to Erf 1939 Block R, the area is well suited for human settlement as compared to Block SS where the people were to be settled;

xi. The reason given by the council is that when the town planners made their plan over twenty years ago, there was no business centre in the area and the people from there had to travel a long distance to Mabopane Station. However, as we speak today, a new modern shopping complex with Banks, Restaurants, Supermarkets and the post office etc has been built about half a kilometer from the site in question;

xii. The problem of addressing a need for viable business centre has since being addressed;

xiii. The site in Block SS ext 5 is still under geological survey and most parts of this land is swampy and lies on a dolomite and flood line, making it unsuitable for human settlement, especially the poor who do not have means to develop the area;

With the above facts at hand, the concerned residents committee recommended the following:

a) Tshwane Municipality must stop the all the evictions in both Block R and KK informal settlements permanently;

b) Tshwane Municipality to formalize and develop the affected areas into formal residential areas;

c) Tshwane Municipality to close down the solid waste dump which is seen as a stumbling block to the development of Block KK informal settlement (This move shall also help to resolve the environmental health hazard posed by the dump);

d) Should there be a compelling reason for the Municipality not to meet recommendations A and B above, and the people be forced to be relocated, such relocation should be done with due consideration of section 4(7) of the PIE Act;

e) Further, The Municipality must ensure that the area where people are to be relocated must be well serviced with RDP houses or shelters of equal or above status as those where the people are currently living;

f) The cost of relocating the People and erecting new temporary shelters must be borne by the Municipality.

This is aimed at safeguarding the vulnerable citizens as alluded by the Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke in the Constitutional court matter between the Joe Slovo Informal Settlement and the City of Cape Town.

The honorable judge stated then that: "no matter how commendable the government's intentions about the use of land, without the solid promise of alternative housing, evictions might turn out to be a method of brutal state control and far from the progressive realization of the socioeconomic rights the 1996 constitution guaranteed"

So far, the municipality has not agreed to these proposals and the residents are waiting for the bulldozers to come and break their shacks that have been their home for many years. At the mean time, the Community has approached the Lawyers for human rights to help if the municipality implements its threat. The real worry that the residents have currently is what the future holding for them. They would like the Municipality to implement the recommendations made by the Soshanguve Concerned residents Committee but up to so far, the municipality is quite. The Residents are becoming impatient about this silence and their anger hangs like a time bomb which may soon explode into flames as seen in many areas within the country.

This press release is prepared by: Selata wa'Nkwane (obo: the Soshanguve Concerned Residents Group)

3 DECEMBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Kennedy 12 Trial: Five Nil to Abahlali baseMjondolo

Today the first five days of the trial of the Kennedy 12 came to an end. The trial will resume in May next year and then, if more time is needed, it will continue again in July.

We wish to begin this statement by thanking all of those people and organisations that have stood by our movement in the difficult times that followed the attack and then this ongoing trial. Your solidarity is much appreciated. There is a saying that when days are dark friends are few. But in these dark times we still have many friends and the solidarity from all of you is deeply appreciated.

The legal process against the Kennedy 12 has been dragged on for far too long. The lives of the 12 accused have been seriously disrupted. They lost their homes in the attack and after they were arrested they lost their jobs. They have spent hard months in Westville Prison – a place that is an absolute disgrace to our society. It has been a very difficult time for their families. We have always tried to get this matter into trial as soon as we could and the state has always delayed and delayed. We were very pleased that, at last, the trial has started. But we are disappointed that it may now drag on until the middle of next year. The accused will not be able to continue with their lives. Our movement will continue to have to divert its energies to the trial, to the accused and to the people displaced in the attack. For as long as the trial continues the charges will be used by our enemies to discredit our movement. We are also worried about the safety of the accused, of the witnesses, of our leading members in Kennedy Road and of our leaders in general. We are particularly worried about the safety of witness X. We really do feel that the state must take steps to guarantee the safety of this witness.

The trial could not have gone better for the Kennedy 12 during this week. It is now five nil to the Kennedy 12. After five days of the state leading its evidence it has no case against any of the 12. None of the state's witnesses identified any

of the 12 as being responsible for any murder and all of the state witnesses were quickly and clearly shown to be unreliable. They contradicted their own statements, their own testimony and each other's testimony. The only fact that has emerged clearly during this week is that the Kennedy 12 are being framed. State witnesses admitted that they were asked to identify members of the Safety & Security Committee and the Mfene Dance Group (and not people that they had seen committing any crime) in the police line up. They admitted that the police had written their statements for them, and told them to sign, without reading them back or giving them an opportunity to interrogate their contents.

After one week of hearing the state's evidence there is simply no case for any of the 12 to answer. If the trial continues like this our lawyers will just ask the magistrate to dismiss all charges when the prosecution have finished making their case.

However from Monday to Thursday the media coverage of the trial, especially the reporting by SAPA, was disgraceful. They reported and sensationalised the allegations made by the witnesses but then said nothing about the fact that the testimony of those witnesses was entirely discredited during cross examination. A trial goes back and forth. Claims are made and their truthfulness is then investigated. The reporting on a trial should do the same. It should report the claims that are made by witnesses and then also report on the credibility of those claims after cross examination. To fail to do this and to only report the allegations that are made is to create an entirely false picture of what has happened in court. As a movement we find ourselves winning, decisively, in the court and at the same time losing, just as decisively, in the media. SAPA's coverage of the trial was so unethical that the Magistrate even had to condemn it on one specific point and to report their journalist to the media Ombudsman.

Anyone who doubts that the reporting has been grossly unfair should compare it against the transcripts of the trial. We challenge the media – especially SAPA to do this. We are publicly requesting that the SAPA editor examine the transcripts and then meet with us to discuss why the reporting was so unfair and what can be done to ensure fairness in the future.

We are not sure if the trial has been reported in this deeply dishonest and unfair way because journalists have been won over by the politicians; if they just share the hatred of the poor (and especially the hatred of the strong poor, the organised and mobilised poor) that is common amongst the middle classes and

the rich or if they are just lazy and not doing their jobs properly. However we do note that the reporting was much fairer today (Friday).

Some of our comrades are now asking if it was wise for us to mobilise in defence of the media via the Right2Know Campaign. They are saying why must we, who face life threatening conditions in the shacks every day, invest our own time and money in mobilising in support of a corporate media that treats us and our movement with such bias and contempt. They are saying that yes we have a right to know but we also have a right to know the truth. In our discussion this afternoon we reaffirmed that we are opposed to all attempts by government to censor the media. However we have also decided that we will not support any media freedom campaign that does not spend the same amount of energy on defending the freedom of the corporate media as it does on:

1. Demanding the democratisation of the media and support for autonomous community media.

2. Making sure that poor people have good support to challenge the media when they report on us and our movements with such reckless dishonesty and bias.

We are very well aware that the politicians do not accept defeats by the organised poor very well. When they lose on one terrain they shift the battle to another terrain. We won our case against the Slums Act in the Constitutional Court and they responded with the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road and the incredible lies that surrounded the attack. The campaign to assassinate the movement's reputation continues. We fully expect that the state will mount a new attack against us after failing to make any case against the Kennedy 12 in court this week. We do not know what form their next attack will take – it could be more violence, it could be more lies, it could be something new. We are very well aware that their intelligence is always close to us – even standing next to us and listening when we are praying outside the court. We recognise many of their agents, even the cars that they use.

There is no doubt that there was a battle in Kennedy Road in September last year. So far this trial has only shown that the police have tried to frame the accused as being responsible for the two deaths in that battle. It has shed no light on why that battle happened, who started it and who was responsible for the destruction of homes, injuries and deaths. It is good that it is clearly emerging that the police have framed the accused. But a full and neutral investigation is still

required so that the real truth can emerge and so that all those who destroyed homes, injured and killed people can be made to fully account for their actions before the society and before the law.

We do not believe that the lower courts were neutral in this matter. They have, clearly, been totally politicised. However, we respect this court and its fair-minded and experienced Magistrate. It has, like the Constitutional Court, been fair. We are very pleased with the work of our legal team and we appreciate the church support that has enabled us to go to court with good lawyers. We will accept any judgment handed down by this court.

We remain committed to a living politics. We remain committed to a people's politics. We remain committed to the struggle for land and housing in the cities. We remain committed to building the political power of the poor against elites in the state, business, civil society and the media.

Ms Bandile Mdlalose
 Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A (Secretary General)
 Ms Zodwa Nsibande
 Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League (Secretary General)
 Rev Mavuso
 Rural Network Spokesperson
 Mr Mnikelo Ndabankulu
 Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson

7 DECEMBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Terrible Shack Fire Currently Raging in QQ Section, Khayelitsha

A terrible fire is currently raging in the QQ Section settlement in Khayelitsha. More than twenty homes and the community-built creche have already been destroyed. The fire is still raging.

Shack fires are not natural disasters. They are a direct result of the contempt in which the government holds the poor in this country. Shack fires are political. We will never accept that it is normal for the poor to burn.

Those so-called social justice organisations that are calling for a politics of patience in which the poor do not directly and immediately confront our oppression take no account of THE FACT that our every day lives are an emergency. We live in crisis every day. We live in life threatening conditions every day. This is what drives us to the streets. We will continue to go to the streets until our humanity is recognised and we are treated with dignity. It is not our protests that are a threat to our society. Is the way that we are forced to live that is a threat to society. It is the oppression of the poor that is a threat to society.

We refuse to be patient. We refuse to accept that it is normal for human beings to have to live like this.

For on the scene updates and comment from QQ section

Mr. Qona
Mbongeni

8 DECEMBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Up To Five Hundred People Left Homeless in the QQ Fire Last Night

The fire that raged through the QQ Section shack settlement in Khayelitsha last night has destroyed up to 100 shacks leaving as many as 500 people homeless. Most people have lost everything including ID books, work clothes, school uniforms, medication and family photographs.

The community built and run crèche has also been destroyed.

We are appealing for immediate help for the people who have been left destitute in this fire. As a movement we are struggling for justice and not charity but in a time of crisis we embrace the generosity of others.

It is rumoured that this fire was started by a self-organised electricity connection. Our movement has been organising around the questions of electricity and fire in Durban for many years. Our position is that:

1. The major cause of shack fires is the fact that shack settlements are not electrified and therefore, as a matter of urgency, all shack settlements must be electrified.

2. When the state fails to electrify shack settlements or simply refuses to electrify them at all then people have a right to electrify their own shacks. However it is essential to draw a clear distinction between badly made and dangerous connections installed in an ad hoc manner and well organised, well made and safe connections. A well organised community structure can electrify a settlement safely.

We do not accept that shack fires are natural disasters. Shack fires are the result of the social abandonment of the poor. We will continue to politicise shack fires and we will continue to fight for our full social inclusion in this society. That means that while we fight for land and housing we are also demanding the immediate electrification of all shack settlements as a matter of extreme urgency. Where the state fails to respond the shack fire crisis adequately – and

an adequate response must include immediate electrification – we will encourage all communities to organise their own connections in a collective, disciplined and safe manner. Neither the struggle for justice nor the self organised responses to surviving injustice can move forward without proper organisation. We are encouraging all communities to democratise their settlements and to elect accountable and recallable leadership outside of party structures so that the collective, bottom up and responsible self management of settlements and the struggle for the full right to the city for all can be taken forward.

For updates and comment from QQ section

Mr. Qona
Mbongeni
Mzonke

8 DECEMBER 2010

Press statement · Joint statement

Court Victory for the Rural Network in eShowe

People from all rural areas branches came in numbers to witness the sentencing of the two Farm Watch who killed Vukani Shange and Thembinkosi Mpanza in 2006. The sentencing was handed down on 8 December 2010. Each one was given 15 years of Murder and 5 years of making a decision to kill.

Victory Against Farm Murders in the eShowe Regional Court

Justice was delayed for Thembinkosi Mpanza and Vukani Shange but it was not, in the end, denied. Moments ago Jabulani Sithole and Phumlani Thusi were convicted of murder and attempted murder in the eShowe Regional Court.

This case dates back to 17 June 2006 when Thembinkosi Mpanza was 17 and Vukani Shange was 16 years. They were shot to death by the Farm Watch on Horse Shoe Farm near eShowe. They had taken some sugar cane to chew on while walking home from school. For this, the crime of enjoying the fruits of their own land, they were killed. There is more information on the case here.

This case was adjourned 25 times before the killers were finally brought to justice. These delays in our justice system are unacceptable.

The Rural Network has previously noted that this case: “Raises question about whose life is important or less important in this country. We have noted with great despair that when a poor person on a farm is shot by a farmer and their Farm Watch no one cares. Neither government nor media take it seriously but if it is the farmer that is killed the whole world is shaking.” It is clear that if you are poor and black your life does not count the same as a person who is rich and white. We are saying that everyone’s life must count the same. We are saying that we are willing to struggle in the streets, in the farms and in the courts to make this principle a reality in the world.

We will continue to struggle for a world in which everyone’s life counts the same. We will continue to struggle for a world in which it is recognised that land is a gift from God that should be a common treasury for all and not the private

property of the rich. We will continue to stand with all families that suffer abuses like murder, beatings and the impoundment of their cattle on farms.

For more information and comment direct from the celebrations at the court

Rev. Mavuso

Rural Network Spokesperson

Mr M'du Sibisi

eMasangweni Rural Network Branch Chairperson

Mr S'bu Zikode

Abahlali baseMjondolo President

23 DECEMBER 2010

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

ANC Intimidates Witness X, More Intimidation and More Killing in Kennedy Road

The attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo in the Kennedy Road settlement in September last year was followed by serious intimidation against the movement in the settlement. People were forced to denounce the movement, any support for the movement put people at serious risk and organising in the settlement had to go underground. Homes continued to be destroyed until July this year and people had to be able to show ANC cards to access food vouchers for senior citizens and social relief as well as the building materials that, after the struggle of our movement, are now made available to people after shack fires. Building material was even given to ANC members whose shacks hadn't burnt. Death threats were made against numerous people including AbM leaders not living in Kennedy Road. These death threats were often issued in public, such as at the court appearances for the Kennedy 12 (who were at first the Kennedy 13).

After the attack Willies Mchunu, who told the KwaZulu-Natal parliament that 'a resolution has been taken to disband Abahlali', imposed an unelected ANC controlled Community Policing Forum (CPF) on the settlement. That CPF never met and never functioned. The settlement was instead run by an unelected informal network of ANC supporters closely supported by the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) of the Ward 25 ANC under the leadership of the notoriously authoritarian and corrupt Jackson Gumede. This informal network was also supported by the Ward Councillor, Yacoob Baig, senior ANC leaders, such as Dora Dlamini, an MP in the provincial parliament, and, at times, the local police. Zibuyile Ngcobo and Zandile Mdletshe, who took a leading role in the attack in September last year (including the destruction and looting of homes), have been the leading figures in this ANC network that seized control of the settlement after the attack. They both remain in possession of goods, like furniture and clothes, looted in the attacks.

Their power came from their ability to exercise violence and to destroy people's homes and loot their property with the impunity that comes from state backing (a backing that included tacit police support for the ongoing destruction of homes); the immediate state opposition to any spontaneous attempts at organising self defence; and the access to the money, tenders, jobs and developmental support that are channelled through the local party structures.

AbM continued to organise underground in the settlement despite the risks and, by May this year, a Kennedy Road branch began to organise openly under the courageous leadership of Nozuko Hulushe. On the 7th of February this year Nozuko was violently attacked by Zibuyile Ngcobo. Her face was smashed with a brick and her hair was pulled out.

There have always been some officers in the Sydenham Police Station that have tried to do their jobs fairly and without political interference. When the whole station is under pressure from the ANC, or when there is heavy political pressure on a certain case, it becomes very hard for any police officer there to do their work fairly. But when that pressure recedes some officers are able to do their work fairly.

Nozuko succeeded to open a case against Zibuyile Ngcobo. After Ngcobo was arrested Ward Councilor Yacoob Baig rushed to bail her out and instructed the police to drop the charges. ANC MPL Dora Dlamini came to Kennedy Road and tried to force Nozuko to drop the charges. But Nozuko stood firm and the police officer handling the case stood firm and the case went ahead. There was the usual intimidation from the ANC in the court and after Lindiwe Mlangeni repeatedly swore at and threatened Nozuko in the court the prosecutor told Nozuko to open a case against Mlangeni. The case was opened and Mlangeni was arrested. Yacoob Baig bailed her out too. We don't know where that case is now. On the 28th of October this year Zibuyile Ngcobo was found guilty of assault and defeating the ends of justice. She was given a five year suspended sentence and warned to never interfere with Nozuko or to fight with anyone in Kennedy Road.

She continues to be an ANC activist and tenderpreneur in Kennedy Road and it is believed by some that she is also selling the drug wonga.

Last month Jackson Gumede was arrested on a charge of stealing building material provided after the fires in the Lacey Road and Kennedy Road settlements. He was also bailed out by Yacoob Baig. That case is still pending.

We note that we are constantly presented as criminals and thugs by the ANC and their allies. During five years of mass struggle our movement has put thousands of people on the streets, organised numerous campaigns, had to deal with armed authoritarianism from landlords, red ants, the police and party structures. We have had to deal with fires, serious state repression and incredible lies about us. We have active branches in 64 shack settlements in this country (and we will launch two new branches in January), more than 10 000 paid-up members and, we estimate, more than 25 000 active supporters all organised in a bottom up system where members direct branches and branches direct the movement. The ANC has constantly slandered us and constantly misused the police to beat and harass us. But despite all the pressure that has been placed on the police to make arrests, and despite the fact that more than a hundred of our comrades have had to stand in the dock on criminal charges since 2005, only one AbM member has ever been convicted after an arrest. In May 2008 Philani Zungu, the former Deputy President of the movement who has a civil case pending against the Sydenham Police after he and S'bu Zikode were tortured in the Sydenham Police station in September 2006, pled guilty to a charge of (carefully and safely) connecting his settlement, Pema Ridge, to electricity. He told the court that his action should be assessed on the basis of the fact that the settlement has never burnt and that there has never been an electrical accident there since it was connected. Zungu's action was a social action which should be supported by any right thinking person.

However an ANC leader has now been convicted of assaulting one of our leaders. Ngcobo's action was deeply anti-social and should be opposed by all right thinking people.

AbM continues to organise openly in Kennedy Road. It is still not safe to wear a red T-shirt in the settlement but we are forcing this freedom by refusing to be intimidated. The movement salutes all AbM members in Kennedy Road and wishes to pay special tribute to the courage of Nozuko Hulushe.

A Democratic Break Through in Kennedy Road

In October this year there was a major democratic break through in Kennedy Road. For the first time since the attack and the violent imposition of ANC rule in the settlement an election was held in the settlement. Candidates stood in their individual capacities and no one ran as an ANC or AbM candidate. This was done in order to ensure that this important step towards the full democratisation of the settlement could be taken safely. The election went safely, with mass support, and a new Kennedy Road Development Committee (KRDC) was elected. None of the ANC leaders are on this committee and most of its members were AbM activists before the attack. We welcome the fact that, for the first time since the armed and state backed removal of AbM from the settlement and the imposition of unelected ANC rule, there has been an election in the settlement and that it is now under democratic rule. We also welcome the fact that while the ANC network that ran the settlement are all Zulu people the new elected KRDC is all mixed up – there are amaZulu, amaXhosa, aMam-Pondo and moSotho members. Everyone who lives in the settlement is welcome to vote for this committee and to serve on this committee. Given that the attack that was mobilised against us was mobilised on an ethnic basis this is also a very important break through.

Abahlali has not yet returned to the settlement but two important principles of Abahlalism – democracy and a non-ethnic politics – have been reinstated in the settlement. We will have to see if the ANC allows this committee to do its work safely and if the state accepts it as the legitimate representatives of the community or if it continues to take the unelected ANC network as the only legitimate structure. We can already see that the ANC continues to inform the media that Zandile Mdletshe is the leader of the settlement while there is a democratic elected committee there.

The new KRDC has made some progress. There is still no creche and no organised collective care for people living with HIV/AIDS. But the grass has been cut, the hall is being looked after and the Municipality has been approached to do something about the incredible amount of rubbish that has accumulated in the settlement since the attack. It was agreed that the settlement will be cleaned for a week in December and it was decided by the new KRDC that people will be elected to the cleaning jobs (the old KRDC used a lottery system to allocate jobs). However Jackson Gumede, chairperson of the BEC of the ANC in the

ward, intervened and said that he has his own list of people that must get these jobs. This is exactly how the attack on our movement began last year – over a dispute as to whether a community or the ANC should control development. The new KRDC will face a real challenge to deal with this.

The new KRDC also faces another serious challenge. As soon as there was an elected committee that committee was given the same demand as the old KRDC – to do something about crime and about the shebeens. Many people have been killed by criminals in Kennedy Road since the attack. These murders have often had an ethnic aspect and are often linked to the shebeens. The new KRDC has, under pressure from below, taken exactly the same decision as the old KRDC which is that shebeens must close at 10:00 p.m. In 2009 this decision led some shebeen owners to ally with the ANC mob in the attack on our movement. It also gave the ANC something to use against our movement – they claimed that regulating the opening hours of the shebeens was some sort of oppression of the community. This is just nonsense. General Bheki Cele is on TV all the time saying that shebeens must be regulated. The real issue here is not shebeens. It is that the ANC was so desperate to attack our movement that they were willing to make alliances with anybody, including shebeen owners, criminals and those people that believe that now is the time for the Zulus.

S'bu Zikode recently met with Raul Zibechi who is a comrade from Latin America. Raul explained how in Latin America the regimes there have encouraged criminals and drugs as a way to divide communities and to weaken their mobilisation. We note that here in Durban the ANC is willing to encourage alcohol abuse and criminality to try and undermine our movement. Everywhere in the world the unity of a poor community is a threat to the state and the state will do what it can to break that unity. Unregulated alcohol use, drugs, crime and ethnic politics are all ways to break the unity of the poor. The state is made powerful and the poor are made weak when we are made to fight each other. The problem of drugs is new in our communities but in the last two years the use of sugars and rocks (crack cocaine) has exploded. One of our best young activists is currently, with strong support from the movement, in the middle of the fear and pain that comes with withdrawal from these drugs. We will support him with the same commitment that we bring to supporting a comrade in jail or a comrade who is losing a family member to AIDS. No one in this movement must ever have to walk through a long night of suffering alone. We make

no distinction between this kind of support and our political work. Getting a young man off rocks or caring for a young woman dying of AIDS is as political as boycotting an election or marching to symbolically bury a councillor or burn the mayor's house.

The new KRDC are also taking action against crime. This is in response to a popular demand that they cannot ignore. They are trying to organise to force, as had been achieved before, the police to respond to crime in the settlement in a way that treats shack dwellers as citizens and not as if we are all criminals. They are also catching criminals where possible and then calling the police to come and fetch them. They are being extremely careful to make sure that no one ever hits any one suspected of criminal acts even when the provocation is extreme. They are aware of the dangers of this and they are aware that when a state is against a community organisation or movement any attempt by members of that organisation or movement to administer justice places it at real risk. It is the easiest thing in the world for the police to get a criminal to testify against a movement in exchange for being released after committing a serious crime.

The new KRDC is also in regular discussion with the KRDC in exile and with Abahlali baseMjondolo about various matters including the return of the people exiled from the settlement in September 2009. The question of safety both to the exiles and the new KRDC is high in everyone's minds. But there is confidence that once the trial of the Kennedy 12 is over, and the lies of the ANC stand exposed before the world, that a full return will become possible. The movement has made it clear that it is not willing to accept any partial return. Either everyone will return or no one will return. There can be no sacrificing of certain individuals or groups.

The ANC is losing control of Kennedy Road. The new democratically elected committee while independent from all political parties and organisations is, under democratic pressure, implementing the same policies as the old AbM affiliated KRDC.

The ANC is also losing in court.

In recent days they have tried to take back the ground that they have lost in the community and in the court with more violence.

The Intimidation of Nozuko Hulushe

Three weeks ago Nozuko Hulushe was accosted by Mduduzi 'George' Cele, a cousin of Zibuyile Ngcobo. He was armed with a gun and threatened to shoot her. He didn't make an attempt to shoot her but he did hit her against the door. He said that she would be dead within two weeks.

The AbM branch in Kennedy Road are sure that Cele is wanted by the police for the recent killings at the pharmacy near the Seafood shop in Quarry Road in Clare Estate. When he is in Kennedy Road he stays with Zibuyile Ngcobo.

On Friday last week (17 December 2009) Nozuko Hulushe left her house at 7 in the morning to take her rubbish out. Zibuyile Ngcobo was sitting outside her house drinking alcohol. She started swearing at Nozuko telling her that 'your days are numbered' and that the 'police won't keep you safe'. She said to Nozuko that 'you need to be killed with a gun' and that 'we will destroy your head with a gun'.

At 12:30 Nozuko left her house again to go to the shop. She was accosted by Ngcobo once more and the threats were repeated. This time Ngcobo was sober.

Because Ngcobo was sober when the threats were made, because of the well known criminality and violence of the people she is associated with, and because of the (at times but not complete) state guaranteed impunity with which she has been able to engage in violence and intimidation Nozuko took these threats seriously.

She went to the C.R. Swart police station to request a peace order but they told her that she must open a case. She then went to the Sydenham police station. The police officers consulted with Ngcobo's boyfriend and then informed Nozuko that they wouldn't open a case and that she must reconcile with Ngcobo. Nozuko was unwilling to reconcile with a person with a history of violence (usually state sanctioned) and who had, that morning, threatened to kill her.

However on Monday this week (20 December) Nozuko succeeded to open a case against Ngcobo. The case number is 415/12/2010. As a movement we are requesting that human rights organisations monitor the investigation of this case.

Nozuko has returned to her home in the settlement but she is remaining locked inside and does not feel safe in the settlement. It is very difficult for her children to spend Christmas locked inside their home.

For some time a grey 4x4 vehicle with tinted windows has often parked outside Nozuko's home after dark. On occasion Zibuyile Ngcobo and Zandile Mdletshe have been seen entering this vehicle. The driver, who cannot be seen clearly through the tinted windows and who always wears sunglasses, has taken photographs of Nozuko. This vehicle has also been close to AbM gatherings outside the court appearances of the Kennedy 12. It was outside Nozuko's house last night and the day before yesterday. The registration number is ND 597 682.

The Intimidation of Witness X

Witness X was initially supposed to be a witness for the prosecution in the case against the Kennedy 12. Before the trial she was intimidated by the local ANC and the investigating officer, Officer Naidoo, who kicked in her door early in the mornings, threatened her with arrest if she refused to testify, told her that if she refused to testify Xolani, another state witness, would call a meeting to have her evicted from the settlement and promised to give her money after the case if she did testify. Officer Naidoo stopped intimidating Witness X and other state witnesses after the prosecutor warned him.

After Witness X refused to testify for the prosecution the magistrate asked her to be a court witness and she testified in camera. To everyone's shock her name was reported in the media resulting in the judge referring the newspaper report to the Press Ombudsman.

Witness X was, our lawyers are certain, the only credible witness to testify during the first week of the trial of the Kennedy 12. She testified that she had not witnessed any of the 12 commit any crime but that she had been pressured to give false evidence.

Last week, on Sunday, Zandile Mdletshe's brothers accosted Witness X, told her that by testifying she had sold their sister to 'Wanya Totsi' (this is how the local ANC refer to the old KRDC and AbM and, now, to all Pondo people).

Later Xolani, a state witness, approached Nozuko Hulushe and told her that because Witness X had testified on her own and not for the prosecution Witness X would now have to be removed from the settlement. The ANC mob destroyed more than 30 homes in September last year and have destroyed quite a few more since then, with the last one (the home of Anton Zamisa) being destroyed in July this year. This destruction of people's homes has been carried on with full state sanction and this threat to destroy the home of Witness X must

be taken seriously. Xolani also told Nozuko that 'We won't get along if the situation continues like this' which she took to be a direct threat against her in direct response to the fact that a state witnesses had declined to testify for the state.

On Thursday (16 December) Witness X was watching Generations when three nephews of Thembi Nxumalo, an ANC leader in Kennedy Road and a state witness in the case of the Kennedy 12, burst into her home. Two of them had knives and one had a sharpened object (like an umbrella pin or a bicycle spoke). They said that she had betrayed them by testifying and they threatened to kill her. She grabbed a bottle, broke it and used it to chase them out of her home. They came back later that night with Thembi Nxumalo. Witness X ran out of her home to ask someone to call the police. Her neighbours were up although it was late as they own a shebeen. They saw what was happening and intervened to protect Witness X from Nxumalo and her nephews.

One motive for the threats against Witness X is revenge. But another is to send a clear message to her not to testify again if she is called. Another motive is to make it clear to all state witnesses that it is not safe for them to decide, as Witness X did, to tell the truth about how the state's case has been fabricated. Already the number of state witnesses has fallen from 40 to 9 and some people who are still supposed to testify are openly telling others in the community that, now that the ANC are losing control of the settlement, they are no longer prepared to lie for them in court.

Two More Murders in Kennedy Road this Weekend

Since the attack on AbM in September last year there have been numerous killings in the settlement. These are mostly criminal murders but they often have an ethnic dimension and they are also directly linked to the end of the attempt to regulate shebeens, the end of the relationship that had been built between the old KRDC and the police and the end of community policing efforts. Two more people were killed this weekend.

One of them, a man named Xolani, was a imPondo man who was robbed and stabbed in an ethnically motivated attack. It is believed by our members in the settlement that a man also named Xolani, the same state witness that threatened to destroy Witness X's home, was involved in the killing. For these people anyone speaking isiXhosa is called 'Wanya Totsi'. The man who was killed had

no relation to any AbM linked structure. As a movement we are requesting that the human rights organisations pressure the police and the state to investigate, fairly and fully, this killing and all other killings that have happened in the settlement since the attack on our movement last year.

Crime remains very high in the settlement, ethnic tensions remain a serious problem, the police continue to be disinterested in crime committed against people in the settlement and, while some steps are now being taken, the community is not yet sufficiently well organised to deal with this problem.

No Christmas in the Shacks

In the past we have always said that there is no Christmas in the shacks due to the fires and due to the fact that, once a community is organised, the state always chooses the Christmas period to evict because many people are away, lawyer's officers are closed and so on. This is why every year we have to make sure that some of our best activists remain at home and on high alert during the Christmas period.

We are sure that this new wave of repression is coming during Christmas for the same reasons that evictions usually come at Christmas. However we remain organised during this period and our comrades working in the law, in the human rights organisations and elsewhere remain committed and ready to act.

As a result of the current climate of intimidation in Kennedy Road we are not giving the names of anyone there as contact people. However our office can answer any questions with regard to this statement. Our number is.

6 JANUARY 2011

Press statement · Motala Heights Branch

Unlawful Attacks on Education Rights in Motala Heights

Motala Heights Abahlali baseMjondolo Branch

Today people are celebrating the matric results across the country. Here in Motala Heights, as in many poor communities around the country, we are planning our resistance to the illegal exclusion of poor children from our country's schools. Every year the first campaign on the Abahlali baseMjondolo calendar is the struggle to keep our children in school and to have them respected in school.

Here in Motala Heights the situation is really bad at the Motala Heights School. The school is blatantly acting against the law and blatantly discriminating against the poor kids and actively denying them their right to education.

Sometimes people fill out the fee exemption forms and they are just ignored. Sometimes the school secretary just refuses to give parents the fee exemption forms and shouts at them and ill treats them when they request the forms. This secretary acts like the school belongs to her. If you haven't got money you are nothing to her. She is like a big closed door to the poor people.

Last year the school refused to release the reports of the kids whose parents couldn't pay the fees. This is illegal. They also said that they will put the debt owed to the Motala Heights School, which ends in grade 9, on the transfer cards that kids need go on to other High Schools. The secretary actually told one parent that this is "to make the parent and child have a bad reputation in the new school."

When the new year comes people are told to re-register their children and the secretary tells the poor parents that they can't register their children because they owe money. A deposit of R500 is charged to re-register each child.

The secretary blocks the poor parents from access to the headmaster.

The principal even says that people who are getting the Child Support Grant, which is supposed to be for food for their children, must give the grant to the

school. What does he think these children will eat? Does he think that a child can study with the pain and weakness of hunger?

Letters have been sent to parents that owe money for school fees. These parents have been handed over to Protea Credit Control and this company is threatening to take them to court and to seize their few possessions against their debt.

After interventions from our movement, with support from Dr. Ivor Baatjies, the school agreed to release the reports. With a lot of effort we can win these struggles each year, just as we can win struggles against evictions, but we should not have to struggle to defend our basic rights that are guaranteed to us in law.

We do not pay school fees because we have no money. Some children are going to school with nothing in the stomach. Sometimes the only income in the family comes from a father who is pushing the trolleys for the richer people at the shops. The women who are washing for richer people are earning R20 a day. The women who are working in factories are earning R250 a week. This is not even enough to pay for water and electricity. We are so much in struggle just to survive that we cannot pay school fees.

Kids from very poor homes are dropping out of school because they are being insulted because their parents can't pay their fees. They are called out and embarrassed in assembly. They are made to stand on chairs in class.

Some kids are coming from abusive homes. School should be a sanctuary for these children but they are being screamed at in school because their parents are poor. They are ill treated at home and in school. Often this bad treatment pushes our kids out of school. When our children are forced out of school they start to be with the wrong people and to do wrong things. They see no future for themselves and they become angry. They get mixed up in drugs and crime. They fall pregnant.

Our kids also count. All kids deserve to see a future.

Most of the poor kids that survive the Motala Heights School go on to Wye-bank Secondary School. At this school the process around fee exemptions is handled fairly. The problem with this school is the transport. The bus often comes late and the driver is reckless. When the bus comes late our children are locked out of the school for being late although it is not their fault. This is victimization of our children. There is also discrimination against our children

from some of the Wyebank residents. In 2009 they even stoned the bus bringing children from Motala Heights to Wyebank.

There are serious problems at the Nilgerie Secondary School in Marianhill. Kids are bringing weapons to school, even axes. Something needs to be done about this and very urgently.

The Motala Heights School needs to be extended all the way to matric. When we asked for this in the past we were told that there was no space to extend the school. In fact there is lots of space. It is owned by Mr. Walker and it is called Tanglewood Farm. A small section of this land needs to be expropriated so that the school can be extended. The interests of one land owner cannot come before the interests of a whole community. This is obvious.

We do what we can to look after the children in our community. This year, with the support of the Pinetown Minister's Fellowship, we organised a wonderful Christmas Party for all the kids of Motala Heights with a Mother Christmas and a toy for every child (educational and fun toys – no toy guns or knives or soldiers). The money that was left over from the party will go to buying school stationery for the poorest kids. But we need a lot more support. There should be a full time social worker for this community.

Our demands are:

1. All intimidation of poor children and their parents by the Motala Heights School must stop immediately.
2. All attempts to deny parents access to fee exemption forms, or to unfairly deny applications for fee exemption without any discussion or recourse, must stop.
3. When our children go back to school on 19 January 2011 no child should be excluded because their parents are poor.
4. A small section of Tanglewood Farm needs to be expropriated so that the Motala Heights School can be extended.
5. A full time social worker needs to be appointed for this community to look out for the kids and the old people here.

Every parent has a right to know what is going on at their kid's school, to have their kids treated fairly and to participate equally in the governing of the school. These rights are not just rights for the rich parents. They are rights for all parents. If these rights are not respected by the Motala Heights School we will take them to court and we will march on the school.

Mr. Shezi in the Education Department has always been very helpful to us. But it is very difficult for poor people to access the Department. Telephone calls and taxi fares are paid in money and we don't have money. Dr. Baatjies has contacted the Education Department for us and they have promised to look into things at this school and to report back to us.

As a movement we want to extend our deep thanks to Dr. Ivor Baatjies, who formerly worked with the Education Rights Project and the Paulo Freire Institute is now at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg, for his years of support for our struggle for equal education rights for all children in Motala Heights. Dr. Baatjies has informed us that CERT will be monitoring the Motala Heights School closely this year, especially when it comes to admitting children at the beginning of the new term. Dr. Baatjies is available to explain the law around education rights in South Africa and why the actions of the Motala Heights School are in gross violation of the law and basic education rights. He can be contacted.

Ricky Govender Threatens More Evictions

The notorious gangster landlord Ricky Govender has verbally threatened 42 poor families with eviction. He is claiming that he has sold the land that they are leasing to the municipality. He has said that he will deliver the eviction notices on the 15th of January. Since 2007 we have successfully stopped all his evictions and we will stop these evictions too. Some people have lived on this land in their own self built tin shacks for as long as 35 or 45 years.

Shamita Naidoo
David Pillay
Louisa Motha

10 JANUARY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Urgent Call for Journalists to Rush to Kennedy Road as Tensions Rise Again

Today Jackson Gumede, chairperson of the BEC of the local ANC in Clare Estate and Sydenham, brought people to begin work on an eThekweni Municipality cleanup project in the Kennedy Road settlement. This project was requested by the new democratically elected Kennedy Road Development Committee. The people that Gumede brought to begin work are ANC supporters, some from outside the settlement and others who are followers of Zandile Mdletshe, who, without election, took over the settlement after the state backed violence against Abahlali baseMjondolo in September 2009.

Some people at Kennedy Road, including elected community leaders, stopped Gumede's people from doing the work. They said that they have a right to insist on the democratic allocation of jobs (which has previously been achieved in the settlement either by lottery or by election) and that the local ANC has no right to only give work to their supporters.

Mdletshe phoned Officer Mqadi, the crime intelligence officer who was based full time at the settlement since 2008 and who was present during the whole night of the attacks in 2009. He is now at the settlement. The protesters demanded that he address them and explain his role. He is now with Mdletshe and her supporters at her home. It seems like he is protecting them.

There is now a big meeting in the community hall. Some of the people are now blaming Mdletshe for the attacks and the violent state backed removal of the elected committee in September 2009. Surprisingly some of the state witnesses in the Kennedy 12 case are leading the challenge to Zandile. They are saying that the violence in September 2009 was due to her and the local ANC. The people in the hall are demanding that the project managers from the Municipality come and address them, that Mdletshe stop trying to run the settlement without a democratic mandate and that Mqadi clarify his role in the settlement.

The violence in September 2009 began with a dispute over whether jobs in the settlement should be allocated by the local ANC or by the democratically elected community structure. If the ANC insist on misusing all development for their party political agenda there is a risk that there could be a new round of violence in the settlement. The last time that there was a democratic challenge to the ANC's assumption of a right to allocate jobs the party responded with violence.

We also note that yesterday Shamita Naidoo's water was illegally disconnected in the Motala Heights settlement and that her neighbours warned not to give her or her family any water. This is an act of intimidation directed by the local landlords who are trying to clear their way to evict the poor from Motala Heights. Our solidarity is with Shamita.

We call on the journalists to rush to the Kennedy Road settlement to witness the unfolding events for themselves. There is no doubt that the ANC and the police will lie about what has happened later so journalists should see things for themselves.

As with all emergency press statements some details in this statement may need to be corrected once events have calmed down.

the AbM office

16 JANUARY 2011

Press statement · Motala Heights Branch

Ricky Govender Bulldozes the Motala Heights Shembe Temple

The notorious gangster landlord Ricky Govender has bulldozed the Motala Heights Shembe Temple. This surprise attack on our community and our culture was carried out without warning or notification and we hereby give notice that we will not allow Ricky Govender to vandalize our community or our culture.

Govender started to level ground with a bulldozer on Thursday. He first flattened the wetland in lot 42, which is at the bottom of the valley along the main road. He then started to grade lots 50 and 51 which run up the side of the hill next to the shack settlement from the big houses in the valley. When Govender brings in the bulldozers to grade he always breaks water pipes, drainage pipes, electricity connections and even washing lines. This time was no different.

There are often disputes about who owns land in Motala Heights because of confusion arising from the time of the Group Areas Act. Some tenants have three different people claiming to be their landlords. As far as we can tell Govender has, for years, been taking land that does not belong to him and building houses that he then puts for rent. When we last went to Pietermaritzburg to check the title deeds lot 42 did not belong to Govender. We couldn't get any information for lot 50 but there was a whole long list of owners' for lot 51 and Govender's name was not on that list.

He claims that he brought in the bulldozers to grade this land because he is building 'low cost houses' that will cost R300 000 each. He claims that the eThekweni Municipality supports this development.

Govender must give the community proof that he has authorisation from the owners of this land and from the Municipality to develop this land.

On Friday afternoon Govender's bulldozer suddenly moved up the hill and bulldozed the Shembe Temple. There was no warning and no discussion with the community or with the Shembe Congregation. It looks like he decided that

while he had the bulldozer here he should just send it up the hill to destroy the Shembe Temple too. Ricky Govender, his brother Nelson, and an associate of theirs known as Paddy, were on the site when the bulldozing took place. When the driver of the bulldozer (Gwala) was challenged on what he had done he referred people to the owner of the bulldozer who referred people to Ricky Govender. The name of the company that owns the bulldozer is ANVH.

The Motala Heights Shembe Temple was first built in 1997 by Baba Dlamini who moved to Nazareth in 2006. The Shembe congregation here has worshiped at the Temple every Saturday since 1997 which makes thirteen years in total. This is scared ground.

Lindokuhle Magwaza of the Motala Heights Shembe congregation says:

“This is a disaster. It is very bad and we are very angry.”

Samukele Mngxati, chairperson of the Motala Heights A Branch says:

“We want to know why Ricky Govender is behaving like this. This is not the first time that he has tried to undermine or even destroy our community. He was behind the attempt to eradicate the shack settlement in 2006, he has tried to evict and intimidate many of our comrades in the tin houses and in December last year he stopped the Municipality from improving the road into our settlement (which was something we had fought for) by instructing the contractor to stop work while he was on site. He then got the contractor to drop the gravel that was meant for the public road leading to the shack settlement at his pub and used the gravel to improve the land outside his pub. We will not allow any more development for the rich in Motala Heights if there is no development for the poor. If the City is not willing to listen to us we will invade all this land graded by Govender and develop it ourselves for the poor, for the shack dwellers and tenants.”

James Pillay, spokesperson for the Motala Heights B branch says:

“If the government fails to deliver to us we will invade the land and develop it ourselves. We need houses and we cannot stand by while we are ignored and all the land is taken by the rich and for the rich. Everyone on this farm needs to have a decent house.”

Bheki Ngcobo, former Chairperson of the Motala Heights A branch says:

“Nothing must happen here in Motala Heights without us being consulted. As Abahlali always says ‘Nothing for us without us.’ We cannot accept this.”

Shamita Naidoo, Chairperson of the Motala Heights B Branch says:

“Last year there was a threat to destroy a Hindu Temple in Marianhill. [Deputy Mayor] Logie Naidoo said that there can be no demolition of any religious building unless it is neglected. That Temple was then saved from demolition. The Shembe Temple is sacred ground for the Shembe congregation and it must also be saved. No one has a right to just bulldoze some one’s sacred place.”

A meeting and prayer service was held on the site of the desecrated Temple today. It was decided to rebuild the Temple and the Temple has been rebuilt. It was also decided that on Monday:

1. A delegation will go to get a legal opinion on the legality of Govender’s destruction of the Temple.
2. A delegation will take this matter to the elders of the Shembe church.
3. A delegation will take this matter to the eThekweni Municipality.
4. We will assemble at the Temple on Monday morning and we will not allow it to be destroyed again.

On Tuesday, when the children return to school, we will be monitoring all the schools in this area to ensure that no poor children are excluded from school because their parents can’t pay school fees.

Lindokuhle Magwaza, Motala Heights Shembe Congregation
 Samukele Mngxati, Chairperson of the Motala Heights A Branch
 Shamita Naidoo, Chairperson of the Motala Heights B Branch
 Bheki Ngcobo, Former Chairperson of the Motala Heights A Branch
 James Pillay, Spokesperson of the Motala Heights B Branch

19 JANUARY 2011

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

ABM WC Will Attend the Conference for a Democratic Left

As Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape we have decided to support the call for a Conference for a Democratic Left (CDL). We note that the CDL has issued statements in support of our movement when we have been under attack from reactionary forces and that the CDL has declared that it aims to build a democratic alliance of progressive forces that is committed to a bottom up transformation of society.

It is obvious that the various forces that wish to build a society centered on human dignity rather than private profit should work together as closely as is possible. However if any attempt to build this unity is to succeed it must be aware of certain pitfalls.

Previous attempts to unite the social movements failed because they were not democratic and because they were dominated by authoritarian NGOs rather than the social movements themselves. This needs to be avoided in the future and left NGOs need to understand that their role is to support and not to dominate grassroots organisations. Left NGOs need to understand that we are poor and not stupid.

There is also a serious problem of sectarianism in the South African left. Some individuals are willing to go so far as to actively support the state against popular movements that refuse their authority. This is disgraceful and can only do damage to our struggles. No one should think that they control an organisation or a place for life.

Most of our members have decided to become activists because they are sick and tired of being ladders for politicians. They trust our movement because we ask people to believe in themselves and not someone with personal ambitions. Most of our members will not trust the CDL if it decides to become a political party.

We will attend the Conference for a Democratic Left with an open mind and a willingness to work with anyone who is committed to the emancipation of the oppressed. We will continue to support this project for as long as:

1. It remains genuinely democratic.
2. It respects the autonomy of the movements that participate in its discussions.
3. It does not try to impose NGO control over grassroots movements.
4. It clearly and firmly rejects sectarianism.
5. It does not become a political party.
6. It remains committed to a bottom up transformation of society.
7. It orientates itself to the mass struggles that are already being waged by ordinary people in communities and work places.

We note that ABM in KwaZulu-Natal has decided not to attend the conference and that they are waiting to see how the CDL relates to grassroots formations in practice before taking any decisions. We respect their decision and they respect our decision. We note also that the Poor People's Alliance's has not taken any general position on the CDL. Our primary commitment remains to the Poor People's Alliance.

24 JANUARY 2011

Press statement · eMmaus Branch

Six Families Threatened With Unlawful Eviction in eMmaus

On Friday last week the Mahogany Ridge Property Owners' Association sent a security guard to a small new occupation in eMmaus (which is near to Motata Heights in Pinetown). Six families having been living on that land since October last year. The security guard gave them eviction letters and instructed them to leave that day and said that if they did not leave their shacks would be demolished today.

Minutes ago the security guard returned to eMmaus and asked the people why they are still living there. They told him that they are living there for the same reason that they occupied the land in the first place – they have nowhere else to go. He said that he was going to fetch the police to immediately return to demolish their shacks.

It is clear that there is a concerted assault on the new land occupations in this area. But neither the police nor the private security companies nor the landowners seem to understand that even if an occupation is new it still protected by the law and any eviction without a court order is an illegal and criminal act.

This is a small settlement, only six families, so we are mobilising nearby comrades to join them and help them to defend their homes. We are also seeking legal support to interdict the Mahogany Ridge Property Owners' Association, the police and the private security company from illegally evicting these families.

The state has failed to house the poor. Last year the eThekweni Municipality built just over half the number of houses that they had promised to build each year. The province has failed so badly in its house building work that Tokyo Sexwale has taken their budget away from them.

When the state is failing to house the people the people have a clear right to house themselves on unused land. This is common sense.

Khanyi Dlamuka

18 FEBRUARY 2011

Emergency press statement · eMmaus Branch

Theft of Building Material in eMmaus

A company called Africon is currently stealing shack dwellers' building materials in eMmaus, Pinetown. An employee of Africon, known as Mkhize, is leading this corporate thuggery. Khanyi Dlamuka, a young lady, has had to face this tyranny on her own in the small settlement at eMmaus as other residents are at work. However other comrades are rushing to eMmaus to support her.

Mkhize refuses to say where he is taking the building material. He has already taken six bakkie loads full.

The company that owns this land and which was stopped for illegally evicting the residents, the Mahogany Ridge Property Owners' Association, has also erected a dangerous electric fence around the land. There are children living in this settlement and it is an extremely reckless act by this company to erect an electric fence in a place where children live and play.

Khanyi Dlamuka

8 MARCH 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Intimidation of Grassroots Activists Continues in Kennedy Road & Motala Heights

At about 10:30 a.m. on Sunday the 20th of February Nozuko Hulushe, the chairperson of Abahlali baseMjondolo in the Kennedy Road settlement, went to fetch water. She was accosted by a man that she had never seen before. He rudely and aggressively demanded to wash his face in her bucket of water and she refused. After she finished he washed his face at the tap and then insulted her and assaulted her.

While he was assaulting her he made threats to her relating to the Kennedy 12 court case, her leadership role in Abahlali baseMjondolo, the fact that the ANC has lost the settlement (to a democratically elected structure with very close links to Abahlali baseMjondolo) and the press statements that the movement has issued after previous assaults on and intimidation of Abahlali baseMjondolo members in the settlement and witnesses in the ongoing Kennedy 12 trial. He specifically warned Nozuko not to ‘run to the media and to the police every time she got problems.

While the assault, and its associated threats, was occurring a friend of Nozuko’s, Nonhle Mkhize, took her own bucket off her head and rushed to Nozuko’s aid. The stranger immediately began to beat her on her face and head. After a while he took off his sandals and hit her with his shoes and punched her on her face and body. Nonhle was able to grab a stick and Nozuko grabbed a bottle and together they managed to fight their attacker off and he fled. They were both left with serious bruises and cuts.

Nozuko immediately phoned the new (and democratically elected) Kennedy Road Development Committee (KRDC) and the police. The KRDC arrived straight away and the police came much later. Detective Mazibuko entered the incident in his Occurrence Book. Because the man who had attacked Nozuko and then her friend Nonhle was not from Kennedy Road the KRDC asked people to look out for him so that he could be identified.

At 6 pm that evening he was seen at Zandile Mdletshe's place together with Zandile, her brothers and George Mduduzi Cele, who is Zibuyile Ngcobo's cousin. Mdletshe was the leader of the unelected ANC group that seized control of the settlement after the attack by an armed and drunk mob chanting ANC and ethnic slogans in September 2009 and she has been identified in court as a person who played a key role in the attack. Ngcobo is a well known ANC member and a member of the local BEC of the ANC. Mdletshe and Ngcobo have a well documented history of violence and intimidation in the settlement.

On Monday when Nozuko was returning from the doctor she saw her attacker again – this time he was at Zibuyile Ngcobo's place. Zandile Mdletshe was there too. Nozuko's attacker has recently been staying at Zandile's place regularly but he is from a hostel in KwaMashu.

On Saturday 5 March Zandile Mdletshe was handing out food vouchers to her friends and relatives in Kennedy Road. These vouchers were allocated for disaster relief after some shacks were damaged in the big storm that hit Kwa-MamSuthu (the Quarry Road shack settlement) in Ward 23. The KRDC made a note of all the details and has made a full report to the public protector. This is just one incident in a very long line of incidents of blatant corruption. Will any action be taken? Or will the elites once again defend this sort of corruption and intimidation because they depend on it to keep their place in this world?

The intimidation of community leaders is not only happening in Kennedy Road. In Motala Heights, in Pinetown, Ricky Govender continues his blatant thuggery, sometimes with the open support of the Pinetown police. Govender has a long history of intimidating activists, tenants and even journalists. Yet there is no inquiry into his actions and nothing is done to force him to obey the law. A few weeks ago he even laid charges against five well known Abahlali baseMjondolo activists at the Pinetown Police station. The five were Mashumi Figlan, Shamita Naidoo, Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Bheki Ngcobo and James Pillay. He took a list of newspapers articles that exposed his thuggery to the police and asked them to arrest the AbM members that had spoken to the media. There could hardly be a clearer case of a rich, powerful and dangerous man trying to misuse the state to silence his poor critics when his own intimidation has failed to do so.

Yesterday Govender went, with the police at this side as if they are his personal security, to the new land occupation in Motala Heights and told the people

there that they must sign statements saying that Motala Heights B Chairperson Shamita Naidoo had sold the land to them. Of course no one paid for this land. It is unused land that was occupied by people that had been evicted from their homes by their landlords and who have nowhere else to go. Govender is also claiming that this land is his when in fact it belongs to the Municipality. This was definitively ascertained before the occupation was organized and we have checked again and the land in question remains municipal property. It is clear that Govender is trying to persuade the police that they should open a criminal case against Shamita Naidoo and that she is responsible for the fact that homeless people have built their own homes in Motala.

Govender then went to the home of James and Gonnie Pillay. He has been trying to evict them for years without success and they have suffered all kinds of intimidation including an attempt at arson. This time he came with some very aggressive and insulting men from pest control who told Uncle James that his poor man's house was dirty and that pests were moving from there to Govender's rich man's house and so they would have to bulldoze everything in the interests of public hygiene. This is outrageous. It is Govender that has been illegally dumping industrial waste right outside the Pillay's home for years. It is Govender whose bulldozers burst open the municipal pipes and left open sewerage running through the community when the Shembe Temple was recently destroyed. It is Govender that is making a mess in this community.

Govender has now also brought the piece of land on which Shamita Naidoo and 25 other poor families are living. Some have lived there for as long as 65 years. He is saying that "I will show Shamita who is the mayor here". He is using his money to try and get control over the community.

As a movement we note that there is a big discussion about corruption in the media. It is said that senior officials like Mike Sutcliffe will be arrested soon. We will finish and issue a statement on this matter soon. But right now we need to note that we have constantly made statements about corruption and the intimidation that goes with it in places like Kennedy Road and Motala Heights, as well as Joe Slovo, Siyanda etc, without anything changing. It seems very clear that people like Ricky Govender and Zandile Mdletshe are not lying when they say that they have backing from the top down. Sutcliffe and other officials keep

saying that if corruption is brought to them they will act. We have been constantly ignored during more than five years of pointing out corruption. All that has happened is that we have suffered serious repression.

We also note that there is a big discussion about threats to press freedom and censorship but that very few people are willing to be in a living and practical solidarity with people like Nozuko Hulushe and Shamita Naidoo who face real and constant danger as a direct result of the work that they do in their communities. There is a tendency to talk about abstract principles while ignoring real people and real communities that are being oppressed year after year. We are asking for solidarity, real solidarity, with people like Nozuko and Shamita.

People like Govender and Mdletshe might have support from the top down. They might have politicians and police officers that are supporting them. But we have support from the bottom up.

Abahlali baseMjondolo gives Ricky Govender notice that we will not allow anyone to be evicted from this new land that he has bought with his dirty money and that we will shine a very bright light on any act of intimidation or exploitation against the 25 families living there. We also give Ricky Govender notice of our continued determination to ensure that Motala is developed democratically, in the interests of the whole community, and not by one man for his own private interests. We will walk this journey and face its dangers with Shamita Naidoo and all the comrades in Motala Heights. We will continue to invite the progressive clergy, academics and journalists to come to Motala and to see the situation there for themselves.

We also give the ANC notice that we will not allow them to continue to use violence, corruption and intimidation to try and retain some influence in Kennedy Road. The ANC took Kennedy Road by violence and they held it for a while with violence and corruption. But they lost it to democracy and it will remain democratic. In fact we still have to extend the democratic gains that have been made in Kennedy Road until everyone has the same right to organise freely and safely and the exiles can return home in safety. This will require that an end is put to the politic of violence that the ANC brought to the settlement and continues to use in the settlement despite the fact that their leaders have lost control of the settlement. We will walk this journey and face its dangers with Nozuko Hulushe and all the comrades in Kennedy Road.

Women like Nozuko and Shamita do hours and hours of unpaid work in their communities – organising for housing, getting children into schools, starting and running crèches and vegetable gardens, mediating conflicts, stopping evictions, looking after the old and the sick, organising Christmas parties for the children and much, much more. Women like Nozuko and Shamita are izimbokodo – the rocks on which our communities and movements are built. What kind of a country are we living in where people like this face assault, intimidation and police harassment at the hands of state backed thugs be they poor men from hostels or rich men from big houses?

It remains clear that as the poor we are not living in a democracy. It is a matter of urgent importance that this reality is recognized. No attempt to build a national politics of the poor in this country will succeed until it is understood that there is no democracy for the poor in this country and action and solidarity are organized from within an understanding of that reality.

People like Mdletshe and Govender are the local Mubaraks to the ANC's America. We are the people. We know what we must do. We pray for the strength and courage to be able to do it.

Abahlali baseMjondolo

9 MARCH 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Ayikho impunga yehlathi

(There is no place to hide in the world)

The truth shall conquer; we will destroy all kinds of propaganda and attacks on our movement with the truth.

We wish to welcome the outcome of the report of the Auditor General and to salute the work of Ngubane and Company in responding to the calls made by our movement and by fellow South Africans over many years to rescue our city from corrupt politicians and officials.

Across South Africa so-called 'housing delivery' has become a way for politicians, party members and their friends and families to enrich themselves. Across South Africa poor people are in rebellion again this corruption of the promise that there shall be land and housing for all. Across South Africa poor people are in rebellion against this corruption of democracy. A refusal to accept corruption is often a main reason why people take to the streets.

We have always disputed the widely circulated reports hailing eThekweni as the best run municipality in the country. How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when so many people are living like pigs in the mud and burning in fires year after year? How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when there are so many forced removals to human dumping grounds? How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when it is taken as a crime when people want to think and speak for themselves? How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when the poor must suffer illegal evictions, illegal bans on their protests and illegal beatings and arrests at the hands of the state? How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when politicians, officials and party members don't even try to hide their corruption from ordinary people? How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when business people like Ricky Govender can freely vandalise Motala Heights and its people year after year and Nandi Mandela can be so blatantly corrupt in Siyanda. How can eThekweni be a well run municipality when councillors like Derek Dimba can be so corrupt in Mpola? How can

eThekwinini be a well run municipality when local ANC leaders like Ma'Mjoli in Foreman Road, Zandile Mdletshe in Kennedy Road and Jackson Gumede in Lacey Road can get away with such obvious corruption and even demand party cards for people to access emergency support? How can eThekwinini be a well run municipality when armed mobs can freely drive people from their homes and their community for the crime of having demanded that the ANC recognise their dignity as human beings?

We have been reporting corruption and mobilising against corruption for years. But because we have always been considered as people who do not count in our society our claims were always dismissed with contempt. But now the war lord and tender entrepreneur who governed the city by himself in the name of democracy has died leaving his comrades with disgrace and shame.

We have lived almost all our lives in the shacks, our children being burnt to death in shack fires, our children being bitten to death by rats. Our people suffer in that poisonous environment where there are no refuse collections, where there is no adequate water and sanitation. Land access and land security are always the talk of the day but there is never any real action. We are very sad when we think about all these sufferings as part of our daily struggle for survival to hear that a minimum of R532 million of rate payers' money has gone missing in the so called best run municipality in the country. Our most basic demands to be treated with respect and dignity, to be housed, have often been violently attack by boss Sutcliffe who stand accused of these corrupt activities. This is the same Sutcliffe who has illegally banned our marches, sent the police out to beat us, lied about us, been complicit with the attack on our movement and refused to investigate any of the many cases of obvious and public corruption that we have brought forward.

The time for dirty party politic and propaganda is over. Abahlali believe that the Mayor should also be held liable for this huge corruption. His volunteering to head the special investigation in to his own city's conduct is childish and should not be allowed. How can he honestly investigate his own comrades? In fact as the Mayor he should be the first person to answer to these allegations. So, we strongly suggest that he refrains from interfering with this investigation. He should vacate the mayoral office pending the investigation. There is no doubt that people like Cogi Pather and Nigel Gumede are also fully responsible. Our office has engaged with them on numerous occasions to report alleged

corruption and misallocation of RDP homes from our own settlements without any success. Gumede has always beaten about bushes when we ask for meetings with him. He would even ask his personal assistant not to acknowledge letters that we write to him. He knows that we are even aware of our own neighbours who have received homes simple because they are his own comrades in Mount Moria. We have read in Ilanga newspaper that Gumede is now calling for people with evidence of such corrupt activities to come forward. He speaks as if people have not been reporting corruption to his deaf ears for years and years. Why is the Siyanda corruption in the Khulula Housing Project still not investigated if Gumede is serious? Why is the case of Busisiwe Gule of Joe Slovo and her neighbours who are still living in shacks when their homes were built and given to others still not attended to after all these years? Why have certain individuals in Kennedy Road settlement been given homes before their turn come with the rest of the community? Why do the people of Richmond Farm still live in transit camps despite the court ruling that said that they can only stay there for one year? Why has nothing been done about the people who are still suck in the Ridge View transit camp years after their houses were corrupted and given to the wrong people? This is just to mention a few of the very many cases of corruption that we have taken to this municipality over the years without getting any result. After all these years we are still waiting for answers from Gumede.

Sutcliffe, Pather, Gumede and Mlaba and all the others need to learn that in a democracy you don't only account to your comrades. In fact you don't only account to auditing firms. In a democracy politicians and officials must also account to ordinary citizens like shack dwellers, like street traders, like domestic workers and like security guards. Sutcliffe, Pather, Gumede and Mlaba and all the others must all go and they must all go now.

The reason why our movement was attacked in Kennedy Road in September 2009 on the order of the war lord who has now died leaving his comrades exposed is well known. We were attacked because we were exposing corrupt councillors, organising the unorganised and running our own projects such as crèches, clinics, feeding schemes, community gardens. We were attacked because we were creating job opportunities for the unemployed. We were attacked because we were fighting nepotism, comradism, and the politicization of service delivery. We were attacked because we organised ourselves outside of the control of the party and its councillors. We were attacked because we thought

that urban planning should be a bottom up and not a top down project. And, yes, we were attacked because we challenged the constitutionality of the then Slums Act which humiliated the Provincial Legislature. We were attacked because we took this democracy seriously. We were attacked because we believed that we had the same right as any other person to think and speak and act for ourselves in this democracy and because we acted on that belief day after day and year after year.

The only way to be poor and to remain safe in this country is to limit your participation in this democracy to voting in elections. The day that you decide to organise yourself and to express yourself outside of party structures and elections is the day that you must give up your safety.

Today we say again that we are prepared to face the consequences of speaking the truth about corruption in this city. The price that we have paid, the price we continue to pay can not compromise our future. Corruption is a disgrace for our hard won democracy. Our province has to return millions of Rands to the National Treasury because it could not spend that money while we suffer in the shacks. This is also a great concern for our movement.

We invite all those who are serious about rooting out corruption and who are honestly prepared to work for our country to join us on this journey as we work for a society that recognises the humanity and the dignity of every person.

Abahlali baseMjondolo

10 MARCH 2011

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Statement of Solidarity with the Haitian People

Abahlali baseMjondolo Statement of Solidarity with the Haitian People

When we began our struggle in 2005 we said that struggle was a school. We declared that each settlement was not just a land occupation that had been organised under apartheid and that now had to defend itself against a democratically elected state aiming to drive the poor out of the cities. We declared that each settlement was also a community and, when it was democratised and people were freely discussing their lives and struggles together and as equals, it was also a kind of popular university.

We have learnt many lessons in the school of our struggle. Some of these lessons have been bitter. We always knew that we were the people that did not count. But when we started our struggle we thought that if we could raise our voices loudly enough, that if we could go over the BECs and Ward Councillors, that national government would hear our voices. But we learnt that the politicians at all levels took our request to be heard and our demand for dignity as criminal. We learnt that it was not just the Yacoob Baigs of this world that will not allow poor people to be part of the discussions that shape our society. We learnt that it was also Nigel Gumede, John Mchunu and Willies Mchunu. We learnt, by their silence, that the hatred of an independent politics of the poor goes to the very top of this society.

We learnt that when you are a poor person your attempts to speak for yourself, to participate in decision making and to be a citizen rather than a 'beneficiary' of development that never comes or, if it does, may take you to a transit camp, is taken as criminal. We learnt that a simple request to be heard and to be taken seriously will be answered with insults, lies, rubber bullets, jail and torture. We learnt that there are many forces in civil society that, just like the politicians, want followers and not comrades and are very frightened of the idea of the poor organising the poor. We learnt that civil society is often much more

connected to the state than to the people. Almost everywhere our modest demands, our demands for our basic needs to be met, our demands to be treated as human beings, to be treated with dignity, were received with contempt, insults and violence.

In our university we discussed our own situation. We discussed the history of the struggles of the poor in Durban. We discussed housing policy. We discussed how best to organise ourselves. We also discussed the struggles of the poor in other countries – in Zimbabwe, in India, in Brazil and in Haiti.

It was immediately clear to us that the Haitian people have been denied democracy. They have been denied the right to elect their own leaders and to shape their own future. This denial of their right to democracy has come from the Haitian elites, from the American state, from the governments of France and Britain and from some of the big NGOs that are tied to elites in Haiti and in America and Europe. It is clear that all of these elites are agreed that the Haitian people can only be allowed to have democracy for as long as they vote for their own oppression. When they vote for their own dignity their right to democracy is immediately removed and it is removed with violence.

Our right to democracy has also been removed with violence. We have learnt that it is common for democracy to be denied as soon as poor people want to participate in a democracy as equals, as people that think and that count like all other people, rather than just as followers of some or other politician or party.

In 2007 and 2008 we organised a day of solidarity with Haiti. We watched videos sent to us by the Haitian Action Committee and we discussed those videos. In 2008 we were able to have long discussions with Jacques Depelchin who has spent time with Fanmi Lavalas, the Haitian movement, and with Abahlali baseMjondolo in South Africa. In 2009 some of our comrades stayed with Peter Hallward in London. Peter Hallward wrote a book on Haiti called *Damming the Flood* and that book is in our library. It is one of the books that we were able to save during the attack on our movement in September 2009. In that book there is an interview with Jean-Bertrand Aristide. We have discussed that interview in depth. We were also able to save copies of Aristide's own books like *In the Parish of the Poor*.

We have talked about liberation theology and why it is that some of the churches are more able to recognise the equal humanity of the poor than some parts of civil society. We concluded that it is because civil society usually sees

the poor as ignorant and in need of top down education while some churches see that every person has a spark of the divine fire burning inside them and so they see the poor as human beings that are oppressed and who should be joined in a struggle for justice.

We invited Aristide to meet with us more than once but we were told that he has not been allowed to talk politics here in South Africa. But we have read his words and they are pure Abahlalism. It is a politic of dignity. He says that "Everything comes back, in the end, to the simple principle that tout moun se moun – every person is indeed a person, every person is capable of thinking things through for themselves." This is also our politic.

The Haitian government has given Jean-Bertrand Aristide a visa to return home. It is being said that it is the government of our own country that is now denying him the right to return home. If this is true that would make the government of South Africa the ally of the elites in Haiti, in America and in Europe that are denying the Haitian people the right to democracy.

We noted the silence of our government when the people of Tunisia, then Egypt and then Libya took to the streets of their countries to demand dignity and freedom. We have noted the silence of our government when popular protest here in South Africa is banned, put down with police violence and protesters are tortured and even killed. We have noted how when our government does speak about the struggles of the poor it speaks to show them as violent, short minded and a result of the people being used by cunning agitators with evil intentions. We have noted that our government is unable to understand that people cannot forever accept that they must live, like pigs in mud, with fire, with rape, with hunger, with leaders that are imposed from the top down and without hope. We have noted the silence of our government in the face of our demand for an independent enquiry into the armed attack on our movement in September 2009 and the ongoing intimidation of our members in the Kennedy Road settlement which has included violence and death threats and resulted in more than forty families being driven from their homes.

Almost a year ago we marched on Jacob Zuma. We took our demands, in our thousands, to his office. The response has been silence, a year of silence. We are under no illusions about this government. Nevertheless we, once again, address ourselves to this government, a government that, what ever its flaws, remains an elected government. Our demands are clear and they are just.

1. Allow Jean-Bertrand Aristide to return home and issue a statement of unequivocal support for the Haitian people to freely elect their own leaders and to shape their own future.

2. Ensure that all the people that were driven from Kennedy Road by the local ANC can return in safety and issue a statement of unequivocal support for all South Africans to be able to organise and to mobilise independently of the ANC if that is their choice. Institute an independent enquiry into the attack on Kennedy Road.

3. Organise an independent enquiry into how the police are responding to popular protest in South Africa with a particular focus on the killing of protesters.

We call on the poor people's movements, trade unions, progressive churches and those parts of civil society that understand that democracy is not a debate between experts but that it is a free and open discussion between all people to join with us in support of these demands. We will organise a small demonstration in support of the right of the Haitian people to govern themselves. Details will be announced soon.

S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo President
Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary

17 MARCH 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Press Statement for 21st March 2011 (Human Rights Day)

On the 21 March 2011 Abahlali baseMjondolo Western Cape will have a mass rally at VE informal Settlement at 10:00 till 13:00.

The aim of the rally is to launch our campaign for the 2011 local government elections, which is: No! Land No! House No! Water No! Electricity No! Jobs No! Vote.

As much as this day was supposed to be celebrated as a Human Rights Day in South Africa and having one of the best constitution in the world which recognised the socio economic rights.

As ordinary citizen of this country we find it frustrating and disappointing to see that there is a huge gape between the constitution of this country and with its citizen because in reality South African government does not adhere to it's constitutional obligation to provide it's citizen with basic rudimental services such as: WATER, ELECTRICITY, TOILETS AND HOUSING.

Instead of providing people who can not afford to pay municipal rates with sufficient water they cut off people's water and instead of building houses for the poor they demolish people's houses and evict people to the edge of the city.

More than 15 communities across the city of Cape Town will join ABM WC to say No! To Capitalist Democracy. No! To ANC, DA, ID, COPE, UDM policies that lead to water cut offs, electricity cut offs and forced evictions.

The Rally is going to endorse number of activities/ programmes that the movement is going to take/ implement during its NO! LAND NO! HOUSE NO! VOTE CAMPAIGN

Mzonke or our admin

18 MARCH 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March on Mlaba & Sutcliffe 21 March 2011

Abahlali baseMjondolo to March on the KwaZulu/Natal Premier on Human Rights Day

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA will be marching to the Durban City Hall on Monday, 21 March which is Human Rights Day. We will be joining other movements, organisations, communities and citizens and individuals of Durban and surrounding communities including street traders, flat dwellers, farm dwellers and shack dwellers. Together we will deliver a clear message to Mlaba, Sutcliffe and Naidoo that they have corrupted this city for too long and that their time is up.

We will be marching to end the incredible corruption in this city. We will be marching to force Mlaba and his corrupt and brutal council to vacate their offices pending the investigation into the 3.7 Billion Rand that they are alleged to have corrupted. Our central demand is clear: "They must all go!"

We will also be marching for land and housing in our cities. We will be marching for an end to the amatins and to all forced evictions. We will be marching for the right to organise freely and in safety. There has never been any respect for the human rights of shack dwellers and the poor in this city and we will be marching, once again, to affirm our equal humanity and our demand for equal dignity.

For too long our movement has been treated with disrespect and shame. For too long our demands have not been taken seriously. For too long we have been made to live in substandard houses without secure land, electricity and toilets. For too long the politicians have lied to us without conscience and treated us with contempt. For too long we have organised without being able to enjoy the right to free expression in our own city.

The politicians would like Human Rights Day to be just another day on which our human rights are violated by greedy politicians. We have engaged the government at all levels, including the Zuma office, without success. It is

clear that we have not earned the respect of the politicians because we cannot buy their respect. Today we have decided to take it upon ourselves to demand that respect. Today we have decided to take our struggle back to street where our real power lies. We are determined to affirm, assert and defend our dignity.

Today it has become clear why the shack dwellers remain in poverty and in the shacks year after year while Government issues the housing budget every year. Today it has become clear why the eThekweni municipality continues to ignore us. The reasons for the attack on our movement and for the bans on our marches each time we raise these issues have become clear. The reasons for Nigel Gumede avoiding meeting with our leadership has become clear. The corrupted 3.7 Billion Rand is the answer.

Today is the time for accountability. Today is the time for rate payers' money to be returned by those who have corrupted it. Today is the time for corrupted RDP homes to be returned to their rightful owners. Today is the time for an end to all corruption in this municipality. It is the time for free and safe organizing in our settlements to begin. As long as the politicians and officials continue treating us with such brutality we will remain organised in our streets. We are warning Sutcliffe and Mlaba that we will not be intimidated by their police, their lies or the ongoing intimidation of our members by local ANC leaders and business men allied to the party.

Abahlali in Durban, just like our Western Cape sisters who we fully support, remain too proud of our vote to give it to corrupt politicians. We thus say "No Land! No House! No Respect! No Vote!" This is a campaign that we will stand by until radical changes happen. We support the call that Abahlali of the Western Cape will be launching on Monday to ensure that the politicians do not play fouls with our people. Our people can no longer be deceived.

Our march will leave from King DinuZulu Park (formerly Botha Park) and proceed to the Durban City Hall from 9 am to 12 pm.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (Abahlali spokesperson)

Bandile Mdlalose (Abahlali Secretary) or at the Abahlali office

26 MARCH 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March on the uGu District Mayor

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A

March on the uGu District Mayor to Demand that Nomusa Dube Extend Her Investigation into Corruption to the Vulamehlo Municipality

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A is a social movement that fights to protect and promote the interests of the poor in S.A. While our movement works hard to build and to sustain democratic structures in our communities, to organise our own community controlled projects and to secure land and housing in our cities we also work hard to partner with all government departments and development agencies that are willing to help to better the lives of our communities and to get rid of corruption wherever necessary.

We have recently welcomed the promise made by Ms. Nomusa Dube, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in KwaZulu-Natal, to investigate corruption in the eThekweni Municipality without fear or favour. We have made it clear that we have numerous cases of corruption to report to her investigation and that we are willing to offer our full support to her investigation.

But the problems are not just in the eThekweni Municipality. The situation is also very bad in Pietermaritzburg, in Howick, in Tongaat, and in many other places. For so many years our communities who live in rural areas have not been respected and acknowledged as South African citizens equal to all other citizens. There are serious problems in the Vulamehlo Local Municipality which falls under the Ugu District Municipality between Umzinto and Umkomaas on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. On several times we have raised our concerns with the Manager of the Vulamehlo Local Municipality. Our voices have not been heard. His eyes remain closed to us. The situation in the Vulamehlo Municipality is very bad. The poor are not recognised in this Municipality.

As a movement we have always been aware that what the poor have been promised in terms of human rights and service delivery is not enough for a

dignified life. Of course it would be much better to live safely and freely in a well located RDP house than to be repressed in a shack and therefore we struggle for rights to be made real and promises to be kept. But we always remember that these promises are only promises to help the poor to survive poverty and that they are not promises to share the land, cities and wealth of the country and to end poverty. We always keep a bigger vision of justice in mind as we struggle for small victories here and there.

The government cannot deny us the right to hold it accountable to its own promises and its own laws. They cannot say that because they are elected they are representing the will of the people when they are breaking their own promises and laws. We will hold them to their own promises and laws while always being aware that the struggle for dignity – for equality, justice and freedom – must never be reduced to a struggle for human rights and service delivery. We will take a slice of bread but we will not forget that we deserve the full loaf.

The dignities of the poor have not been recognised in the Vulamehlo Municipality as demanded by the Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution. We as Abahlali baseMjondolo feel that we are not honoured and respected by the Vulamehlo Municipality and that it does not respect the Constitution. This Municipality is violating our Human Rights as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. Section 26 of the Constitution states that housing is a fundamental Human Right but this municipality and its council has not met that obligation and it has also violated section 10 of the S.A Constitution in the Bill of rights.

We are also aware that we have been misled by the Municipality and its councillors who have given us false information about the development that is supposed to take place in our community. According to the IDP we have found that development is supposed to have already taken place in Wards 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. But in fact no development has happened in these wards! This Municipality does not even use its own drafted policy document of service delivery which is in the IDP. So this municipality does not follow the Municipality Systems Act no 32 of 2000 Section 35 which stipulates that an IDP adopted by the council of a Municipality is the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development as well as decision with regard to planning management and development in the Municipality. It binds the Municipality in the exercise of its executive authority.

When ever poor people make it clear that we will not accept oppression we are shown to be criminals. Yet it is the Vulamehlo Municipality that does not respect the law and the Constitution.

We have also noted that there is serious corruption that is going on, especially in the allocation houses for the poor in Dududu. There are about 20 people that have been given houses according to the Municipality while in reality they are still living in informal housing structures hoping that one day they will get houses and not being aware that their houses have been corrupted away. Housing is a dream that will never come true for them without the intervention of the MEC of COGTA, Ms Nomusa Dube.

So therefore we call on the MEC to investigate on these matters that have been raised by the community of Dududu. We want to know what happened to the projects that appear in the IDP on page 116 – 118 of the SDBIP. We are also concerned about the fact that tenders are all being given to one company used as a service provider by this municipality. What happened to the tax payer's money that was allocated for Vulamehlo Projects? The budget is there on paper but not in practice. Houses are built and delivered on paper but no on the round.

There are not even any projects for the youth, women and other vulnerable groups in this municipality.

So therefore we would like the MEC to intervene to this matter as a matter of urgency. We are demanding that the uGu District Mayor must respond to us with 14 days after our protest on the 28th of March 2011

Our protest will start from Mjundwini Community Hall from 8am and proceed to the Dududu police station where the Memorandum will be handed over at 12.

Bandile Mdlalose
Abahlali baseMjondolo (Secretary General)
Sphiwe Mbhele
uMjundwini Community Committee

14 APRIL 2011

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Protest Day 2: The call for Madikizela, MEC for Human Settlement to resign continues tomorrow

PROTEST DAY TWO

TIME: 10: AM TILL 12: PM

Tomorrows protest will be lead by QQ informal settlements to call on Madikizela to sign an undertaking that he will not ever again demolish people's structure or evict people without any order from the court or to resign.

THE PROTEST WILL START@ KEIZERSGRACHT STREET, CAPE TOWN. (NEXT TO CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)

Nompumezo Nyakatyha ABM WC admin
Mzonke Poni ABM WC Chairperson

About QQ informal settlements call: Mthobeli Qona

SOLIDARITY STATEMENT

ABM WC condemns today's evictions at E – Section, Khayelitsha carried by Transnet, we are so disappointed by the Magistrate who granted such eviction order without taking into consideration of the impact of the eviction order.

It is so disappointing to see that there are still Magistrates in this country who issues eviction order that leads lead to homeless, as we believe that it is the responsibility of the court to ensure that the human dignity is respected and protected (an eviction that lead to homelessness that undermines the human dignity). The owner of the house who was evicted today she does not have any alternative accommodation and as a results of that today she is going to sleep out side her house.

Mncedisi Twalo AEC
Mzonke Poni ABM WC

21 APRIL 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

No Freedom for the Forgotten

On the 27th April the whole country will be asked to commemorate the seventeenth year of so called “Freedom”.

We cannot forget that many people died and fought hard and with courage and determination to gain this freedom from apartheid. We honour those people all the time. Many of our members struggled in trade unions and in community organisations. We have members whose ancestors fought in the war fought from the Nkandla forest and in the rebellion on Nguza Hill. The struggle against apartheid is our struggle.

But we have a clear understanding of what that struggle was for and it was not just to replace white politicians with black politicians. That struggle was not just to force white business to take on some black partners. That struggle was to ensure that South Africa belongs, really belongs, to all who live in it. That struggle was to ensure that there would be land and housing for all, that the doors of learning and culture would be opened to all and that there would be work for all. That struggle was for equality, to ensure that every person counts and that every person counts the same.

It is so sad to still hear and see that seventeen years after the end of apartheid there are millions of people who are ‘forgotten’ and yet they are being told that they are free. They are being told that they must go to the stadiums on an empty stomach to listen to politicians tell them how far they have come and then go home to a shack.

We are told every day that freedom means voting plus service delivery. We do not accept this definition and we will not be intimidated by all those who say that our refusal to accept this definition means that we are immature and unprofessional. As a movement of the forgotten it is our duty to continually ask ourselves what freedom really means. Freedom is always something that should be defined by the people.

Is it true that people are free if they are still living under the fear of being evicted? Are people free if they are still living under the fear of dying in shack

fires because authorities deny them their basic right to have access to electricity? Are people free if they must still fear rape? Are people free if their children are still dying from diarrhoea? Are people free if they are still living in shacks? Are people free when they are being forced into transit camps or tiny badly made houses out in the human dumping grounds?

Are people free when they vote for councillors that never come to speak to them again till the next election? Is democracy really supposed to be a system for the politicians to use the poor as ladders?

We are being told that there is a freedom of expression. Are we free if people that exercise their right to free expression are being beaten up and shot to death by the police who are supposed to be protecting us? Our movement and all the other movements of the poor like the Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Landless People's Movement and the Unemployed People's Movement, as well as many smaller community organisations around the country, have faced serious police repression for many years. Most of the middle classes have not had eyes to see the march bannings, intimidation, arrests, beatings, torture and even killings at the hands of the police. Most of the middle class have not had eyes to see how the police have supported party thugs to attack the autonomous organisations of the poor.

But after what happened in the Free State where a member of the community who was protesting against the lack of services delivered to them by their councillor was seen on a national television being beaten up by police, who were more than five, and being shot in the chest and dying on the scene no one can say that they do not have eyes to see what the police are doing to us. This is not the freedom that we fought for.

We are ignored when we do not resist and repressed when we do resist. This is not freedom. In fact it is oppression.

Therefore it is clear that the struggle must continue. It is also clear from the movements and protests around the country that the struggle is continuing.

The question is how we should struggle. Some people are still trying to force the parties to listen to the people from inside the parties. But in Cape Town and everywhere else people are protesting as their right to freedom of choice is being violated by the political parties who choose who should be the candidate of being the councillor, leaving out people who are being elected democratically

by the members of their community. Yet we claim South Africa is a Democratic country. What kind of a democracy is this? It is a Demon-crazy.

Even if people are complying with the law and have peaceful marches the current situation is that the even if the authorities happen to come to collect memorandums they have this tendency of not answering to the demands of the communities. People organise and march and the response is either silence or intimidation. Is being poor in this country a curse?

Yet as we are towards local government election they politicians are busy telling people to go in their numbers to voting stations to vote for people who will not even listen to the people who have put them into power. The people on the grassroots are people who don't count in this society except when it is time to vote. The politicians are making all kinds of promises when they want our votes. But when we ask them to keep those promises they tell the police to arrest us, beat us and shoot us.

If you are a worker the boss wants your work. Therefore you put pressure by refusing to work. If you are a tenant the landlord wants your rent therefore you put pressure by refusing to pay rent. If you are a citizen the parties want your vote therefore you put pressure by refusing to vote for them. All the parties oppress the poor. We are evicted and shot at everywhere in South Africa from Durban to Cape Town to Johannesburg and in all the small towns like Grahamstown and Ficksburg. Therefore there is no point in voting for one party to discipline another party.

The way for the poor to be able to discipline the politicians is for us to organise ourselves to build our own power. As a movement we have decided to continue with the No land, No house, No Vote campaign for this election. We are calling on the poor to boycott the election and to instead organise themselves and build their organisation that can defend their own interests.

We will not be going to the stadiums on the 27th of April to listen to the politicians. We will meeting amongst ourselves to mourn the death of freedom and to discuss the best ways to take our struggle forward. We are sending delegates to the funeral of Andries Tatane and we will begin with a report back from the funeral and a minute of silence for the all the people that have been killed by the police in the struggles of the poor since 1994.

We will, once again, call our event Unfreedom Day because there is no freedom for the poor. The racist government is gone yet most people are still suffering, most people still do not count in this society. We are not free if we are still:

- Living in shacks.
- Having no access to electricity.
- Without land.
- Having no access to water.
- Having no toilets.
- Without work.
- Being forcibly evicted and forcibly removed to transit camps and rural human dumping grounds.
- Being denied the right to plan our own future.
- Being repressed when we try to organise.
- Living in a society in which there is no dignity and no respect of the poor.

Our living conditions are the same as they were under apartheid. We are still treated with contempt and repression when we want to organise and to plan our own future. It is this reality that encourages us not to vote. It is not that we are not patriotic of our country. The problem is that we are living in a new kind of apartheid error under a new administration. The problem is that we are not yet free.

We want to be very clear that freedom is not only a question of service delivery and budget constraints. It is a question of our full participation in all discussions and decisions about the future of our own communities and our country. It is a question of honesty, respect and dignity for the poor. It is a question of full recognition that the poor count in our society.

In November 2005 our movement organised a march on Obed Mlaba from the Foreman Road settlement. That march was illegally banned by the notorious Michael Sutcliffe. We decided to march in peaceful defiance of that ban. As soon as we left the settlement the police attacked us with rubber bullets, stun grenades, tear gas and live ammunition. A number of us were seriously injured. Obed Mlaba did not condemn the police violence or the banning of march. He said that we were a third force that had been created to disrupt the elections in 2006 and that we would fail to exist after the 2006 election. Well it is now five

years since that election and we are still here. We are still refusing to vote for our oppressors. We are still struggling for a real freedom, a freedom that will recognise the equal humanity of everyone.

The 2011 Unfreedom Day Rally will be held in Foreman Road Shack Settlement, Clare Estate, Durban, starting from 10:00 am on Wednesday, 27 April 2011.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Zodwa Nsibande
Bandile Mdlalose

1 MAY 2011

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Kennedy 12 Return to Court for Part Two of their Trial

Abahlali baseMjondolo will return to the Durban magistrate's court on Tuesday 3 May 2011 to support the twelve men who have become victims of the political conspiracy to disguise the reality of the armed attack on our movement that took place in the Kennedy Road settlement on the 26th and 27th of September 2009. That attack displaced hundreds of women, men and children and the resulting conflicts left some people with serious injuries and two people dead.

The armed attack on our movement was carried out in the name of the ANC and the disastrous politics of ethnicity. The attack was publicly endorsed by senior figures in the ANC and for many months afterwards a mob associated with the local ANC continued to destroy the homes of our leading members in the settlement with complete impunity. The police never once stepped in to stop the ongoing destruction of our homes despite repeated pleas for them to intervene. Our call for an independent commission of inquiry into the attacks was ignored and the police investigation into the violence was turned into a political witch-hunt. During the bail hearings even the magistrates made it clear that this was a 'political case' and the open bias in court was incredible. Our leading members were openly threatened with death in public places, like the court, and for months we had to organise underground.

The repeated screening of video footage of the police murder of Andries Tatane on the TV news has shocked the middle classes. It has awoken some of their civil society organisations from their long political sleep. We were deeply saddened to watch another comrade being attacked by the police. But we were not shocked. Our peaceful requests to speak to the government about the conditions in our communities have been met with repeated violence since 2005. Our members have been regularly attacked by the police, the Land Invasions Unit and Group4 Security. We have been shot with rubber bullets, water canons,

stun grenades and live ammunition. We have been beaten and we have been tortured.

We are not alone in suffering this violent repression from the police, land invasion units and private security companies. The Landless People's Movement in Johannesburg and Abahlali baseMjondolo and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign in Cape Town, as well as other movements and many smaller community organisations, have had similar experiences. It has also been common for activists to be threatened by ward councilors and local party structures and to have these people and structures order the police to attack activists.

But the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road in September 2009 marked a new phase in repression in our democracy – a democracy that has always had political freedom for the rich and the middle classes and a politics of patronage and repression for the poor. It is one thing to be attacked by the police or securities. It is another thing to be attacked by other poor people that have been mobilised, on an ethnic basis, against an independent movement by the ruling party and given the support of the police to attack, to threaten, to demolish homes and to drive all the leading members of a movement out of a community.

After we suffered this attack in September 2009, and the ongoing destruction of our homes and harassment of our members in the following months, the Landless Peoples Movement suffered similar attacks during 2010. Many of us were reminded of the xenophobic attacks of May 2008 and the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in the 1980s.

The ANC seized control of the Kennedy Road settlement with violence. It took some time for it to be taken back to democratic control, under the new Kennedy Road Development Committee. This was achieved peacefully by people standing together against intimidation.

Phase one of the trial of the Kennedy 12 started on the 29th November and ran to the 3rd of December 2010. During that week the state bought five witnesses the court. Not one of them was able to give any evidence linking any of the accused to the two deaths which the state has claimed that the twelve are responsible for. Four of the five witnesses admitted that the police had told them who to pick out in the line-up and one witness refused to testify for the state. She then became a court witness and testified that the police had tried to force her to give false evidence against the accused. She also testified that in her

view it was the Kennedy Road ANC that were responsible for the attack. After the court case death threats were made against her and she was attacked in her home and warned not to continue to tell the truth in court. if she had not been supported by our neighbours she may have been killed in this attack.

The attack on our movement in September 2009 was a political attack carried out with the support of senior people in the ANC and the police. This trial has always been a political trial.

Our real crime in the eyes of the ANC in Durban has been that we organised ourselves outside of their control. We have been accused of running our own authority. We do not deny this. It is not a crime for the unorganised to organise themselves. Our crime has been to define ourselves as people who do not count in our society and to issue a clear demand – we want to count as people who are equal to everyone else in our society. We want our dignity back. We do not compromise on that. We are prepared to struggle on the streets and in the court rooms to win our dignity back. We will continue to insist that our equality with all other people is recognised and that it is recognised practically.

Abahlali wish to invite all our comrades in the Poor People's Alliance, all our friends and colleagues, the Church leaders and the media to come and bare witness to the trial and to express solidarity with the Kennedy 12, whose families have been torn apart by this cruel attempt to make them responsible for the attack. Abahlali wish to express their continuous gratitude for all the support we continue to enjoy from our comrades nationally and international. We want to assure you that we continue to stand by our Amandla when circumstances are difficult. We are struggling for our lives and the lives of our children and so we can never give up. We are not prepared to accept oppression and so for us there is no alternative other than to keep on struggling.

The trial will resume at 09h00, at Durban Regional court, Y Court, 11th Floor.

Abahlali Youth League Secretary Zodwa Nsibande.

Abahlali Secretary Bandile Mdlalose.

1 MAY 2011

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Shack Fire Takes a Life in eMmaus

At 04h00am this morning a candle was accidentally knocked over in a shack in New eMmaus in Pinetown. Mr. Zulu (33), the owner of the shack, was burnt to death as the fire destroyed his shack.

The fire brigade and the police were called but by the time they came the damage was already done and Mr. Zulu was already dead. Yesterday in a separate incident the Jadhv Place shack settlement in Clare Estate was on fire as well. There has been a wave of shack fires across the country since Easter. A number of people have burnt to death. Winter is here and the poor are burning once again.

When we first started to organise ourselves as Abahlali baseMjondolo the politicians would always say that shack fires are the result of drunkenness. Now they always say that shack fires are the result of ‘illegal electricity connections’. They are always trying to blame us for the fires whereas they are the ones that have failed to ensure that we have access to electricity. Everyone knows that when self organised connections are done safely they protect us from fires. But when we connect ourselves in a safe and carefully disciplined manner we are called criminals.

Most Abahlali settlements have connected themselves to electricity. But the new eMmaus shack settlement has feared to electrify themselves as they have been always told that self electrification is the cause of the shack fires. Today the “politicians save lightening” forcing us to use the candles and paraffin stoves which are the cause of the shack fires which took an innocent life of another human being this morning.

For the past few months, the community of New eMmaus have been in a struggle of survival, where they were facing illegal eviction by “Mahogany Ridge Property”. These community members have been living in this area on a new land occupation for the past eight months. Mr. Zulu is from one of the families that have been facing illegal evictions.

On our UnFreedom Day event on 27 April 2011 Abahlali baseMjondolo Western Cape had a Shack fire summit while Abahlali baseMjondolo KwaZulu-Natal had an UnFreedom Day Rally. These two events were part of our “No Land, No House, and No Vote” campaign. The following day ABM WC lighted candles in the memory of all those who lost their lives in the shack fires and today Mr. Zulu is one of them who has lost his life in a shack fire leaving three children without their father.

The reason behind our “No land, No house, No vote” campaign is the very same incidents that took place today. How can we vote when we keep losing our loved ones? How can we vote when our Parents, Brothers, Sisters, Children and Comrades die in such a state that you hardly recognize them and where you only have to pick up bones? Today we have a lot of orphans which are caused by the shack fires. It is a shame that electricity that is not even needed by us but our human lives, is something that we still have to struggle for in a democracy. In fact it is a disgrace.

For 17 years of “democracy” we’ve been given empty promises, that we will get proper houses with basic needs of electricity, water, sanitation. Of course nothing gets said about our human getting dignity. For 17 years we’ve been urged to vote but yet we still live in shacks. We do not only live in shacks. We also die in shacks and when we die in our shacks the government blames us for our deaths. How can one kill oneself? It is painful that we are seen to be struggling for basic services ahead of dignity.

As we are still losing people’s lives, as we still have so many shack fires. We still stand on our “No Land, No House, No Vote and No Dignity therefore No Vote!” policy.

Frantz Fanon said that non-viable society is a society that must be replaced. This society might be viable for some people but it is not viable for us. We live like pigs in the mud and can burn to death on any night. Our attempts to organise ourselves and to take the services needed by our lives for ourselves are criminalised. It is therefore our duty to replace this society with a society that recognises the value and dignity of every human being. It is the duty of everyone that recognises the equal humanity of all people to join us in this struggle.

Khanyi or the Abahlali office

25 MAY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Evictions and Intimidation Continue in Many Shack Settlements After the Local Government Elections

On the day after the election, 19 May 2011, the eThekweni Municipality's Land Invasion Unit arrived in our settlements. Mr Mdletshe from the Land Invasion Unit arrived with his team to demolish shacks in Arnett Drive, Reservoir Hills. When talking to residents there Mdletshe was very rude and violent to Abahlali. He pointed at Sam Jaca and threatened him saying he is the one that took him to the High Court. Mdletshe's team then demolished two shacks leaving the families homeless. They had no court order and were acting without any respect for the law, the court, the community or the families that they left homeless.

This is not the first time in recent weeks that Mdletshe has threatened our members. On the 1st of May 2011 an umhlali was brunt to death in eMmaus in Pinetown. On the 4th, 12th, 13th and 16th of May Mdletshe came to the eMmaus occupation to threaten residents and undermine them. When he was challenged he said that he does not speak to shack dwellers.

On Tuesday, 17 May 2011 Mdletshe's team went to our newly launched Abahlali branch in Intake View and threatened residents there with eviction.

Our Richmond Farm branch, by KwaMashu, was also visited on Thursday, 19 June 2011 and shacks were demolished without an Order of the Court.

It is not only our members that are under attack. On 20 May 2011, two days after the election, around thirty shacks were demolished in Mayville, Cato Manor leaving many people homeless. As usual there was no court order and the evictions were illegal and criminal acts. One family had been living in their shack since 1986.

We are told that we must vote for a better life. We are told that voting is the only legitimate way to make our complaints. We are told that voting is the way to make our voices count. But the day after we are expected to vote we are attacked violently and unlawfully by the government. Both the DA and the

ANC treat the poor with the same lack of respect and the same lack of legality. We have sent messages of support to the people evicted from the Taflesig land occupation in Cape Town. Under the DA and the ANC there is no meaningful consultation with the poor. There is just violence, intimidation, destruction and contempt. Why must we vote for parties that are united in their decision to fight an illegal war against the poor? As we have said before there is no democracy for the poor in South Africa. The government thinks that it is above the law and that we are below the law. Our voices and our humanity count for nothing. This is why people are in rebellion all over the county.

In the Kennedy Road settlement intimidation continues. There is a R350 million road projects that has began and, as usual, development is being openly abused for party political purposes. As usual the local ANC members have been given control over employment on the project and, as usual, they demand ANC membership cards for community members to be employed. The contractor has also been threatened that their offices will be fire bombed if they employ any local community members without the approval of the local ANC. The situation is very volatile now.

Abahlali warn that this issue of the local ANC wanting control over all employment opportunities is precisely what sparked the attack on our movement in September 2009. We had developed a very fair way to allocate jobs. We did it via a lottery. The local ANC could not accept this. They demand ANC cards and public demonstrations of ANC support for access to jobs, fire relief, food parcels and houses. In 2009 and 2010 they were openly issuing death threats against our members and destroying their homes.

The new and elected leadership in Kennedy Road has approached the KRDC in exile to seek their support as they face this attack by local party leaders. We advise the newly elected councillor to intervene with fairness and transparency. If he believes in democracy he will clearly and publicly state that the local ANC has no right to only allow their own members to get jobs and he will take action to ensure that access to jobs is not controlled by the local party leaders.

Contact the Abahlali office

29 MAY 2011

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

ANC Branch Threatens Attack on the Leadership of the Makause Shack Settlement

Abahlali baseMjondolo stands in full solidarity with the democratically elected leadership of the Makause settlement as they face threats of violence from the ANC branch in Primrose. We are far away in distance but close in spirit and we will do all that we can to mobilise support for the comrades in Makause as their community politic faces the threat of repression from party politic. As our experience shows very well these threats must be taken very seriously by all democrats.

Makause Press Statement

Primrose ANC Branch Threatens Attack on the Leadership of the Makause Shack Settlement in Ekurhuleni

The ANC in the Primrose branch in Ekurhuleni on the East Rand has planned something like a protest or attack on the leadership of the Makause informal settlement this weekend or during the week. The leadership heard this from the grandfather of the failed ANC councillor (the Primrose ward again went to the DA), who is in the Makause leadership. The Makause leadership is non-party political. The ANC's mobilisation campaign before the elections was about promises of creating jobs. This involved members forming CCs and securing contracts and tenders to benefit members. The person behind this is Absalom Budeli, the failed ANC ward councillor candidate, and his branch leaders.

The ANC branch leadership is accusing the Makause leadership of supporting the DA and of being paid to stop the community from voting, and they see 'General' Alfred Moyo (who is part of the Makause leadership) in the forefront of these assumed campaigns. On election day the Municipality's contractor started implementation of the municipality's high mast lighting project to install 5 lights owed to the Makause community since 2008. This involved employing 20 community members from Makause. This group (coordinated by

General, who himself is not employed in this project) was labelled by the ANC as DA supporters. In the last week, there were 4 attacks on Somali shop owners in Makause. The Makause leadership structure represents local and foreign shop owners in the settlement. The leadership expects that these 4 attacks are connected to the ANC's campaign to overthrow them.

Today the ANC called a meeting to elect their committee to overthrow General and the Makause leadership by force or attack them if they resist and don't give up leadership to them. The Makause leadership is expecting riots in the area. They await the outcomes of the ANC branch meeting today, and are unsure of what might happen later.

Alfred Moyo

13 JUNE 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Another Shack Fire Destroys Families' Homes in Siyanda

South Africans are still recovering from the heavy rains that caused a lot of damage and flooding especially to poor communities. In Siyanda people have to deal with fire as well as flood. The Shange family, the Buthelezi family and one other family have all been left homeless after a fire that destroyed three shacks in Siyanda B Settlement on Saturday, 11 June 2011 during the broad day light.

The fire is said to have started from a locked shack whose owner has been away for almost two weeks to his rural home in KwaNongoma. Mr. S'cebi Shange, a 33 year old man and a father of a 4 months old baby was left only with all he had on his body. Residents suspect that the fire started in the electricity box.

It took some time for the Fire Department to arrive and when it did it came in a wrong passage way where there was no access for the truck to come closer. The truck had to drive back to find an alternative road access. By the time they came there was nothing left. "The blaze of the fire had already destroyed all we owned" said Mr. Shange.

"The newly elected councillor Mr. Mdlalose arrived at the scene yesterday with his BEC members, but did not even speak to us" said Mr. Buthelezi. Mr. Shange. added that "We have lost hope as we have expected the councillor to assist us in dealing with the disaster."

The Abahlali baseMjondolo leadership arrived in afternoon to witness the damage and the effect caused by the fire. The families were traumatized and were in desperate need of rebuilding material, clothing, furniture and foods.

Abahlali continues to condemn these ongoing shack fires which can be avoided. They are not natural disasters nor are they a result of the poor being uneducated about the causes of fires. They are a result of the way that we are forced to live in an oppressive society.

We have had enough of these fires. In the past we have organised a shack fire summit and we have marched to demand an end to the plague of fires. Our efforts have fallen on deaf ears.

It is high time that the eThekweni Municipality engages meaningful with all shack dwellers to find a permanent solution to the permanent crisis of shack fires. Land and housing, water, electricity and sanitation can save lives of the shack dwellers.

We have always advised the municipality that while we acknowledge that land and housing can be a long term solution interim support such as the provision of fire breaks, more water standpipes, sanitation and road access must be provided as a matter of urgency.

If we were people that counted in the city urgent action would be taken to address this crisis. By year after year passes while we are left to burn. For year after year it is said that shack dwellers and their homes are burning because we are ignorant and drunk. The fact is that we are forced to live in this crisis of fire because we do not count to this government. Land, housing and electricity could end this plague.

the Abahlali Chairperson in Siyanda Branch, MaMkhize Nxumalo or the Abahlali Office

14 JUNE 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Bring Back the Truth and Dignity from 1976

The AbM YL Youth Day event, 16 June 2011, Motala Heights

On Youth Day this year the nation will be celebrating 35 years since the struggle of the youth that died for Freedom, Democracy, Justice and Equality in 1976. We as Abahlali youth agree that the courage of the youth of 1976 must be celebrated. But we also wish to bring back the truth and the dignity of those youth that sacrificed with their lives in 1976. We need to make that truth and dignity a living force now. The struggles of the past must not be misused to silence the struggle of the present. The struggles of the past must be used to support the struggles of the present. Every generation must be free to take their own struggle forward.

We as Abahlali youth league have noticed the difficulties that we are facing at a grass root level while our parents are struggling for us for a living. On 16 June 1976, the youth died for Freedom, yet today while we are told that we are free it is clear that we are not free. We are not yet free while there is youth that is suffering from poverty, from child abuse, while we are still living in shacks, while we are still losing our lives due to shack fires. We are not free while we cannot get good education and so few of us can find any work. When we do find work we are usually working temporary for the labour brokers. If we want to raise these issues we are not given the freedom of expression where we should be free to raise up our voices and express our grievances. Instead we get arrested and beaten.

We are the future of the nation. We are the driving force of this nation. But because we are still unrecognized, we are still unemployed, poor, and living in shacks we are still going to fight for our dignity. This is our lives; our future. If we do not fight for ourselves, for our generation, no one else will do it. Those youth of June 16, 1976 died for the truth and yet it is not revealed. We will carry on from where the 1976 youth left off.

But this time we will not let anyone tells us that freedom on papers is real freedom. We are fighting for real dignity, not just for lousy freedom on papers or a revolution that we are told about but that is not reaching us. We are struggling for a freedom that everyone can experience for themselves in their every day lives. That means decent education, decent work, a decent guaranteed income for those without work and a decent place to stay for everyone. It also means the freedom to organize as we want and to say what we want in safety.

We acknowledge comrades like Hector Peterson, Steve Biko and Chris Hani who died before we were told that we are Free. But we do not want to acknowledge those who go around telling us that we are free now. The biggest Question for us is if Steve Biko was still alive would he be in the Government that neglect the shack dwellers or with the poor, particular the excluded?

For us June 16 is also a day that brings painful memories. We remember our Hero comrades Thembinkosi Mpanza and Vukani Shange who were brutality killed by the farm watchers who shot them dead while they were coming from school in June 17, 2006 happily singing the National Anthem. They felt hungry and decided to eat two sticks of sugar cane and the farm watchers killed them. These farm watchers were working in the farm which is owned by Channel, a white male with no mercy.

Today is making us raise questions how is it possible that we have arrived at the point where people have to take a people's government to court for such basic things as water and housing, which the constitution fully enshrines? These things are so basic that they should just be obvious. We shouldn't even have to talk about such basic things. Just recently a South African court ruled in favour of the people for their right to water. Guess who took the people to the appeal court to tried and overturn the decision of the judge? The government! The appeal court ruled in favour of the people. Guess who is thinking of appealing the decision through the constitutional court? The government! Who stood against the decision of the victims of the apartheid-capitalism to take the big corporate that benefited from this system to the international court? Who? The government!

Those boers and their vigilantes who killed Biko and Hani and Solomon Mahlangu and Hector Peterson and Muntu ka Myeza and Masabata Lwate and many others only killed the flesh. Their spirit lived on in the people's struggle. But today the spirit of Mahlangu, Biko, Hani, Peterson and all the others is being

killed by the current black boers. Lwate is being killed here and now by our today's oppressors. The Boers failed to kill Biko and Hani's spirit because their comrades kept their spirit alive and so it is the challenge of our generation to ensure that today's black Boers are failing to kill our spirit and the spirit of the heroes of the past. But it is hard. In this country we kill the spirit of Tambo and Biko everyday. Some of us hate other people instead of struggling against oppression. There is rape, xenophobia and hatred of LGBTI people. Some of us love beautiful things for ourselves but ask our brothers and sisters to endure conditions such as the Kennedy Road shack settlement. Yes that hate must come to an end. Yes the truth and justice must be told and fulfilled.

Today the government is busy wasting money to pass the so called, 'Secrecy Bill' to hide their corruption that is making the poor became more poor and turning so many politicians into predators eating off on the suffering of the people. The challenges that the youth of 1976 went through was understandable because it was done by the government of the Apartheid. Today our own mothers and father are now in power yet they are not doing anything to uplift the Youth. They say the youth of today are lazy where as there are no jobs for us. We are not being assisted. We call upon the investigation on the millions that were spent by NYDA on the event that they say it was for the youth.

It is not just us who are struggling. People are struggling everywhere around South Africa. We are not alone.

On the 16 June 2011 we will gather at Motala Heights shack settlement to commemorate the youth of 1976 and to discuss the challenges that the youth of today are facing. We will be joined by comrades from the SNI and comrades from R2K. We call upon all the youth who feel neglected to join us on this day.

The struggle shall continue! A luta continua!

Qina.

Lindo Motha

Mazwi Nzimande

Ms. Bandile Mdlalose

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A(Secretary General)

Office

3 JULY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Municipal Security and Shack Dwellers Clash in the Kennedy Road Settlement

Attempt at Armed De-electrification Successfully Resisted

This morning Municipal Security Guards arrived at the Kennedy Road shack settlement and began disconnecting people from electricity. The community had previously negotiated an understanding with the Municipality that they would not send their security guards into the settlement to disconnect. However this morning this agreement was violated and the people resisted the disconnections. There was a confrontation, rubber bullets were fired and stones were thrown. A young man was shot in the chin with a rubber bullet at close range. A road blockade was then organised following which both the SAPS and the Metro Police arrived on the scene. But the attempt to disconnect people from electricity was successfully resisted.

The new ward councillor also arrived on the scene. He told the people that he would tell the Municipality not to disconnect anybody at Kennedy Road from electricity and that those that had been disconnected should reconnect. He blamed the Municipality for the confrontation this morning and said that the Municipality must now move swiftly to electrify all the shacks in the settlement.

The Kennedy Road comrades, and Abahlali baseMjondolo in general, have been struggling for electricity for many years. Before each election promises are made and after each election the security guards and police come to disconnect the people. The struggle for electricity for all continues.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
Mr. Sibiya, Kennedy Road Development Committee

4 JULY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Police & Municipal Security Break the Ward Councillor's Promise & Return to Kennedy

Yesterday the new ward councillor Bhekisani Ngcobo arrived at a road blockade erected to defend the community against armed de-electrification by the eThekweni Municipality and promised residents of the Kennedy Road shack settlement that the municipality would stop trying to disconnect them from electricity. Today the Municipal Security Guards arrived, with police back up, and tried to continue to disconnect the people. The people resisted and organised another road blockade. Right now the police have stepped back but it may be that they are waiting for reinforcements.

For a long time communities around the country have been struggling against councillors imposed on them from the party bosses and arguing that they should be able to elect their own councillors. Some of these struggles have been successful and Abahlali baseMjondolo was genuinely elected by the ANC members in the ward. However the events of today and yesterday show that the Municipality does not obey elected councillors even when they carry a genuine mandate. They are not democrats. The power is in the hands of managers and technocrats and not elected representatives. This is why the councillor system will never meet the needs of the people. The only way forward is for people to organise themselves on the ground and to remain well organised irrespective of who is elected.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
Mr. Sibiya, Kennedy Road Development Committee

17 JULY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Kennedy 12 Will be Back in Court on Mandela Day

We wish to remind all our comrades and friends that we will be back in court, for the third part of the trial of the Kennedy 12, on Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 July 2011. You are all invited to join us at the court.

While the rest of the country and the world will be celebrating Mandela Day by remembering the struggle of Tata Mandela we will be celebrating our daily Mandela Day in court where we continue to face state repression in the third year since our movement was attacked in the Kennedy Road settlement.

A true honouring of the spirit of a comrade is not only to remember the struggle of that comrade. It is also to bring the spirit of that comrade into the struggles of today. We think that best gift for Tata Madiba is that we are still trying to complete his work of fighting for Justice and Human Dignity.

This trial is our prosecution. It is part of a long persecution for what we stand for. What we stand for is a clear and firm instance that everyone counts in our society. This long trial is part of the price we continue to pay for moving out of the order that oppresses us. We invite all Democrats to join us in this dangerous journey for land and freedom.

Our comrades must be reminded that we were attacked in Heritage Month while we were busy dancing iMfene, playing soccer and enjoying other traditional entertainments. We are going to court during Mandela Month. We don't enjoy the so called "freedom" that we are always been told to celebrate. We remain poor and when we try to organise ourselves we are confronted with violence from the party and the state.

The attack on our movement in 2009 is similar to the attack on our protest march of 2007 in Sydenham where we were attacked by the police and the Abahlali 14 were arrested. After the 2009 attack 13 people were arrested. The 13th comrade's charges were dropped after spending 3 months in prison for absolutely nothing. We were not surprised by this. This is what the state can do. It

can take you out of your home, away from your family, away from your work and lock you up for three months in a place where you are regularly beaten. It can do this to you with no evidence against you and with no apology. No one can deny that we do not count to this society.

The trial will be held at the Durban Regional court on the 12th floor in Y court at 9am.

Abahlali baseMjondolo office

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (Spokesperson)

Bandile Mdlalose (Secretary General)

18 JULY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Victory in the Kennedy 12 Trial!

The Victory in the Kennedy 12 Trial is a Victory for all the Poor in South Africa. The Kennedy 12 have been acquitted of all the charges brought against them after the attack on our movement in September 2009. It is a great day for the 12, their families, our movement and the struggle of the poor in South Africa.

We wish to begin by extending our deepest, heartfelt gratitude to all our comrades and our partners around the world who have supported the 12 and our movement since the attack. We must thank our Alliance partners, the Rural Network, LPM, and the AEC; our comrades in the UPM and the Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front; Bishop Rubin Philip of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Diakonia Council of churches, and all the other church leaders that stood with us; the German churches; the Church Land Programme; the Human Rights organization around the world, particularly Amnesty International, the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR) in New York; our comrades in the grassroots organisations in the US from Chicago to New York City and the Bay Area in California, our comrades in Moscow (Russia), Italy, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and Belgium. We also want to thank all the academics and leading scholars who signed a powerful petition in our support and all those who academics who wrote articles in our defence while we and our supporters were under attack. Most importantly we want to thank our Legal Team from the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI). There are so many of you, we cannot mention you all by name, but we thank you all. We are not alone in this struggle.

Today the Durban Regional court has acquitted all of the Kennedy 12 accused of murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, public violence and damage to property. In fact there was no case to answer as the prosecution failed to make any case against any of the accused on any charge. We have always been saying that these charges were fabricated and politically motivated. This emerged clearly in the court. The Magistrate said that the evidence that was brought before the court was contradictory, was unreliable, not credible, had serious discrepancies and was concocted. No court in this world could find the accused guilty without any evidence at all against them. The court has agreed

that there was fighting and killing but that it was not by the accused. The Magistrate was saying all these things because our legal team had applied for acquittal under Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Act. The Magistrate had no option but to grant that application to have the accused acquitted because it was clear that there was no evidence against any of the accused and that there had been an attempt to frame them.

Today it has, again, been clear that there will be high price to be paid in the struggle for justice and a better society. We salute our comrades, the Kennedy 12, who have paid a very high price not just for Abahlali but for all poor in South African who are suppressed every day when they try to resist their repression. This is a lesson to all those who have chosen to be our enemies – Abahlali will defeat you in the streets and in courts. We are many and we have proven to the world that we have the courage to stand together and to face repression and lies. Abahlali will celebrate this hard won Victory. Our meeting will discuss the celebration plan.

Those in High authority within the eThekweni Municipality and those in the KwaZulu Natal legislature who abused their power to engineer and back this attack on our Movement have been exposed to the world. This was not just an attack to our Movement but an attack against our hard won democracy. From today, as it has always been the case, our Movement will move forward without any fear of any thuggery from any politician. We will continue to be together and to find courage in our unity.

The likes of Henrick Bohmke and his associates have been exposed to the world as the liars that they are. The regressive left that would rather support state repression against a movement than to allow the poor to organise ourselves and to speak for ourselves has been exposed for what it is.

We call upon the media to attend our Press Conference to be held at the Anglican Church, St Mary's Street, Greyville at 11:00am tomorrow. At this Press Conference we will tell the Nation about the lie of our democracy, the democracy that serves the interest of the few, while the majority of us live in deep poverty.

Our struggle continues.

S'bu Zikode (ABM President)

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (ABM PRO)

Bandile Mdlalose (ABM Secretary General)

Rev. Mavuso (Rural Network PRO)

Zodwa Nsibande (ABM Youth League Secretary)

26 JULY 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Displacees Return to Kennedy Road

The Kennedy Road Development Committee, the Kennedy 12 and other Displacees Return to the Kennedy Road Settlement

Our acquittal in court without freedom to return to resetting our feet in Kennedy Road would be pointless.

After two and half year the Kennedy Road Development Committee, members of the Kennedy 12 and their relatives, as well as some members of AbM, went to Kennedy Road on Sunday to check on their homes and sites that they were residing on when our movement was attacked. We were about a hundred people.

The ululation of women during our arrival was a clear indication that our enemies are not the residents of Kennedy. Our enemies wear suits and ties and many of them occupy high positions in the City Council and the KwaZulu-Natal legislature.

The first stop was at the community hall. When we arrived in the hall the local ANC members had called the community to a meeting to try and boycott our return which did not work out. There were only twelve people there. In fact the community had organized a counter meeting to stop the ANC's employment of their comrades only. Fortunately the community of Kennedy refused to be fooled again by the thuggery people who are hiding under the ANC to hide their criminal act. We then proceeded to check on the premises that used to be the AbM headquarters. We found the place very filthy and it looked like there was no one responsible for keeping the area clean. After that we started with visiting Mbiko's house. Mbiko is a member of KRDC. His house was built with bricks. What we found there was only the walls. The roof, the doors as well as the window frames had been taken. The walls were about to be falling and someone had tied them with the strong rope to prevent them from falling. We fear that this may hurt neighbours.

We then proceeded to Zamisa's place. He is also a member of KRDC. His site is still available but what is left now is only one part of the wall. The other three walls had been destroyed and it was looking like it was recently destroyed. After that we then proceeded to Lembede's shack where we had found out that there is someone that had occupied his entire four room shack. We then proceeded to Simelane's shack where we found that the site is now smaller in a way that you can't even build a tiny shack there as the neighbors had taken some of his side of the site. We then went to Mdu's shack where he used to stay. There we found that the person who had occupied his shack has built a Spaza shop with a shebeen on the other side. When we entered there we were welcomed by a big and loud sound of music from a duke box and two pool tables outside. In other places where we had visited, especially those that used to be for Kennedy 12, people had built in their sites. There were only a few people for whom their places were still vacant.

What was very interesting was that in other places we had found that the occupiers had fled the shacks as soon as they saw us coming and left the shacks either locked or unlocked. We don't want to evict anyone. What we want is to be given an alternative accommodation in order that everyone displaced in the attack on our movement by the ANC can return to Kennedy Road without our return rendering anyone one homeless.

We have already written to the Mayor Mr. James Nxumalo and we are also speaking with the Local councillor of ward 25, Mr. Bhekisisa Ngcobo, to indicate that we want to negotiate a solution that allows all the evictees to return without anyone being evicted. We are still waiting for their reply to this urgent need for places of accommodation. As we speak displacees are still staying with friends and relatives and some of them are paying huge rental money which they are struggling to pay as most of them are not working or temporarily employed.

It was very sad to see the way the garbage has been piling up in every corner of the settlement with no one to pick it up where as there are people that are being given a tender to clean the settlement and paid. We wonder what they are doing? We were very disappointed to see some families having to sleep in the toilets while no one cares. We were disgusted by seeing our offices having been turned into toilets. This situation will cause people to suffer from TB and other unhygienic related diseases. No one should really be allowed to live such a deadly life. Last night (25 July 2011) the garbage that is being piled up has

killed a person, it alleged that the pile fell onto a child causing death. This dirt was behind his house and as yesterday there was a heavy rain, this dirt fell to the shack while he was inside and push the shack and he was found death inside. The negligence of the eThekweni municipality has again claimed another life. How long shall people die in shacks without being given houses and services while they are waiting for the houses that Nigel Gumede promised to the people of Kennedy in 2009 and again a year back?

Abahlali wish to extend its sincere gratitude to the station commissioner Colonel De Villiers for deploying the police officer in Kennedy on Sunday 24 July 2011, during the visit. This is an evidence that AbM are committed to work with any government authority and law enforcing agencies that is there in the area for as long as it is for the betterment of the community.

We are now in the long process of rebuilding our lives from scratch. We would be happy for any support ranging from spiritual support, building materials, furnitures etc. We ask all responsible leaders and progressive forces to help us build this community, unite it and upgrade it. Abahlali want to see everyone being treated with respect and dignity, as people who count in our society.

Abahlali office
Zodwa Nsibande
Mnikelo Ndabankulu

6 AUGUST 2011

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

eThekwini Municipality Shoots Sixteen Year Old Boy in Kennedy Road

Sixteen Old Boy, the Son of Witness X, Shot by the State in Kennedy Road

This morning the eThekwini Municipality launched another armed raid on the Kennedy Road shack settlement to try and disconnect the people from electricity. As usual there was resistance, unarmed resistance, to this attack from the Municipality. The Municipality's security guards responded by firing live ammunition at the protesters.

A sixteen year old boy was shot and badly wounded at around 8:40 this morning. He was not part of the protest. He was shot while walking to the shop. He has been rushed to Addington Hospital and there is, as yet, no clarity on his condition. This is the reality of the war that the eThekwini Municipality and the government of South Africa is waging on the poor of this country day after day.

Every attack on the poor by the state is a matter of deep concern. Every time the police or the state's other armed forces attack protesters with live ammunition we are deeply concerned. But in this case there is another reason why we are deeply concerned.

The twelve year old boy who was shot and rushed, bleeding massively, to the hospital is the son of Witness X. Witness X was a state witness in the trial of the Kennedy 12 who became a court witness and told the truth about what happened and how she had been asked to lie. She was subject to death threats from the local ANC following her decision to tell the truth in the court and she was attacked and was only saved by the quick support of her neighbours. After the verdict she received more death threats. At this point we do not know if it was coincidence that it was her son that was shot this morning or if he was deliberately targeted. We hope that the shooting this morning was not connected to the case of the Kennedy 12 but we cannot rule that possibility out until we have all the information about how it was that a 12 year old boy was shot in Kennedy Road this morning.

Busisiwe Gogo

21 AUGUST 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Statement on the Return to Kennedy Road

Those members of the ANC that attacked our movement in September 2009, that banned our movement in the Kennedy Road settlement after the attack on the pain of death, that destroyed and looted our homes for months, that sold our sites to new people, that made death threats to state witnesses in the trial that followed the attack on our movement and attacked one witness and issued public death threats against many of us have now run to the media to say that they are scared of the return of the displacees to Kennedy Road. They have even gone to the police to ask that we must be prevented from returning to the settlement. They are trying to present themselves as victims.

We wish to be clear about somethings.

We have always been very clear that any politic that tries to make the poor turn on the poor is a very, very dangerous politic. We have always rejected this and worked very hard to build unity amongst the poor. We have worked against xenophobia, against ethnic politics and against attempts to use party politic to destroy a living politic.

When our leaders were first attacked in 2008 we did not respond with violence. We found the grandmothers of the attackers and we negotiated reconciliation and healing through them. When our movement was attacked in 2009 we were clear that the attackers were still part of us, that everyone that had been hurt and killed was part of the community, part of us. We made it very clear that we mourned all deaths and injuries as tragic. We were very clear that our enemies were those that had mobilised the poor to attack the poor. We made it very clear that we wanted an independent commission of inquiry that would find the full truth of what had happened. We suggested that Pius Langa could head this commission. We also made it clear that as well as the truth we also wanted healing. We were always clear that we wanted healing and not revenge. We wanted the truth as a step towards healing.

After the attack the displacees met every Sunday at Botha Park. The group included the KRDC, the Kennedy 12 and around a hundred others. The civil

case that the displacees are taking forward against the police for supporting the attackers and failing to protect their basic rights is moving forward. But it was eventually decided that, in the interests of peace and safety, they would not return until the trial of the Kennedy 12 was over and the lies that had been told about our movement were exposed for what they were.

The trial is now over. The witnesses that testified to the ANC story about the 2009 attacks in court were found to have been lying. The police that supported these liars were found to have fabricated evidence. The Kennedy 12 were fully acquitted of all charges against them. Despite the huge political pressure to secure a prosecution not one of the allegations that was made against the Kennedy 12 or our movement stood up in court.

We have welcomed the verdict of the court but we have also made it clear that a victory in court will not count as a full victory until:

1. Everyone who was displaced from Kennedy Road and who wishes to return to the settlement can do so in safety.
2. There is free and safe political activity for all organisations in the settlement.

If the senior ANC leaders, like Willies Mchunu, that supported the attack on our movement by describing us as ‘criminals’, welcoming the ‘liberation’ of the settlement and announcing that they had ‘disbanded’ our movement want healing they should:

1. Issue a statement of apology to the Kennedy 12, everyone who had to flee Kennedy Road, our movement and everyone that suffered in the attack.
2. Issue a statement that affirms the full right of everyone in Kennedy Road to organise safely and freely in the settlement in the organisations of their choice.
3. Support the right to return of all the displacees and assist them in rebuilding their homes.
4. Establish an independent and credible commission of inquiry that can examine all aspects of the violence and political repression in Kennedy Road.

But if these senior ANC leaders continue to deny the right of the poor to organise ourselves freely then we will organise our own return to Kennedy Road.

Before the recent local government elections ordinary ANC members in Ward 25 rejected the faction of the local ANC that organised the attack on our movement. They were voted out of the ANC and some of them followed the old ANC councillor, Yacoob Baig, into the Truly Alliance. The people who have

now come into leadership in the local ANC are people with whom we have had a good relationship. We see no reason why we cannot work them in the spirit of democracy and the interests of the whole community.

Yacoob Baig and the former mayor Obed Mlaba were not people that could be trusted. But we have no reason not to think that we cannot work with the new councillor Bhekisisa Ngcobo and the new mayor James Nxumalo. We have written to both of them, as well as to the new head of the Sydenham Police Station, Officer De Villiers, to request their support in the return of the displacees to Kennedy Road. We have made it clear that we wish to negotiate the return in such a way that no one has anything to fear. We have made it clear that we will not request that those that bought our sites and houses from the attackers will be evicted. We are always against evictions and we are always for the unity of the poor. There is enough space in Kennedy Road for everyone that is now living there as well as all the displacees to have a place.

We are committed to realising the right of return for all displacees that want to return to the settlement and we are committed to realising this right in a way that brings healing to a community that was poisoned by the worst kind of party politic. No one living in Kennedy Road, including those that bought the land and houses of the displacees from the attackers, has anything to fear from the return of the displacees.

the Durban office of Abahlali baseMjondolo

25 AUGUST 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Celebration of the 6th Anniversary of AbM

Celebration of the 6th Anniversary of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A.

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” Romans 8: 31-36

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement is a grassroots mass democratic organization that was formed in 2005, to fight for, protect, promote and advance the interests and the dignity of the poor in South Africa.

Abahlali has stood firm in making sure that the dignity of the poor is respected and that we are all treated equally. We have been clear that neither the state nor civil society has the right to speak for the poor. We have been clear that we have the right to organize ourselves, think for ourselves and to speak for ourselves. This has been taken as a threat by all those who have assumed a right to think and to speak for the poor without speaking to us.

When we started this journey nobody thought that we would still be existing by now. All those who said that our movement would not survive until now have to accept the reality that we are still here and that we are still struggling. That’s why we are celebrating the 6th anniversary of the existence of Abahlali on Saturday.

Our struggle was never a smooth sailing. Every way that we took we were obliged to struggle. Every way that we took has led to repression. But with organized resistance we were able to overcome the recurring forceful eviction by the municipality. We have won many victories.

The most important victory is that in these six years of existence we have been able to achieve our primary goal which is bringing back the dignity of the people that live in the shacks. We have planted the seed that makes people to realize that the fact that we are living in the shacks and that we are poor doesn't mean that we are unable to think. We may be poor in life but we are rich in mind. We are rich in the togetherness and strength that we have created together. But the struggle for a better life for all the millions of people who live in the shacks and on the farms is not completed. The struggle for human dignity is still at large. This is why up until today we are still calling upon the government to partner with us and to have meaningful engagement with us. We are calling up for a bottom up style of development. We are calling for the government to support democratic people's planning. We are calling for the social value of land to come before its commercial value. We are calling for housing to be a public good and not an opportunity for private profit. In order to win this battle we need one another.

Our struggle has a long road to travel. There will be many dangers on this journey. Some people will lose faith. Some will be co-opted. Others will continue. We will make new alliances along the way. We will continue to be in a living solidarity with all attempts by the poor to organize for a just and democratic world. We will continue to be in a living solidarity with all those who share our goals and respect our way of struggling.

Our autonomy, our success in organizing (by 2009 we had more than 10 000 paid up members in 64 different settlements) and our victories against the government were not taken lightly by the some of the ANC leaders which has resulted in them plotting to destroy our movement in 2009 at Kennedy Road where the movement was started. In September 2009 our Movement was attacked in the night and then banned in Kennedy Road, our leaders had to flee their homes and 12 members who affiliate with the movement were arrested with charges of attempted murder, murder, public violence, damage to property etc. We survived this attack on our movement. The support from different people, their prayer, physical support and moral support, managed to carry us through this darkness.

The Kennedy 12 spent almost a year in jail with no bail granted. This was painful to them, to their families and to the movement. On 18 July this year all charges against the 12 were dropped and they were all acquitted. The witnesses

who spoke against in court us were found to have been lying. The police were found to have fabricated evidence against us. This has not only been the victory of Abahlali but the victory of all the poor and the marginalized in South Africa. Finally the lies of ANC and their plots have been seen by the world.

On the same day of our anniversary we will also be celebrating the Victory of the Kennedy 12 who have sacrificed for our struggle almost a year of their lives in jail. The fact that we are celebrating this victory of the acquittal of the Kennedy 12 does not mean that we are turning the blind eye on the fact that two people died on that night, rather we are celebrating the fact that the people who were victims of state repression are now free. We are still calling upon the state to do a thorough and credible (which means independent of party politic) investigation of everything that happened that night including who really killed the two people that died on that night. We also want the state to investigate who were the people behind the attack. And we want the state to investigate who were the people that broke our leaders' homes, burnt them and stole all their things in broad day light while the police were standing by. We want all of the truth to come out.

The 6th Anniversary and Kennedy 12 Victory celebration will be held at eThekweni College Sport Ground, in Springfield Park next to Makro, just below the Kennedy Road shack settlement on 27 August 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (Media Liaison Officer)
 Zodwa Nsibande (Abahlali National Administrator)
 Bandile Mdlalose (Abahlali Secretary General)
 Abahlali Head Office

2 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Re-Launching the Kennedy Road AbM Branch

In September 2009 the Kennedy Road Development Committee, a structure that was always subject to annual election with the right to recall, and which was working hand in hand with Abahlali baseMjondolo, was expelled from Kennedy Road by armed members of the ANC. Willies Mchunu then imposed an ANC committee on the community. He called this the 'liberation' of the settlement and said that the elected structures were 'illegitimate' and that the unelected committee imposed by armed force was 'legitimate'. The committee imposed by Mchunu did nothing for the community. Things went from bad to worse. The houses that the ANC promised after the attack were never built.

For a long time AbM had to operate underground in the settlement because the death threats, assaults and demolition of people's homes continued for months after the attack. When AbM began to operate openly there were death threats and assaults. But our members were brave and they continued.

As a movement we are always very careful to struggle with people and not for people. We do not impose what we think is good for the people. We never launch a branch anywhere without getting a democratic mandate from that community. Our members in Kennedy Road are now ready to formally launch a new AbM branch in the settlement.

Many people of Kennedy have renewed their membership of being Abahlali and have committed to work with Abahlali baseMjondolo movement in advocating for decent housing and basic services in the settlement. Electricity is a big issue in the settlement. The municipality has been violently disconnecting people, even those who applied for legal electricity. Another big issue is the construction of the intersection on the N2 that is next to Kennedy. The municipality has putted a budget of 350 million for this road. Only ANC members are getting work on this construction. The councilor is controlling the employment. And the biggest question is if there is money to construct the road why can the government not build houses for the people that live in Kennedy, some of whom has stayed in shack for more than 20 years.

Tomorrow, 03 September 2011, we will be launching the New Kennedy Road Development Committee at 09h00 at the Kennedy Road Community Hall. As always this new structure will work with all the people irrespective of their political affiliation. We call upon all the media to come and witness real democracy taking place.

Mr Mzwakhe Mdlalose
Mr Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Abahlali baseMjondolo office

3 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

AbM WC Welcomes Church Solidarity

Abahlali baseMjondolo, Western Cape Welcomes Solidarity from the Cape Town Churches

On Wednesday 31 August Abahlali baseMjondolo in the Western Cape had an important meeting with a number of church leaders and church organisations. The meeting was held in Khayelitsha and was called by the church leaders.

The church leaders present included:

- Dr. Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town
- Dr. Stephen Brislin, Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town
- Dr. Braam Hanekom, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, West and South Cape

The church organisations present included

- The South African Council of Churches, Western Cape
- The Restitution Foundation
- The Centre for Christian Spirituality
- The Institute for Healing of Memories
- The St. Georges Cathedral Crypt and Memory Project

As everyone knows Abahlali baseMjondolo and the Rural Network in KwaZulu-Natal have formed close bonds of solidarity with church leaders and church organisations. The solidarity that has been developed between the organised poor and the churches in KwaZulu-Natal has been vital for the movements there to be able to survive repression and the general tendency of the middle classes, in and out of the state, to criminalise the movements of the poor.

Everyone knows that the churches have played a very important role in supporting popular struggles in places like Haiti and Brazil. In both these countries the theology of liberation, a spirituality which takes the view that every human being is important and that God is on the side of the poor, has been a very important contribution in building the power of poor people's movements.

Everybody knows the powerful role that the churches played in the struggles against apartheid.

For all these reasons we warmly welcomed the meeting proposed by the church leaders.

The meeting was open, frank and warm. Abahlali baseMjondolo was very clear that the movement is looking for solidarity in the struggle for justice and not for charity. We were also very clear that as a movement we do not accept that NGOs or other organisations should think for us or represent us but that poor people must have the same rights as all other people to think for ourselves and to represent ourselves. We are not children and for us solidarity must be a partnership between equals. We were also very clear that our struggle is not a struggle for service delivery to speeded up. Our struggle is for social justice and for the poor to be fully included in all decision making that affects us.

The church leaders were very clear that they recognise that they can't be friends with everyone and that their support for the state over the last 17 years has not led to the creation of a just society in which everyone counts. They were very clear that South Africa is an unjust society. They were very clear that they have decided that the time has come for them to listen to the voices of the organised poor and to find ways to work with us to support our day to day struggles. They were very clear that they need to break with a state centred theology and to rather choose a people centred theology that has a preferential option for the poor.

We have agreed to have a follow up meeting soon to concretise the basis for ongoing solidarity.

As a movement that has been subject to serious state repression and to the general tendency, which is also prevalent in civil society, to misrepresent the organised poor as irresponsible, irrational, violent and criminal, we warmly welcome this important overture from the church leaders in the Western Cape. We look forward to working closely with the churches in the Western Cape as we struggle, together, for a just society in which the human dignity of all people is recognised.

Mzonke Poni
Chairperson, Abahlali baseMjondolo, Western Cape Region

6 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Abahlali baseMjondolo will boycott tomorrow's meeting called by the City of Cape Town Mayor Patricia De Lille

Abahlali baseMjondolo will boycott tomorrow's meeting called by the City of Cape Town Mayor Patricia De Lille and we will protest against this meeting as this will not be a meeting of equal partnership/engagement.

We believe that this meeting will be dominated and controlled by the city of Cape Town not by backyarders.

And Backyarders from Delft, Mitchells Plain, Mandela Park, Gugulethu, Nyanga and Khayelitsha will join ABM WC protest outside Mew Way hall tomorrow at 13:30.

We are going to meet outside ABM WC office at 13:00 then March through Lansdowne road to Mew Way.

And we are going to hand over our memorandum to Patricia De Lille to call on her to organize an open meeting where every backyarder and shack dweller will be able to participate.

Mzonke Poni

1. We note that tomorrow at 14:00 at Mew Way, Khayelitsha the City of Cape Town Mayor Patricia De Lille will be meeting with representatives of backyarders to find solutions to address challenges facing backyarder communities.

2. Abahlali baseMjondolo welcomes the move by the mayor to engage with backyarders in terms of finding solutions in problems faced by the backyarders but we oppose to the strategy which is being implemented by the city of cape town in doing so (i.e inviting 3 people per organization)

3. To invite three people per organization of backyarders that undermines the right of ordinary people to speak for themselves in finding solutions into problems that they face on a daily basis

4. And as organization we note that there are people who claim to represent the interest of backyarders while they are not living at the backyards and this again undermines the right of backyarders to speak for themselves.

5. And we also note that organized backyard organizations were not consulted in organizing the meeting and some organizations were also sidelined in this meeting.

6. Abahlali baseMjondolo has been calling on the mayor of cape town Patricia De Lille to address shackdwellers direct in finding solutions regard problems facing shack dwellers and the mayor has been refusing

7. We call on the Mayor to do away with the system of representative democracy in finding solutions regard problems facing the poor as this system excludes ordinary voices from the ground.

8. We call on the mayor to adhere to the principles of participatory democracy or direct democracy by organizing open meeting where everybody will matter, where every body will count, where everybody will be equal; where everybody need to be respected, where everybody will be able speak without any fear.

Mzonke Poni

6 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Mayor De Lille Unwilling to Meet Backyarders on our own Terms

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape mobilised backyarders from Delft, Gugulethu, Mandela Park, Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha in advance of the meeting that Mayor Patricia de Lille had scheduled with backyarders in Khayelitsha today.

We made it clear that we do not consider public events stage managed by the City at which each organisation can only send three representatives to be genuine participatory democracy. We are committed to participatory democracy, to the co-planning of open assemblies at which participatory budgeting and urban planning can be taken forward. The logic of representation at meetings organised in a top down way is the logic of civil society. It is not the logic of popular democracy.

People gathered outside the AbM office in Khayelitsha this morning. It was decided that we should attend the meeting but that we would all attend it. People were excited about the opportunity to engage with the Mayor and to have their voices heard.

But when the City heard that we were coming they cancelled the meeting for, they said, the 'Mayor's safety'. Why is that when ever poor people gather on our own terms, speak on our own terms and try to engage on our own terms this is taken as violence even when all we are doing is talking? Why are the politicians so scared of us? We have never evicted them, shot them with rubber bullets or put them in jail for trying to make their voices heard? We are the oppressed of this society yet we are made to seem like dangerous people – even criminals – when all we want is to talk about our future!

We suffer together, we struggle together and we will engage the state together. We all have a stake in our own future and we cannot exclude anyone from discussions. And, as everyone knows, the only strength of the poor is our unity therefore we cannot accept a mode of engaging the state that undermines

our unity. We are committed to a mass democratic politics because we are serious about overcoming our oppression.

We are currently having an open assembly at the AbM office in Khayelitsha to discuss the way forward.

We will continue to struggle to deepen this democracy into a participatory system by mass struggle from below.

We continue to call on the mayor to adhere to the principles of participatory democracy or direct democracy by working with the organisations of the poor to arrange open assemblies where everybody will matter, where everybody will count, where everybody will be equal; where everybody need to be respected and where everybody will be able speak without any fear.

Mzonke Poni

15 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

What is the Future for the Youth of South Africa?

The issues that are facing the youth are being ignored for eleven months of the year and only recognised on the youth month. But even on the youth month when the issues of the youth are being recognised there is a lack of seriousness about dealing with the crisis facing the current generation. There is a lot of talk and big speeches in stadiums and on TV but very little action.

The media are often confused. They often think that the tenderpreneurs really represent the youth when in fact they only represent themselves and their super-rich friends in business and politics. They are exploiting the crisis of the youth to advance their own interests.

Young people are supposed to have a clear path to adulthood. But here in South Africa millions of us are stuck. We cannot continue with education. We cannot find work and if we do find work we are working casual and have no rights or security at work. We do not have an income. We cannot move forward with our lives, take a respected place in our communities and form our own families. We are stuck.

On Sunday the Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth league was hosted in settlements in Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (the INK settlements). We were excited to meet so many young activists but sad to find the issues that they are facing at a community level, even the scholars. The issues in these areas are the same as the issues that the AbM youth are struggling with in areas like Richmond Farm, Siyanda and the Siyanda transit camp where we have also recently hosted meetings.

Many of the problems that our parents are facing are not different to the problems that we are facing as young activists. We are the first people that are being affected by the failure of the government to provide services to shack dwellers. If there is no water we are the ones that are supposed to go and get the water from the rivers. We are the ones that are supposed to go out in the dark

to buy candles. Often we are the ones being raped at daylight, being stricken by the HIV/AIDs and addicted to drugs and alcohol.

We also suffer when there are evictions, when there are fires, and where there is police brutality against activists. But we also suffer from our own problems as the youth. Unemployment is worse for the youth and grants and what housing is available are only available for people with families. The failure to provide educational opportunities for all young people hits us very hard.

Again all these issues are only talked about only on the youth month.

In community meetings we discuss the poverty, hunger and lack of information to young people and the lack of basic youth facilities needs like grounds to exercise and play sports, libraries and community halls. This has left a lot of questions to us.

If everyone says that the youth are the future why are we being neglected like this?

If everyone says that the youth must avoid drugs and alcohol why are we not been given real alternatives for our lives?

We thank all those elders that want to see the youth develop, like the Principal of Thobile Primary School who has opened doors to the youth.

It is clear that the youth need to organise ourselves to make our voice strong and to challenge this situation where young people have no jobs, no access to education and no income. Everyone in this world deserves a chance to make a decent life. Right now some people have too much and others have nothing. This is not fair.

What kind of society are we building here when the boss of Shoprite, Whitey Basson, can earn 627.53 million Rand in one year while millions of young people have no work and no hope for their lives? Twenty rich people in our country are owning 112.2 billion Rand, while 48% of South Africans, around 24 million people, are living on less than 322 Rand a month. This is unacceptable. This has to change. For us progress is not a question of replacing white millionaires with black millionaires. For us progress is a question of building an equal society. We are not the problem. It is the concentration of wealth in the hands of people like Whitey Basson that is the problem. The tenderpreneurs are just making things worse by corrupting the state. For us progress means putting the worst off first. For us the road to progress is organising and struggling from below for a just society in which everyone has enough to meet their basic needs.

But we have to do all that we can to support the youth in the crisis that we are currently facing at the same time as we have to do all that we can to struggle to bring justice to this world.

After the meetings in the INK settlements it is clear that there is a serious and urgent problem of drug abuse. Drugs are eating at what ever hope the youth have been able to keep alive in these settlements. We have decided to organise a campaign around drug abuse in these settlements. We will visit the nearest rehab centre to explain the importance of the support of social workers to work with the community to help decrease the level of drug abuse in the community. As the AbM youth we are willing to work with the Social Development Department on these issues. Youth are dying while still waiting on the waiting list to access rehab. Something must be done urgently.

When people do get into rehab they come out of rehab not knowing where to go. When people come out of rehab they usually go back into the same situation that led them to abuse drugs in the first place. The biggest problem of all the problems is the lack of employment. This is why we are saying that every person should have a right to work or a right to a guaranteed income.

The government has failed to find a solution on these issues and they have failed to engage with the young people on these issues. We always find them having conferences in big hotels while the serious problems are on the community level. This is where engagement between the people and the state should be happening.

We as the youth of Abahlali baseMjondolo are not happy with the long waiting list for people to get into rehab. We are also not happy that the youth are unemployed and without an income. And we are not happy that most young people are not getting a good school education or the chance to study further after school. We are also unhappy about the lack of facilities for the youth. Therefore we will continue to struggle to pressurise the government to take real action to these issues that we have raised.

We as the Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth league we say “Long live the struggle of the youth! Long live!”

Aluta continua

Mazwi Nzimande: Abahlali Youth League President

Lindokuhle Motha: Abahlali Youth League Vice President

Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali Secretary General

16 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Eskom and the City of Cape Town in another Brutal Attack on the Poor

Yesterday Eskom and the City of Cape Town descended on RR Section in Khayelitsha with a heavy police presence. They removed safe insulated cables that people were running from shacks with legal electricity boxes into shacks without electricity. The people who were running the cables into their shacks were paying those with legal electricity to use their power. These negotiated connections between neighbours were not illegal. It is therefore the police, and Eskom and the City of Cape Town, who engaged in criminal actions (theft and assault) yesterday.

There has previously been a fire in this community which was caused by a candle. If the state does not provide electricity to people they have a right to negotiate with their neighbours to access electricity and keep their homes, families and community safe.

Four people were shot at during the raid yesterday and one person has been left with a broken arm. Four people were arrested and will appear at the Khayelitsha Magistrate's court this afternoon.

The City of Cape Town says that it wants to engage shack dwellers but only if we attend their meetings on their terms and limit the conversation to a discussion on service delivery. Yet they are attacking us! They are attacking us from Khayelitsha to Mitchell's Plain to Hangberg! People have been left maimed for life in these attacks. The City of Cape Town are not democrats. We are asking for open and free discussion and what we get is stage managed PR events on one side and police violence on the other side. They are trying to beat us into accepting our own oppression while they have business lunches with property developers.

We will not be silent about the war, the violent war, that the City of Cape is waging against the poor. They burst into our homes and communities beating and shooting and yet they call us violent. When we make our own arrangements to survive poverty, like negotiating to pay to use our neighbour's electricity, or occupying land, they call us criminals.

Xoliswa Magazi
Bulelani Somaza
Mzonke Poni

24 SEPTEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Comrades in New Zealand in Solidarity with AbM

Activists in New Zealand Who Once Supported the Leadership of the ANC in the Struggle Against Apartheid are now supporting AbM's Struggle for Justice.

In the small country of New Zealand, with a population of about 4.5 million people nationally, the AbM President S'bu Zikode gave an inspiring and challenging speech to 300 people on 11 September 2011. These people were once strong supporters of the ANC during the struggle against apartheid. It is sad that the very same people who fought for the freedom of all South Africans have now been betrayed by the very same comrades who they once fought for to free the country from apartheid. "Since the end of apartheid the rich have gone richer and the poor have become poorer" the President told the assembled group. As he was going around New Zealand he also showed the comrades on that side something about the lives of the poor in South Africa by screening the film *Dear Mandela*. New Zealanders were stunned by the revelations in the film and the President's talks as they have 0% shacks in their country.

During his journey the President met with the High Commissioner of South Africa to New Zealand, who was also surprised that there are people living under these conditions in his own country. He was also shocked to hear that we have exhausted all avenues of the government from Local to Provincial to National without getting any one to take us, and our situation, seriously.

We are always looking for allies in our struggle to build the power of the poor in South Africa through bottom up mass democratic organising. The comrades in New Zealand have pledged their support in our fight for a second struggle in South Africa, a struggle for social justice. We already have friends of AbM groups in England and in America and we look forward to having a good relationship with the comrades in New Zealand too.

Although there is 0% shacks in New Zealand some of the things that the New Zealanders are still in struggle for are no different from the struggle of Abahlali, which is the struggle for land reform, justice and equality. The black position in South Africa still echoes that of Maori in New Zealand stemming from a shared

history of European Colonization. “Our land was stolen from us. Now that the country is in the hands of the black majority the only change we see since 1994 is the change from white faces to black faces in government”.

A key difference in the struggle in New Zealand and in South Africa is that in New Zealand, unlike South Africa, the rights of the protesters are not violated by the police. Back in the times of apartheid you would find policemen carrying guns waiting to shoot at people. Even today the same approach is being done. We are becoming a Police State. Bheki Cele is currently calling on the media to treat protesters as criminals and promising more ‘robust policing’ against protests. In New Zealand when the people protest it a gun free zone. No guns are being carried by police officers. You won’t hear of any incident like the shooting of protesters. Is it right to call South Africa as a free country while the only difference is that today it is not only the white police that are carrying guns for us but even our own black brothers are carrying guns to shoot at us? The answer has to be no.

For as long as we as the poor are not really free in South Africa we will continue to build a politics of the poor, for the poor and by the poor.

We acknowledge the contribution of Global Peace and Justice, Auckland which is led by John Minto as its spokesperson. We also acknowledge the good work that our President did in explaining our struggle to the comrades in New Zealand. However we are all clear that it is the struggle of AbM to bring truth, equality, dignity and spirit of Ubuntu to South Africa that the New Zealand comrades support. They turned out in their hundreds to listen to the AbM President’s presentation in all six cities – Auckland, Hamilton, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Palmerstone North. We stand strong in solidarity with the New Zealand comrades and will respond to all calls to support their struggles from here.

We demand that the government recognise the poor as human beings equal to all other human beings and treat us equally and with respect. If we are not treated equally we will use the same strategies used by the Women of Cato Manor, Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela and other freedom fighters to free South Africa so that our dignity can be restored to us.

Aluta Continua New Zealanders!!!

Abahlali baseMjondolo office
 Bandile Mdlalose: ABM Secretary General
 Mazwi Nzimande: ABM Youth President

7 OCTOBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

New eThekweni Mayor Disrespects the Shack Dwellers

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA is very disappointed by the new mayor's disrespect for the shack dwellers. The hope that we had that the new mayor would be different to the last mayor has been dashed. Obed Mlaba was never prepared to meet with us. He had many things to say about us but he would never meet with us. James Nxumalo, the new mayor, agreed to meet with us in September and the meeting was confirmed to be held yesterday on the 6th October 2011. We had organised many meetings in our organisation to carefully prepare for the meeting with the mayor. Comrades had taken time off work for the meeting. People were excited. But the meeting was cancelled in the last hour.

The mayor has vowed to serve all the people of Durban, rich and poor, and regardless of all the lines that have been put between people of different colours and people speaking different languages. He is not just there to serve members of the ruling party. In a democracy we have a right to organise autonomously if that is our choice. We had high hopes when James Nxumalo was appointed as the mayor because when he was still a Council Speaker he was able to meet some of our leadership. When other politicians were attacking us he was willing to speak to us. We even trusted him when he visited some of the shack settlements that were gutted by shack fires in May and June this year. But today we have realized that he was pretending to be in solidarity with the shack dwellers. He has managed to use the people of Durban, including shack dwellers, to ascend to power. It is true that we did not vote in the last election. But it is also true that we did not mobilise against James Nxumalo as we hoped that he would be willing to work with us.

We thought that he was a good, humble and accessible leader. But once again we have learnt that good leaders are corrupted by a corrupt system. We have been reminded that it is better to destroy such a system that corrupts good people. Nothing good can be done on a rotten terrain.

We know of some people who claim to be leaders in this municipality who hate the shack dwellers. They would rather have the democratic image of the city ruined than to engage shack dwellers. It is the same municipality that sends the police, private security and sometimes thugs to attack our movement. It is the only municipality known to us that has the policy to prohibit the electrification of shack settlements so that our children can be burnt to death in these shack fires.

It is the same City that has treated shack dwellers with contempt for years and continues to dream of a world-class city without slums. This is just another way of saying that they dream of a city where the poor have no place, no rights, no freedom and no dignity. They want us far away, quiet and invisible. The Human Settlement Unit has avoided meeting the organised shack dwellers but every day they get paid in the name of the shack dwellers in the city. We believe that they hate our movement because we have exposed corruption in the city, we have resisted the comradeship in development, we have stopped so many evictions, we have won our case against the 'Slums Act', we have refused to vote for people that oppress us and we have organised ourselves as shack dwellers and run community services outside of the City's control. The City accused our leaders of running our own authority in Kennedy Road. The same accusation has been made in Motala Heights and many other settlements. And of course they hate us for our victory in the case of the Kennedy 12 that has exposed the thuggery that the ruling party deployed against us.

Our movement began with a road blockade in 2005. That road was blockaded because it was impossible for shack dwellers to speak to the people that they had elected to represent them. We have always wanted to engage the state to improve our settlements and our city. But when politicians refuse to recognise us and to negotiate with us our movement is left with no other choices except to engage in mass mobilisation. It is time for us to return to the streets.

We believe that, as the Freedom Charter says, the people shall govern. We have always been clear that we are not just struggling for quicker and less corrupt service delivery. We have always said that we are struggling for land and housing in the cities and for a bottom up system of real democracy in which development can be fully democratised. But we have also always warned that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. In a city where poor people

face eviction, forced removal to transit camps, armed disconnections from electricity, shack fires, incredible corruption in housing and incredibly badly built housing for those that do get housing it is deeply irresponsible for the City to play ducks and drakes with the organisations of the poor. Everywhere frustrations are high.

When the government treats us with contempt, shows us that our lives count for nothing and criminalises poverty and the struggle against poverty, we have no choice but to use people's power in the streets and in the courts when need be. We have done all that we were supposed to do to respect those who do not appreciate and deserve such respect. We have exhausted all political avenues only to be betrayed time and again. One of the most urgent demands to the City has been to house those who continue to be homeless and displaced by the September 2009 attack in Kennedy Road settlement. Yet we are now in October 2011 and there has still not even been one meeting to discuss a way forward on this matter.

We will be hosting a press conference in our offices in town where we will be announcing our programme of action. The press conference will be held on Tuesday, 11 October 2011 at 10 am, Office 416 Salisbury Centre, Tower B, 347-351 Pixley kaSeme Street, opposite Woolworths. We will be holding a General Meeting over the weekend to take the mandate of all our branches and affiliated communities. All branches and communities have been asked to collect their demands and to bring them to the General Meeting. Abahlali has recently launched new branches in Shallcross, Intake View, Richmond Farm, KwaMashu etc. We will bring the demands of the old branches and communities, that have been struggling for many years now, together with the demands from the new areas.

We believe that our numbers will force the deaf ears to account.

Mazwi Nzimande (Abahlali Acting Administrator)
 Mzwakhe Mdlalose (Abahlali President)
 Mnikelo Ndabankulu (Former Abahlali Media Officer)
 Mama Nyawo (Nokuthula Nyawo)

12 OCTOBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Protest Happening Now at Kennedy Road

Abahlali baseMjondolo have started shacking

On Tuesday, 10 October 2011 at 10:00am in our office we held a press conference where we said that if the Councillors, Mayors, and all sorts of government do not meet with the people on the grassroots and have a collective decision making then we will be unable to stop the anger of the people.

While we were still having the conference the Siyanda ward 41 councillor, Mr Lucky Mdlalose, was busy employing his own friends to work in the community.

This resulted in the anger of the community mobilizing them to stop the project that was about to start without involving the community or having spoken with them. The Siyanda people have taught Mdlalose a lesson not to take decisions for them without them by stopping the project. Everything was put to a standstill.

Now the Kennedy Road residents have followed in the footsteps of Siyanda for the very same reasons of having decisions taken for them without them. This time the councillor gave strict instructions to the employer of a project only to employ certain people without consulting with the local residents. This has angered the community in a way that they have stopped everything that is happening in Kennedy Road and have requested to see the employer to negotiate a fair and open employment practice on this project. However he has disappeared and the councillor has switched his mobile off so he won't be reached.

Kennedy Road residents have decided to sit outside the gate until there is an agreement on a fair employment plan, collectively and openly negotiated, for this project.

This top down system needs to come to an end before something bad happens. The people are desperate and suffering terribly without employment. Yet when jobs come they only go to party members and friends of the councillors. Development has been personalised and it has been politicised.

Our government keeps on failing his country. As we have been saying that employment is only reserved to ANC card carrying members this has resulted to the blockade of streets by the community and even the police officers who are said to be protecting the community now are threatening the community of Kennedy Road.

We would like all journalists to rush to the scene at the Kennedy Road Shack Settlement.

Busisiwe Ntwana (KR Chairperson:)
Sindi Maluleka (KR Coordinator)
Abahlali

18 OCTOBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

“We are all S’bu Zikode”

Abahlali baseMjondolo is a movement of the poor that struggles to protect, promote and advance the dignity of the poor in South Africa. One of our roles is to bring the government to the people and the people to the government.

We have marched to take our demands to councillors, mayors, premiers and the president. We have had many meetings but in Durban, the city where our movement was founded six years ago, we have never, despite all the marches, ever had a meeting with the mayor to discuss our demands.

When Obed Mlaba was the Mayor and Mike Sutcliffe ran this city for John Mchunu there was no hope for any kind of meaningful engagement between the organised poor and the City. But when James Nxumalo became Mayor we had real hope that things would be different. He was respected as one of the few politicians that could humble himself and engage the poor with respect.

On Thursday, 13 October 2011 at 13:30pm we finally had our first meeting with the Mayor. There were fourteen Abahlali members elected to represent the movement at this meeting. There were also officials from the eThekweni Municipality’s Department of Human Settlements and councillors, including the Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure, Nigel Gumede. It was a promising meeting. We had hope that when we met with the Mayor, our hopes might be rebuilt again.

Mayor Nxumalo humbled himself with respect and apologised to Abahlali for cancelling, at the last minute, the first meeting that had been arranged. However as the Mayor was so humble and respecting the presence of Abahlali Nigel Gumede interrupted and introduced himself as a murderer (“Ngingumbulali mina”). He attacked Zikode threatening to beat him saying “uZikode akakaze ashaywe”(Zikode has never been beaten). He said that “uZikode akabazi abantu” (Zikode doesn’t know people). He also said that the ANC is at war with AbM and that he has to go to the bushes for Zikode. In Zulu idiom this is a clear threat – a threat of attack, a threat of ambush. The mood was sensitive and fragile.

The dawning of democracy was supposed to mean that the time of the politic of war had passed. Those who are trying to bring it back are a threat, a deep threat, to our society. The new Mayor has a lot of work to do in teaching people like Gumede what it means to be in a democracy. Gumede has served more than 5 years on his portfolio and he still fails to respect the public, especially the poor. Gumede is disrespectful not only to the poor but even to the Mayor himself, for he has attacked the guest of the Mayor in front of the Mayor. Everyone in the meeting expected the Mayor, who chaired the meeting, to protect Zikode. It is the responsibility of a chair to protect anyone who is victimised by anyone at a meeting. This meeting expected the chair to call Gumede into order but he did not. His silence raised a lot of questions about the role of the chairperson of this meeting and the role of any chairperson at any meeting.

In September 2009 our movement was attacked by the ANC in the Kennedy Road settlement. The attackers said that they wanted to kill S'bu Zikode and other leaders. They demolished and looted our leaders' homes while the police did nothing. Our leaders were forced to flee and to become refugees. For months death threats were openly made against a number of our leaders.

In 2009 Nigel Gumede praised this. He saw an opportunity to go to the Kennedy Road settlement and rubbish the work of Abahlali. He promised the Kennedy Road residents that he would build them houses in February 2010 and said that if he failed to deliver the houses the community must chase him out. His comments at the Kennedy Road settlement after the attack were filmed by the film makers that made *Dear Mandela*. They are on record.

ANC people attacked us in Kennedy Road in 2009 and we have now been threatened by a leading ANC member in Durban in the Mayor's office.

This has not moved us from our stand that we demand that Nigel Gumede must resign. He has got no manners for the public. He has become a serious threat to the organised poor by using his powers as the Chairperson of Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure to threaten our leader. After we were attacked in 2009, had our homes destroyed and looted, and were repeatedly and publicly threatened with death it is deeply irresponsible for a leader of the ANC to openly say that the ANC is at war with Abahlali and to threaten to beat and attack our best known leader. We came to this meeting to negotiate. The Mayor made it clear that he is willing to negotiate. He has instructed his officials to examine all of our demands and to report back to us in a second meeting in

two weeks time. But Gumede declared war on our movement and threatened violence to our best known leader.

What kind of politician declares war on a democratic poor people's organisation? What kind of politician declares war on people asking to negotiate? What kind of politician declares war on people who are still suffering from recent violence and threats at the hands of the ruling party and have come to a meeting to discuss healing?

If any of us committed any crimes the government has the power to arrest us and to have us charged with those crimes. Yet they don't arrest us. They don't arrest because they know that there is no court that can find us guilty of exercising our democratic rights. Instead we are slandered, attacked and openly threatened with attack.

They have all the money. They have the police and the intelligence services. They have musicians and journalists and as many lawyers as they want. They can send bulldozers to evict us at any time or the securities to disconnect us. All that we really have is our togetherness. We are not paid to struggle. We are just poor people that are taking our lives seriously. Yet we are presented as a threat to society.

Nigel Gumede needs to understand that S'bu Zikode gets his mandate from the people. S'bu Zikode takes no decisions for the people. He, with many other leaders in our movement, tries his best to faithfully carry out the decisions taken by our members. Whatever he has to say does not come from him but from Abahlali. In our movement direction comes from below. S'bu Zikode is not Abahlali baseMjondolo but we as the membership form the organisation. If you attack S'bu Zikode, who is mandated by us, that means that you are attacking all of us. We are all S'bu Zikode.

We have more than 10 000 members in 64 different settlements – 49 in KwaZulu-Natal and 15 in the Western Cape. We are all S'bu Zikode.

Nigel Gumede is very angry that S'bu Zikode has gone abroad. This was raised after the attack in 2009 and again at this meeting where Gumede threatened Zikode. In the past Zikode has been questioned by intelligence agents after travelling abroad. But every citizen of this country has the same right to go abroad. It is not a crime to go abroad. And it is not only S'bu Zikode who goes abroad to represent Abahlali. All active members may be elected to represent the movement abroad and to tell the untold stories and share the perspective

that the shack dwellers have developed in our discussions in Abahlali. We are always the marginalised and always the talked about. We are always known to be those that are poor, that are uneducated and that can't speak for themselves. But the only difference between the poor and the rich is money. We can all take decisions for ourselves and talk for ourselves.

S'bu Zikode was elected to lead our movement for six years in a row. He often asked to be allowed to step aside to find work and focus on his family. But the members insisted that he stay on and, after discussions with his family, he agreed. He has always led our movement with courage, dignity, gentleness and humbleness. He has worked days and nights and weekend after weekend for years. He has paid a high price for this commitment. He has been arrested, tortured, slandered, chased out of two jobs and severely beaten. He has had his home destroyed and looted and has had to become a political refugee. His family have paid a high price for all of this.

No one in Abahlali would deny that S'bu Zikode has been a powerful leader or that he has been such a powerful leader because he has always insisted that his only role is to support people to organise themselves and to struggle for themselves. But this does not change the fact that S'bu Zikode does not make us struggle. It is oppression that makes us struggle.

Even though Nigel Gumede has attacked the poor we would like to acknowledge the humbleness and respect of the Mayor who has shown that he has got a heart for the people. As a movement we are looking forward to having a good relationship with him because we have seen his willingness to cooperate with the poor. We continue to see his appointment as the Mayor as a real opportunity to move towards a politic of discussion and negotiation in Durban – a real partnership between government and the people.

But Nigel Gumede must go. Gumede has gone too far with his threats. He has no respect for the public and the elected leaders of the public. We are not threatening him but we are telling him that he needs to step down in the interests of democracy. We cannot allow the politic of war and killing to be brought back into this country. We wish to make it very clear that if anything happens to S'bu Zikode we, and all our comrades, will hold Nigel Gumede responsible.

All politicians and officials must learn to respect everyone who they lead or represent without any regard to their gender, race, age, language or socio-economic or political background. No politician can run a City Hall like its their own Spaza Shop.

Democracy cannot be reduced to voting. Democracy is also the right of all people to organise freely and to speak freely. Democracy is not just for members of the ruling party and the middle classes. Democracy is for everyone and that includes the poor. We have the same rights as everyone else to organise freely and to think and speak for ourselves.

We are calling on all democrats, in and outside of the ANC, to support this call to defend our hard won democracy. We are calling for clear statements of support for S'bu Zikode and all other activists facing intimidation and repression. We are calling for practical action to support S'bu Zikode and all other activists facing intimidation and repression. We are also calling on all democrats to work to isolate the warlords, the authoritarians and all others in the ruling party, and in other organisations, that are vandalising our democracy. We cannot go back to a politic of war.

Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali Secretary General

Mazwi Nzimande: Abahlali Spokesperson

Mzwakhe Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo President

Nokuthula Nyawo: Abahlali baseMjondolo Co-ordinator

It is not just in our movement that we say “We are all S'bu Zikode”. At short notice this statement is also supported by the following organisations. We expect other organisations to also issue statements of support once they have had the opportunity to discuss this issue.

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape – Mzonke Poni

Landless People's Movement – Maas Van Wyk

Rural Network – Reverend Mavuso Mbhekiseni

South Durban Community Environmental Alliance – Des D'sa

Students for Social Justice – Ben Fogel

Unemployed People's Movement – Ayanda Kota

19 OCTOBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Protest Today in Pinetown

Abahlali baseMjondolo take to the Streets, demand end to vicious evictions in eMmaus South Africa's largest social movement calls for respect, and the right to decent housing and safety

Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal

This morning, Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) members and allies will be joining a march from Shepstone Road to Tollage Road to call for an end to all demolitions and evictions in the eMmaus community. Since late 2010, hundreds of people have had their shacks destroyed in Durban including some by the landlord, Mahogany Ridge 2 Property Owners Association. Hundreds more have been brutally evicted. The Mahogany Ridge 2 Property Owners Association is currently trying to evict people from a land occupation in eMmaus. These actions by the landlord present a gross violation of people's right to housing and safety. Today we are marching for land and housing in the cities.

We have a right to cities, a right which we are prepared to live for or die for. AbM is in over 64 communities nation wide and has over 10,000 active members.

The marchers will acting peacefully to bring attention to the desperately broken system of democracy that has developed since the end of apartheid. It is in reality a system that has, to put it simply, replaced one set of white elites with another set of black elites, all with little interest in real democracy. Democracy for the poor has meant being moved at the will of the rich, living in shacks and waiting decades for permanent housing. Democracy for the poor in this country has also meant being continually marginalized from conversations and tables where decisions are being made about our lives and the lives of our children and families. We are now in the middle of the census. But we are tired of having government officials coming to count us, talk to us and make empty

promises. They want us to stop building shacks because they do not want us to help ourselves while they themselves are living in decent places.

Abahlali is calling for simple things: justice, housing as a human right, and the chance to be full participants in our lives without being threatened or attacked by political officials. Abahlali's aims are peaceful but have been met with disdain and brutality. Abahlali is calling for an end to the politically-motivated repression and fear mongering which we have been forced to endure at the hands of the government and its thugs.

The protest is also meant to highlight a recent series of disrespectful and dangerous interactions Abahlali has had with government officials. Indeed, despite more than six years of rallies, workshops, and community mobilization, Abahlali had until last week been repeatedly denied its democratic right to meet with and discuss its demands with elected officials.

Marchers will make their way to the offices of Mahogany Ridge 2 Property Owners Association where they will present a list of demands which include, that a hazardous electrical fence that was erected by the landlord be immediately removed, and that the land should rightly be given back to the relevant South Africans from whose grandparents it was stolen. This march marks the beginning of a series of protests that will culminate on December 3rd, the global day of action against climate change. We will claim the space as the masses on December 3rd. We are calling for justice, equality, human dignity. We call for the world not to stand aside and look on as we are being oppressed.

Muzi Mkhize Protest March Convener
Khanyi Dlamuka eMmaus Coordinator
AbM Office

19 OCTOBER 2011

Memorandum of demands · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Memorandum of Demands to Mr. Glen Lion Demy, Mahogany Ridge 2 Property Owners Association

We, the residents, men and women of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA in eMmaus, in Pinetown, in KwaZulu-Natal are democrats committed to the flourishing of this country. We speak for ourselves and direct our own struggle. We have been mobilized by our own suffering and our hope for a better future. It is time to take seriously the fact that the distribution of land is a serious problem in our country and that land was stolen from our ancestors and that this has impoverished us. It is also time to take seriously the fact that land continues to be taken from the poor in the name of development and the market and that this continues to impoverish us.

For too long the commercial value of land here in eMmaus, in nearby Motala Heights and in many other areas has been put before its social value. We demand that social value of land come before its commercial value.

For too long we have been living under constant threats of eviction in our own land. We demand an immediate and permanent end to all evictions. We demand land security.

For too long the right to cities has been denied to the shack dwellers and the poor in this country. We demand the right to live in the cities.

For too long the provision of basic services has been denied to us and the poor. We demand the provision of all basic services such as water and sanitation, electricity, road access, refuse collection etc to us.

For too long we have been fenced in the shacks and transit camps. We demand Mr. Demsey immediately remove the electric fence that has been installed on this land. We also demand the immediate removal of security guards from our community.

For too long the state and the business sector have united against the poor. We demand that the eThekweni municipality to stop sending Mr. Mdletshe to

threaten us with eviction. We demand that Mdletshe stop himself from being used as the puppet of the eThekweni municipality and that he decide to work with the people of this city.

For too long our struggle has been redirected to courts because it is too expensive for us to struggle there. We demand that that you withdraw your court proceedings and negotiate a way forward with us.

If we are given no option to negotiate we are prepared to fight for this land and against all evictions and harassment in courts and in streets.

Land is not for sale in Africa. We demand that you return your money to those who sold this land to you and bring our land back.

Just as people around the city, the country and world are uniting in support of our struggle we express our support for our comrades elsewhere.

If this memorandum is received without conscious Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA will reconsider another plan B... We will not give up the struggle for this land or for the right of all people to live in peace and safety.

Handed over by _____ on _____ at _____

Signature _____.

Received by _____ on _____ at _____.

Signature _____

Mr Muzi Mkhize
Miss Khany Dlamuka

5 NOVEMBER 2011

Memorandum · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March to Demand the Resignation of Nigel Gumede

RE: Call for the immediate removal of Nigel Gumede as Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure for eThekweni Municipality

Today, Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) is marching to urgently call for the immediate removal of Nigel Gumede as Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure for the eThekweni Municipality.

This urgent call for Gumede's dismissal comes after he has spent his tenure continuously neglecting the poor and failing to meet the needs of the poor in this city, many of whom continue to live in life threatening conditions year after year.

We are also demanding Gumede's firing due to a series of menacing threats he has made over the last two years toward S'bu Zikode, Chairperson of Abahlali baseMjondolo, as well as other members of Abahlali. His statements after the 2009 attack on our movement at the Kennedy Road settlement included open statements of disgraceful ethnic prejudice. Abahlali baseMjondolo is and will remain a non-ethnic and non-racial movement for all poor people that is not affiliated to any political party and struggles to protect, promote and advance the dignity of the poor in South Africa. Gumede has become a major block to our efforts to realize genuine democracy for all people and he must resign now.

Over the last six years of Abahlali's existence we have held many marches targeting the people holding power, often turning out in thousands to protest against the ongoing housing crisis and the crisis of economic and political inequality facing the poor. However, not until 13 October 2011 were we granted our first meeting with eThekweni Mayor, the Honourable James Nxumalo. It was at this meeting, with fourteen of Abahlali's elected representatives present, that Gumede once again displayed his brute thuggery, opening the meeting by introducing himself as a murderer, stating outright that the ANC is at war with Abahlali baseMjondolo and threatening to ambush S'bu Zikode in the forest. Abahlali baseMjondolo is not at war with the ANC and has always unequivocally affirmed that one of our roles is to bring the government to the people and the people to the government. We have never been affiliated to any political

party but we do insist on our right to organize and to struggle for a bottom up and people centered system of development in this country. Any threat to S'bu Zikode is a threat to us all. We have clearly stated that "We are all S'bu Zikode".

While we will continue to meet with Mayor Nxumalo in good faith to address our issues, it is clear that there can be no negotiation with Gumede when such threats are in the air. They undermine trust between negotiating parties and damage any real chance of dialogue and action in partnership. Further, Gumede must leave his position because he has spent his tenure disrespecting the poor and leaving us with a long list of broken and unfulfilled promises. His legacy is a one of state violence and contempt towards the poor – illegal evictions, armed disconnections, forced removals to rural dumping grounds, the horror of transit camps, massive corruption, violation of court orders, houses that are built without foundations and are unfit for human beings and people left living like pigs in the mud amidst constant shack fires.

We also march today in solidarity with the Right2Know Campaign (R2K). The Right2Know Campaign is a nation-wide coalition of people and organizations opposed to the Protection of Information Bill – also known as the Secrecy Bill – currently before the South African parliament. The Bill will threaten hard-won constitutional rights including access to information and freedom of expression. Abahlali has fought for many years to realize its constitutional right to protest and hold its mayor, councillors and other political leaders accountable. The Secrecy Bill, if passed, will provide cover to politicians like Gumede who openly threaten citizens asserting their rights. This bill will also be a direct barrier to our ability to get accurate and timely information on the progress of home constructions and delivery of services to shacks. We need more democracy, not less, in South Africa and, with our comrades in other movements around the country, we are determined to struggle to defend and to deepen democracy. The Secrecy Bill and politicians like Gumede are a clear and present danger to the political climate in South Africa – this is the climate change that we fear the most.

Abahlali stands unified and firm that Gumede must resign and the Secrecy Bill must not pass.

The march will start at Botha Park at 10:00 this morning and then proceed to the City Hall.

Bandile Mdlalose
Mazwi Nzimande

21 NOVEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

AbM Press Conference to Announce Mass Protest – 22 November, 10:00 a.m

Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League to March to Demand the Immediate Removal of Nigel Gumede from Office

AbM Youth League to take to the streets and demand the removal of Nigel Gumede as Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure for eThekweni Municipality

WHAT: On Thursday, 24 November 2011, Abahlali baseMjondolo's Youth League will march to demand the immediate removal of Nigel Gumede as Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure for the eThekweni Municipality. This demand comes in the wake of threatening statements that have come from Gumede toward Abahlali baseMjondolo Chairperson, S'bu Zikode, and other members of Abahlali over the last two years. These statements by Gumede, especially in the context of the repression that AbM has faced, show that Gumede is a serious threat to democracy in Durban. Gumede's intimidation undermine our confidence in the official goodwill that will be needed to make the current negotiations with the Mayor's office a success.

Gumede has also been grossly ineffective in his role and has discounted the needs of the poor time and time again during this tenure. We are living in life threatening conditions year after and year refuse to keep waiting indefinitely for decent housing and services.

Nigel Gumede is a direct threat to our ability to address and to overcome the life threatening and undignified conditions in which we have been forced to live for too long. It is these conditions that mean that we are the people in the City who are most at risk of climate change. He must resign now!

WHEN & WHERE:

- Press Conference: on 22 November 2011, 10am at the Abahlali baseMjondolo office, Salisbury Centre, 347-351 Dr Pixley kaSeme aka West

Street. Durban

– Protest: on 24 November 2011, the march starts at Botha Park at 8am

WHO: The Youth League of Abahlali baseMjondolo has put out the call to march to AbM members in over 20 shack settlements around the Durban area. They have also rallied allies who represent sister communities of taxi workers, street traders, hostel dwellers and others. We will fill the streets of Durban with a clear and firm demand for Nigel Gumede to go.

CONTACT: AbM Office:
Mazwi Nzimande

23 NOVEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March to Demand the Resignation of Nigel Gumede

Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League March to Demand the Resignation of Nigel Gumede – Thursday 24 November 2011

After years of broken promises and intimidation protesters march to demand an end to Housing Chairperson's reign of disrespect We are human beings, not dogs. Nigel Gumede treats us like dogs but we will defend our humanity.

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League has organised a march to demand the immediate removal of Nigel Gumede as the Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure for the eThekweni Municipality. People from more than 20 shack settlements in Durban as well as our comrades who are taxi workers, street traders, hostel dwellers, and others will march in solidarity with us on Thursday 24 November 2011. The march will leave Botha Park at 8. We will display the power of the people to show the weight of our demand that: Nigel Gumede must go!

This protest is part of a series of actions to pressure eThekweni Mayor James Nxumalo to terminate Nigel Gumede's employment effective immediately. The protests come after over a decade of Mr. Gumede consistently neglecting the needs of the poor. He has refused to listen to the demands of the city's poor people and has instead been investigated for corruption, supported the attack on AbM, tried to stir up ethnic division and issued open and blatant threats at the leadership and members of Abahlali baseMjondolo. For all these reasons Nigel Gumede must go!

Abahlali is a non-ethnic and non-racial movement of the poor that is not affiliated to any political party and struggles to protect, promote and advance the dignity of the poor in South Africa. Abahlali is active in over 64 shack settlements nationwide, works closely with our sister movements in the Poor People's Alliance as well as the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance and the Unemployed People's Movement, and has over 10,000 paid up members. This march belongs to us, the people who are struggling everyday with inhumane and illegal evictions, electricity disconnections and police brutality.

Nigel Gumede must be held to account for his total lack action to address these needs that our families and communities are facing. He has literally left us out in the cold and so Nigel Gumede must go!

Housing in the city of Durban is not bringing justice to the dispossessed. Housing in this city is a mess – houses are unfit for human habitation, they are in rural human dumping grounds and their allocation is corrupted. Housing has become little more than a way for some people in the ANC to become millionaires while the poor are forced out of the cities. People are being evicted from their shacks and left homeless, subject to violent disconnections from electricity and even forced into transit camps. Housing in this city is not delivering to us. It is terrorizing us and so Nigel Gumede must go!

The Youth League of Abahlali is also demanding Mr. Gumede's removal as his reign has meant that we are unable to achieve real dialogue with those in power. His intimidation and unfulfilled promises undermine the goodwill of conversations with the eThekweni mayor's office and damage any chance of us getting real changes from the municipality. We have grown tired of asking for the same things only to be met with increasing repression and disdain from Nigel Gumede. We and our parents have fought tirelessly for justice and security. Today, we are marching once more for land, housing, and a fair transfer of resources without political barriers. Our elected officials must serve the interests of all youth, families and communities. Because he is not serving the community's interests, Nigel Gumede must go!

The youth are also mounting this protest to remind our elected officials of the power that young people have always shown against tyranny in this country. We want to show that the youth can have a constructive response to the destructive politics as usual game that Nigel Gumede so keenly represents. Our poverty is political. We were made poor. We will respond, as we have always done, by building the power of the poor from the ground up. We want the government to understand that we are not its enemies, we are simply fighting to reclaim our dignity. The youth were once at the forefront of our liberation movement and today we raise again this time for land and housing in the cities, decent education and economic justice. We believe that Nigel Gumede must be sanctioned and investigated but that in the end, Nigel Gumede must go!

We are human beings not dogs and so Nigel Gumede must go!

Mr Mazwi Nzimande
Miss Bandile Mdlalose

24 NOVEMBER 2011

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Protest tomorrow the 23rd at Cape Town Civic centre

A CALL FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT NOT STAGE MANAGED PR ENGAGEMENT

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape tomorrow will have a protest outside Civic Centre at 12h00 till 13h00 and submit a memorandum to Patricia de Lille, the Mayor of City of Cape town.

Tomorrows protest follows number of attempts by Abahlali baseMjondolo to secure open public meeting with the mayor of City of Cape town.

We have done our best as organization, trying to secure a meeting with the mayor of City of Cape Town, we have submitted number of written request to the office of the mayor asking the mayor to address our public meetings about issues that affects us direct such as floods, shackfires, water cut-offs and the role of law enforcement within our communities because many of our communities have been victimised by law enforcement through illegal demolitions.

Tomorrow when we protest to the office of the mayor we want to make it clear to her that we will not compromise our struggle for human dignity and participatory democracy. We want to make it clear to her that democracy is not only about service delivery, therefore our engagement with her and the City of Cape Town will not be limited to service delivery as she want to limit our engagement only to service delivery.

Tomorrows protest is a build up of number of protest that Abahlali baseMjondolo of Western Cape will embark on till the mayor meet with us in our own terms, should the mayor fails to meet with us then we will left with no option but to go back to our members and communities to pave a way forward.

Last year after MEC for human settlement and previous mayor failed to respond to our memorandum our members decided to embark on informal settlement strike which took almost a month and our strike were also hijacked by

the members of the ANC youth league at other areas such as TRA informal settlement because the ANC youth had ambitions to make the City of cape town to become ungovernable and they done so through violence.

And this year we would not want go to another informal settlement strike but if the mayor of city of cape town do not want to engage with our members anything will be possible and the impact might be double and we will ensure it does not inconvenience our members but a huge economic impact

Mzonke Poni

Mthobeli Qona and Charles Adams

24 NOVEMBER 2011

Memorandum of demands · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Memorandum of Demands from Abahlali baseMjondolo to the Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal Dr. Zweli Mkhize, and the Mayor of Durban, Mr. James Nxumalo

24 November 2011, 12:00 pm.

We, women and men, young and old, residents of shacks and flats, all members of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA in KwaZulu-Natal are democrats committed to the flourishing of this country. We speak for ourselves and direct our own struggle.

We have been mobilized by our own suffering and our hope for a better future. It is time to take seriously the fact that land is a serious problem in our country and that land was stolen from our ancestors and that this has impoverished us. We have been made poor by a history of oppression. Housing in the city of Durban is not bringing justice to the dispossessed. Housing in this city is a mess – houses are unfit for human habitation, they are in rural human dumping grounds and their allocation is corrupted. Housing has become little more than a way for some people in the ANC to become millionaires while the poor are forced out of the cities. People are being evicted from their shacks and left homeless, subject to violent disconnections from electricity and even forced into transit camps. Housing in this city is not delivering to us. It is terrorizing us.

We have explored all routes to try and negotiate a better system that puts human beings first. We tried to talk to our councilors but they ignore us if we are lucky and call the police to beat us and arrest us if we are unlucky.

We have marched many times but our memorandums are ignored. After police violence against our protests became an international issue we were finally invited to enter into a long process of negotiations with the City. But the agreement that we negotiated has not been implemented and instead we were attacked by the ANC with the support of the police. We have been to the

courts and won interdicts against the City which are then just ignored. We have reached the point at which it is clear to us that when, after much struggle, we can find a path through a system designed to exclude the poor in the name of democracy that system will just ignore its own rules. It's clear to us that the only way that we can have any hope for our children and for our own lives too is if this system is radically changed from the bottom up.

For too long Abahlali baseMjondolo have been subjected to state repression, displacement, evictions, disconnections, arrests, violence and death threats.

For too long Nigel Gumede has been terrorizing our communities without regard for law. He has lied to our communities with no respect for the shack dwellers, the flat dwellers and the poor. Gumede has failed the residents of the Hillary flats and allow them to be evicted. He has failed the residents of Kennedy Road by supporting the violent expulsion of AbM leaders from the settlement. He has failed all of us by trying to stir up ethnic tensions. He has failed the poor by failing to develop a housing programme in this city that is people centred. He has failed this democracy by personally and openly threatening violence against our leaders and declaring that the ANC is at war with AbM. We demand his immediate resignation. He is a disgrace to democracy.

Gumede has even threatening our leadership in the presence of the Mayor without our leaders being protected by the Mayor or the Mayor calling Gumede into order. The Mayor owes us an apology for his failure to stand up to Gumede and to stand up for democracy.

For too long SOHCO has terrorized our flats communities. We demand that those who have been evicted be reinstated back into their homes. We further demand that SOHCO compensate all evicted tenants from Hillary flats with immediate effect. We further demand that the Premier of the Province Dr. Zweli Mkhize intervene in this matter.

For too long the commercial value of land here in eThekweni and many other areas has been put before its social value. We demand that social value of land come before its commercial value. People around the world are demanding that people must come before profit and this is our demand too. If this demand is not recognised from above there will be no choice for the poor but to continue the programme of land occupations from below.

For too long we have been living under consistent threats of eviction in our own land. We demand an immediate and final end to all evictions. Durban must

become an eviction free city. We demand land security. Yesterday the new land occupation in Richmond Farm was destroyed. We demand justice for these people.

For too long our right to the cities has been denied to the shack dwellers and the poor in this country. We demand the right to live in cities. We will continue to refuse forced removals to rural human dumping grounds. People will resist forced removals and they will continue to abandon these places and to return to the cities. If you continue to criminalize these actions you will continue to criminalize poverty when in fact you were elected to bring justice to the dispossessed – not the NIA, the police, rubber bullets and the jails.

For too long the provision of basic services has been denied to us and the poor. We demand the provision of all basic services such as water and sanitation, electricity, road access, refuse collection etc to us. People living in shacks must have the same right to these services as all other people. They cannot be denied to shack dwellers on the grounds that shack settlements are called temporary when many of us have lived our whole lives in these shacks.

For too long we have been fenced in the land occupations and the transit camps. We demand that the electric fence around the eMmaus land occupation, and the security guards, be removed with immediate effect.

For too long people have been forced into transit camps when in fact they were promised housing. This is another return to the tactics of apartheid and we call for an immediate end to all transit camps. We demand justice for the people of Rich View and Richmond Farm.

For too long the notorious Ricky Govender has been allowed to terrorise the people of Motala Heights. We demand an immediate end to his tyranny.

We are prepared to continue to struggle for these rights in the courts, in streets and in our communities. We are also prepared to negotiate and to work together to find a way forward. But for as long as the City allows Nigel Gumede to openly threaten us it will remain clear that they are not negotiating in good faith.

Just like people around the country are concerned we are also concerned about the Secrecy Bill. We demand that the City and the Province publicly inform President Jacob Zuma that they are requesting him to scrap this bill immediate effect.

Just as people around the city, the country and world are uniting in support of our struggle we express our support for our comrades elsewhere. We note that 2011 has become a revolutionary year, a year in which people around the world are insisting that democracy must be a bottom up system and that people must count more than money. We are not alone.

Receiving this memorandum without conscious, failing which Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA will reconsider another plan B...

Handed over by _____ on _____ at _____

Signature _____.

Received by _____ on _____ at _____.

Signature _____

Mr Mazwi Nzimande

Miss Bandile Mdlalose

27 NOVEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Occupy Durban!

Occupations Currently Underway in Hillary, KwaMashu and Pinetown

We are human beings, not dogs, and every human being has a right to a decent home and a right, if they choose, to a place in the city. Economic, political and legal systems that deny these rights are a threat to our humanity and must be resisted. There is enough money and space in this world for every person to have a decent home. The problem is that the money and space are being held by the few to exclude the many. If the few continue to exclude the many then it is our responsibility to ourselves, our families and our communities to resist this oppression.

In South Africa the state uses violent demolitions and evictions to prevent poor people from developing land and building informal homes on our own. The economic system prevents those without money from buying or renting formal homes. The state promises formal houses to the poor but the number of people without houses is growing, most of the houses built by the state are unfit for human beings and in the rural peripheries of the cities. For some people the promise of a house has turned into the nightmare of forced removal to a transit camp.

We are in the middle of the Sixteen Days of Activism to end violence against women and children. Many conferences are being held. There are many discussions on television. Yet who will stand with the poor, with poor women and their children, when the state or private landowners send out the police or security guards to evict them, demolish their homes and steal their building materials? We do not see or hear from all these NGOs that are talking about the rights of women and children when the state and private landowners use violence to deny poor women and their children the right to a home.

As a movement we are struggling to build a society in which there is an economic system where human beings come before profit and a political system in which leaders take direction from below. We are struggling to build a society

in which there will be a fair distribution of land and decent housing for all. But we are alive now, our children are growing now. We are living in the rain and with shack fires now. Therefore it is clear that we also have to take direct action to struggle for what land and housing we can get right now even as we continue the long struggle for a more democratic and just world.

Occupy Hillary

Four weeks ago 77 people were evicted from the Valley View flats in Hillary. These flats are owned by SOHCO which is a social housing company. Social housing was set up to cover those who don't qualify for RDP houses but are too poor to qualify for bonds. It is called a 'public private partnership'. But the private side of this arrangement has taken over the public side. Tenants are being exploited by paying rentals that will, over their lives, be worth much more than the value of the flats and those that are falling behind are being evicted. They remain unable to get RDP houses and unable to get housing through the market and are therefore being excluded from access to housing. Social housing is therefore failing and it will continue to fail until the alliance between the government and private investors looking to make private profit is abandoned and replaced with an alliance between the government and co-operatives of people needing housing.

Last night 50 of the evicted people returned to the flats to occupy them. The police succeeded in forcing them out again. Tonight they have returned to reoccupy the flats. If they are evicted again they will return tomorrow night.

Contact Details for the Hillary Occupation:

S'fiso

Nomfundo

Occupy KwaMashu

The KwaMashu comrades were first evicted from eBhandeni, which was in Siyanda in KwaMashu in 2009. They were evicted by Nandi Mandela as a road was being built. It was said that the road was important for the 2010 World Cup and that the poor people would have to make way. They were never given alternative accommodation as demanded by the law and were just left homeless.

They have tried several times to engage with the councilor, Mr Lucky Md-lalose who has neglected them. After a long time of failing to get any help from the councilor they decided to occupy the vacant land which is next to the school

called Thobile Primary School. On Wednesday last week the shacks that they had built on the land were demolished by people from the Municipality. The cars that there were driving had these number plates: NDM 6902, NDM 6903 and NDM 6999. The comrades were brave and they rebuilt their shacks the next day.

On Friday the municipality came with cars that had these number plates: NDM 6963 and NDM 6903. They demolished the shacks again and this time they also stole the people's building material. The community went to the police station to open a case of theft. The police refused to open a case but one police officer did call the councilor who responded by saying that as there is COP 17 coming the councilors have been given a mandate to make sure that no one is dirtying the community and that they must take care of the animals and nature. Later there was a debate on Vibe FM between the councilor and Bandile Mdlalose, the AbM Secretary General. During that debate the councilor said that he would make arrangements for alternative accommodation but he has not contacted them. Around thirty people have now decided that on Monday morning they are going to occupy the KwaMashu community hall with their children as there were all made homeless by Nandi Mandela and then again by the Municipality and the Councilor is doing nothing to protect them. The occupation will start at around 7 a.m. Tomorrow.

Contact details for the KwaMashu Occupation:

Jabulile

Mama Mdlalose

Occupy Pinetown

The eMmaus land occupation, in Pinetown, was founded in September 2010. These people had previously been evicted by the Mahogany Ridge 2 Property Owners' Association and before that by the Roman Catholic Church after it sold its land to industry. They had been left homeless after these evictions and needed a place to stay. Since then they have suffered more demolition and theft of their building material. The Mahogany Ridge 2 Property Owners' Association has also put an electric fence around the occupation which is very dangerous for children. The land owners are currently trying to get the people evicted through the courts. AbM is fighting the case in the courts and on the 19th of October 2011 the movement organised a mass march on the landlords in defense of the land occupation.

Contact details for the Pinetown Occupation:

Khanyi Dlamuka, eMmaus AbM Coordinator

It is clear that to many people in government, and to many rich people, the poor remain dirt, something to swept out of the cities. If housing is to be given to us it is housing that is unfit for human beings and that will hide us away in rural human dumping grounds. In Durban our attempts to organise and struggle for land and housing have been met with serious and violent repression from the state and the ruling party. Neither the economic system nor the political system are working for the poor and therefore we will continue to struggle for justice. We invite all the comrades who are in Durban for the COP 17 meeting to come and show their solidarity for the occupations in Hillary, KwaMashu and eMmaus and for our struggle for the right to organise for land and housing and to be able to engage the state meaningfully.

Abahlali baseMjondolo

28 NOVEMBER 2011

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Floods, destruction and despair in the shacks

Abahlali welcomes the world in our country, our province and in our city. We also welcome progressive delegates to our homes, our settlements and our flooded shacks.

Last night after heavy rain some of our shack settlements were flooded leaving shack dwellers, stranded, hopeless and with all their belonging swept away through floods. We have had enough shack fires already. We have had enough rat bites. We have had enough electricity disconnection. We have had enough of being excluded from the rest of our society and today the storm, the full force of what extreme weather does to the poor, proves itself to the world during the first day of the Conference of the Parties.

Whose interests will this Conference of the Parties serve if the poor are outside busy dealing with effect of the floods which are the direct result of our vulnerability to bad weather in the shacks? How can the world begin these talks without going and experiencing the effect and the reality of how the change in climate will affect the people in Durban whose lives are already most precarious? This morning the rich woke up in their houses dry and safe while many poor people faced more disaster. Today it is clear that these talks will take us no where if they ignores the reality that those who will suffer the consequences of the change in climate the most are the poor. So, excluding the poor in these talks will not help any of us.

The Quarry Road West settlement (kwaMamsuthu) in the Clare Hills, Clare Estate, is the shack community that has been most affected by the floods. Residents did not sleep last night having to watch how far the water level reached. It was unbearable to hear people screaming for help helplessly. At least around 300 people are busy searching for the remains of their belongings, clothing, furniture, food and even important documents that went flooded. Witnessing this was a heart sore. In Kennedy Road some of the shacks were flooded down at the little river in between the settlement. Abahlali fear that this rain may return in its full force and that this may only be a warning.

We are appealing to businesses, churches, NGOs and individuals who can lend their hand of support. Although Abahlali warns that this is not a minor issue that has only to do with charity. We have been struggling for years not to see such disasters not only in our life time but for our future generation. We are calling for the state and eThekweni Municipality to immediately start taking Abahlali seriously before it is too late, before they can regret.

For how many years must we keep saying that human beings cannot live in fire and floods, amongst giant rats and in the mud? For how many years must we keep saying that we are being forced to live in life threatening conditions everyday while millions and millions are spent on stadiums, airports, conferences and incredible salaries for the super-rich? For how long will our demand for our humanity to be recognised by treated as criminal and treasonous?

The rich have caused and are causing climate change but it is us, the poor, who will pay the greatest price. The rich, in South Africa and around the world, have to be called to order. Our safety depends on this.

For more information on the flooding in the Quarry Road settlement last night

Mr Thulani Myeni

Mr Jali

For more information on flooding in the Kennedy Road settlement

Miss Ma Felubala Maluleka

Busisiwe Gogo

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Head Office can be contacted.

9 DECEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

AGM and Campaign Against TRAs

Tomorrow Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape will hold our third annual general meeting and, at the same time, we will launch a campaign against the TRAs. The meeting will run from 11 till 2 at the Langa TRAs in Zone 27, Langa.

TRAs, known as transit camps in Durban and decant areas in Johannesburg, are unfit for human habitation. Our movement has always rejected them as inhuman and tomorrow residents of TRAs from around Cape Town will meet to speak out about their living conditions and against the TRAs. The corruption in the Langa TRAs will be noted and it will also be noted that people are always told that these places are 'temporary' but some people have been living in them for seven years now.

Mayor Patricia de Lille has been invited to attend our meeting and to clarify the meaning of the word 'temporary' to the residents of the TRAs and to explain what plans the City has for these people. Mayor de Lille has been invited in advance but she always runs away from meaningful engagement with us. She only wants stage managed PR events. We strongly suspect that she will not take this opportunity to meet with people that have been condemned to live in TRAs in Cape Town.

Our demand is that all people living in TRAs are given decent housing as an urgent priority. The TRAs are an insult to human dignity. They are human dumping grounds and we make no apology for militant hostility to them. Everyone has a right to a decent home.

We are totally shocked that 30 people in the Langa TRAs are now being threatened with eviction once again – this time to Blikkiesdorp. People should go from shacks to houses and not from shacks to one TRA and then another TRA. This is a rich city and yet people are being kept like animals. It is a disgrace.

Cindy from the Langa TRAs
Mr. Qona
Mzonke Poni

12 DECEMBER 2011

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Umngeni Municipality Ordered to Provide Housing to Residents of Tumbleweed Shack Settlement

Issued by: Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement of SA

Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)

Council and residents agree on relocation plans

The Pietermaritzburg High Court today ordered uMngeni Municipality to provide land, water, sanitation and temporary housing to 47 families living in the Tumbleweed informal settlement near Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. The order was granted by agreement between the residents and the municipality after the municipality applied to evict the residents to make way for a new school.

The residents are to be provided land, shelter and services by 22 December 2011, with a target date of 6 January 2012 for their relocation. The deal was negotiated after the Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement of South Africa and the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI) stepped in to represent the residents. Both organisations have welcomed today's order.

Teboho Mosikili, attorney for the residents, said "this is a great result for our clients, who would have been rendered homeless if evicted by the municipality. We are pleased that the municipality, after some initial difficulties, responded reasonably to our clients' needs. Our clients will now be permitted to live in peace and dignity."

S'bu Zikode, former President of Abahlali baseMjondolo, which has been working with the Tumbleweed community for three years, said "we congratulate Abahlali in Tumbleweed for standing firm against the forced eviction, and we also wish to thank uMngeni Municipality for their cooperation in making sure that no one will be rendered homeless in the relocation. We wish that other municipalities, especially metros like eThekweni, can follow the example of UMngeni. If small, rural municipalities can respect and fulfil poor people's

rights to housing and engage so successfully with shackdwellers, there is no excuse for metros.”

Bandile Mdlalose, Secretary General of Abahlali baseMjondolo, said “it is positive that these kinds of negotiated agreements can be made outside of court, but we are grateful that courts can be used to advance the struggles of the poor to secure our socio-economic rights in this country.”

SERI’s director of litigation, Stuart Wilson, appeared for the residents in court. He was instructed by the SERI Law Clinic and Trudie Nichols Attorneys in Durban.

18 DECEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Thembinkosi Qumbela was Never an Umhlali

On Thursday 15 December 2011 The Mercury published an article titled ‘Senior IFP leader crossing to the ANC did not tell his party’. In this article Thembinkosi Qumbela, who was elected as the IFP regional deputy secretary two weeks ago and has now left the IFP to join the ANC, claims that he “had been an activist of Abahlali baseMjondolo” and has “decided to leave everything (IFP and Abahlali baseMjondolo) and return to the ANC. Anyone who is serious about being a politician should be with the ANC.”

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA wishes to distance itself from the lies Thembinkosi Qumbela is spreading that he has been an umhlali. We are a membership based movement, with an annual membership fee of R10. All members are issued with a membership number and a red AbM membership card. Qumbela has never, at any time, been a member of our movement.

We remember Qumbela back into 2005 when he was leading “service delivery protests” in Cato Manor and Cato Crest under the name of the South African Shack and Rural Dweller’s Organisation (SASRDO). One of these protests tried to block the N2 to stop former president Thabo Mbeki from addressing a rally at the King’s Park Stadium. Qumbela was arrested and spent some months in Westville prison.

We opened our first branch in Cato Manor this year and in 2005 we had no members in the settlement. But watching the large protests that Qumbela organised from a distance we had thought he was a man of great integrity as he led a struggle against the failure of eThekweni municipality to engage meaningfully with the residents of Cato Manor and to provide decent housing and services. We got to know him and admired his courage but he did not, at any stage, join our movement.

He did approach our movement for support when he was facing death threats and arrest from the ANC, the same party he now sees as offering an opportunity for him to become a politician. But he decided to join the IFP and SASDRO became linked to the IFP. Virginia Magwaza-Msibi was the keynote speaker at a big meeting that they organised to discuss the COHRE report on evictions in Durban at the YMCA in 2007. Qumbela did once attend a funeral of a victim of a shack fire in Kennedy Road as the family were IFP supporters. Of course we welcomed him as that was the family’s choice.

Later in 2007 we were asked by different people whether Abahlali had opened a new office in Cato Crest. We were told that there was a red container with 'Abahlali baseMjondolo' written on it. We then discovered that Qumbela had been using our name to run his own Spaza organization. We realized it was some kind of an NGO or charity.

Today we can safely say he has betrayed a lot of people who have been behind him. He is now pushing his own individualistic gain. He has used the suffering and struggles of people who supported him during the dark days of his real struggle against the disrespect and oppression of the eThekweni municipality to the poor to become a politician in the ruling party. This is not the first time that he has tried to use the suffering and struggles of the poor to become a politician. We remember that after leaving the ANC, he joined the IFP, he then joined the then NADECO and he then rejoined the IFP again as he has now joined the ANC. This multi-crossing between parties raises a lot of questions about his integrity. We leave those questions with his new home – the ANC.

It is misleading and purely lies for Qumbela to introduce himself to the ANC as an umhlali. He is just trying to prepare a good name and position for himself in his new party. But we ask ourselves as to what will happen to those he has been leading? Who are they going to trust if such leaders are now worried about their own future. We just hope that the people of Cato Crest have now learnt a new lesson about local politicians.

Qumbela is not the first person to have falsely claimed an association with our movement. In the past NGOs have claimed to be working with our movement when they were not. One international NGO with millions of dollars in funding even publicly claimed that we had joined their network of associated shack settlements when we had not. One academic even wrote a paper claiming that she had been an insider to our movement when she had certainly not. She had given a lot of money to some people in Kennedy Road, people who were never AbM members, and she had run around after our movement but she had never been inside our movement. In fact she was based at an NGO that we had publicly refused to work with. When so many different organisations and people are competing to be able to say that they represent the poor in a country in which the poor are not allowed to represent ourselves these lies are inevitable.

We continue to organise ourselves and to represent ourselves.

Abahlali office

23 DECEMBER 2011

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Terrible Shack Fire in Kennedy Road

Last night, in the middle of the night, at about 00:28, a shack fire took place in Kennedy Road. About 300 shacks went to ashes and approximately 1500 people were left homeless.

Kennedy Road Burns Again

The reason of the fire is still unknown but it is suspected that a candle was left lighted. A small child at about the age of 2 years was badly injured and was rushed to a hospital. No one came to the scene aside from Abahlali baseMjondolo. What a shame it is when even the councillor himself doesn't bother to come and see how the damage is. The community was hoping that their ward 25 councillor would come to see the damage and offer support. Their hopes were raised when they saw him coming with the Municipality cars. One of the cars was from Housing. But he did not even bother to consider coming to the place where there was this fire. He just ignored the people who had their hopes up and went straight to the hall and told the people that he was there to write the list of those who are suppose to get food vouchers for Christmas. In the past these vouchers have been abused for party political purposes.

It becomes more of a shame if a councillor who was voted by the people yesterday turns a blind eye to the problems that is facing that particular community today. It even raises question about what is the role of councilors if people won't even get any assistance from the councillor after a disaster.

While the whole world will celebrating Christmas, and with their families in their homes, these vulnerable people will be stranded outside, hopeless and not even having anything to eat, or a shelter.

We have been organising against shack fires since 2005. We have marched, we have issued statements and we have even produced a report on shack fires. We have organised training for people to be able to make safe connections to electricity on their own. We have said over and over again that it is the denial of electricity to shack dwellers that is the main cause of shack fires. And yet we

are still denied legal access to electricity and when we connect ourselves the securities and police are still sent in to disconnect us. Sometimes they shoot at us during these disconnections. When they are not coming with guns to disconnect us they insult us by work-shopping us on fire safety. We know what causes fires. The problem is not that we are ignorant. The problem is that we are using candles in shacks instead of electricity in houses. The problem is that we are oppressed.

We are left to burn because we don't count to this society.

Even when people succeed in the struggle to choose their own councillors the councillors work for the party and not the people. Our humanity will only be recognised when we build enough power from below to be able to demand real equality.

Sindi Maluleka: (Kennedy Road Resident)

Bandile Mdlalose: (Abahlali Secretary General)

13 JANUARY 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Release Ayanda Kota Now!!!

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A, calls upon the South African Police

Services and the state to release Ayanda Kota NOW!

Abahlali baseMjondolo calls upon Grahamstown based South African Police Services to immediately release Ayanda Kota, after his senseless arrest and assault. These kinds of senseless arrests and attacks on social movement activists must come to an end, if democracy is to prevail.

There have been many Ayandas in South Africa since our new 'democratic dispensation' who have suffered in the hands of those who are meant to protect us, we are also one of them.

We remember Tebogo Mkhonza who was shot to death during the protest in Ntabaze, Harrismith, a few years ago.

We remember Monica Ngcobo from uMlazi E -Section, Durban who was shot to death during the protest in 2006, against imposed an councilor during the local government election in 2006.

We remember Mama Nondumiso Mke from Kennedy Road, Clare-Estate in Durban who was also shot during the protest to demand the release of Philani Zungu and S'bu Zikode who were also arrested, assaulted and tortured in the Sydenham police station and charged with all kinds of framed up charges which the police are yet to answer.

And of cause we remember Andries Tatane, from Fickburg whose blood will forever be remembered for our true democracy.

We also remember Alfred General Moyo from Makause settlement in Johannesburg, Ashraf Cassiem of the Western Cape Anti -Eviction Campaign and Mzonke Poni of Abahlali baseMjondolo of Western Cape, who all suffered in the mobilized hands of the police and ANC led thugs.

Ayanda Kota is the chairperson of the Unemployed Peoples Movement in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, whom Abahlali and the poor have high respect for. So the attack on Ayanda is an attack on all of us who believe in Democracy

from below. Abahlali believe the 'book' scandal at Rhodes University and the academic in question is another hidden tool to legitimize and justify the senseless arrest and attack on Ayanda. We have heard how the Makana Municipality and the police have accused Ayanda of having dominated the news in 2011. We want to salute Ayanda and the UPM for standing firm against the apartheid bucket system, corruption and undemocratic behaviour in the Makana Municipality. We call upon the UPM and all democrats to intensify the war against all forms of injustices in our country. We call upon the state and its all institutions to fight corruption, the bucket system and maladministration where ever they show themselves.

We have no doubt that the court will release Ayanda as it is not political court. He has been released before like many other activists without prosecution.

Zodwa Nsibande
S'bu Zikode
Bheki Simelane

25 JANUARY 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Occupiers Currently Under Police Attack in Shallcross

An urgent call for media intervention

The Ekuphumeleni Abahlali branch in Shallcross, in ward 17 under Councillor Shembe Nomvula, is currently under attack and eviction from the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Everybody know that housing is a crisis in South Africa particularly in Durban where we just heard that at least R532 million has gone missing from the municipal housing budget. The Auditor General has just realized a report about corruption, mismanagement of funds and irregularities and as far as the supply chain management is concerned.

Yet at the same time as the provision of housing has been taken over by corrupt politicians and their friends to make them rich hundreds of thousands of people in this city continue to live in shacks facing fires, floods, rats and evictions.

In Shallcross there are shack dwellers some of whom had occupied neglected RDP houses which were built over 2 years ago and then left uncompleted. The residents who have been waiting for more than 17 years for the houses promised to them decided to occupy these houses after some of them, including the old granny in her 80 years who lives with her grand children, decided to occupy them after the heavy wind had destroyed their shacks last year.

The heavily armed South African Police Service just invaded the residents without any notice and without any court order throwing their belongings outside and evicting them without any regard for law. So far about 8 families are left homeless. This eviction is not only illegal but it is also criminal. It must be condemned in its strongest term.

We call upon the media to rush into the scene to witness how the so called “law enforcement agencies” are illegally terrorizing our communities in the name of law and order. We suspect that they got their mandate from eThekweni Municipality which has never carried out any eviction within the premises of the law.

Lucia
Lungi
Abahlali

27 JANUARY 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The Interim Order Against the Shallcross Occupation has been Set Aside

The Interim Eviction Order Against the Shallcross Occupation has been Set Aside

The interim eviction order granted by the Durban High Court to evict residents of Shallcross (Ekuphumeleleni, Inkanyezi Housing Project) was set aside this morning. The High Court has ordered the eThekweni Municipality to stop any further eviction of residents pending the 24th of February 2012 on which date this matter has to return in court. In the meantime the evicted residents have returned to their homes for the second time.

Abahlali wishes to express its disappointment at the fact that the attorneys that South African Nation Civic Organization (SANCO) has promised its members in the area since December did not pitch up in court. This was despite insistence of the SANCO leadership last night that they have lawyers which mislead the community. However Abahlali wish to thank its Legal Team – Nichols Attorneys with the support of SERI – for being able to represent the residents and for doing such a good job.

Abahlali note the ongoing housing corruption in this City. There are situations where one house is named for up to four families meaning one family got it lawfully the others have corruptly paid for the same house. The person who got it lawfully is often the one is evicted.

Abahlali believes the Nigel Gumede's Department is responsible for ensuring the fair allocation of houses. According to the Ekuphumeleleni residents a political solution can be found to the mess of this particular housing fiasco but Gumede is avoiding them. They are now adding their voice on the Abahlali campaign that Gumede must go because he has failed the people of Durban. They were chanting 'Hamba Gumede!' outside the court.

Nigel Gumede must go now because if he has already left it would have been possible to negotiate a solution to the problem caused by the corruption of his department in Ekuphumeleleni and none of this would have taken place.

The Ekuphumeleleni residents will continue to contest this eviction, and the corruption that lies behind the reason to occupy in the first place, in the courts and in the streets. The struggle for the poor to win our right to this city continues.

Lungi
Sbu Zikode
Bandile Mdlalose
Mnikelo Ndabankulu

29 FEBRUARY 2012

Press release · Joint statement

eThekweni Municipality Disobeys Court Order to Provide Housing and Investigate Corruption

Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) and Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)

Residents go back to court to compel Mayor, City Manager and Director of Housing to provide houses or be held in contempt In 2009, 37 poor families won the right to receive permanent houses in terms of an order issued by the Durban High Court. The families must now return to court to force the eThekweni Municipality to obey the order. The Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI) and Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM) are suing the Mayor of eThekweni on behalf the families, who now live in the Richmond Farm Transit Camp near KwaMashu, Durban.

The order directed that the families be relocated from an informal settlement to a transit camp in order to make way for a new road. The order also stated that the families must be given permanent housing within a year of arriving at the camp. The order further directed the municipality to investigate the corrupt allocation of housing at the Khulula Housing Project near KwaMashu. It had been originally been intended that the families would be given permanent housing in the Khulula project, but the houses meant for them were irregularly re-allocated to other families by provincial and municipal officials.

If successful, the case will mean that the Mayor, City Manager and Director of Housing must take steps to provide housing to the families within 60 days, and must investigate the corrupt allocation of housing at the Khulula project. If they fail to do so, they will face a fine or jail time.

Teboho Mosikili, SERI attorney for the families, said: “Both Abahlali and the families themselves have patiently attempted to engage with eThekweni Municipality for three years now. Yet the Municipality is still in defiance of the court order. It is very sad that an organ of state – whose duty it is to uphold the rule

of law and respect the authority of the courts – has chosen to act in such a blatantly illegal manner. The Mayor, City Manager and Director of Housing have all been served with the court order, and meetings have been convened with the Mayor to discuss compliance with it. Yet nothing has been done.”

Sbu Zikode, ABM’s Chairperson, said: “The corrupt allocation of housing in Durban has been a concern for Abahlali’s members for a long time. People are dumped in transit camps, told that it is just temporary and then left to rot while other people are allowed to jump the queue. Now the council is supporting this by refusing to obey a court order. Moreover the Manase report which is due to be tabled to full council today in eThekweni Municipality confirms this view.”

The residents will be represented in court by the SERI Law Clinic and Trudie Nichols Attorneys, together with Advocates Geoff Budlender SC, Stuart Wilson and Nicole Lewis.

The papers filed in the case so far are available here: <http://bit.ly/wE2BpV>

A short film about the case is available here: <http://dearmandela.com/?q=node/76>

Teboho Mosikili, attorney at SERI
S’bu Zikode, chairperson of AbM

12 MARCH 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali Members who were Displaced in September 2009 Still Homeless

Two weeks ago IFP members fought with NFP members at Hostel 17 in Umlazi Township. That political violence left one person dead and it left some people homeless. The Minister of Safety and Security intervened to mediate between the two parties that were fighting. This is very good and is something which we welcome. We also acknowledge that the new Mayor of the eThekweni Municipality took the Umlazi violence into his attention and is working on it. However this activism of the Minister and the Mayor is raising so many questions.

This is not the first incident of political violence in Durban. On the 26 September 2009 a political attack took place in Kennedy Road leaving 2 people dead and more than 100 people homeless and permanently displaced. During that incident 12 members of AbM who were staying in Kennedy Road were accused of murder. They were acquitted on that case which took 2 years. Since 2010 the AbM leadership with Kennedy displacees have had a number of engagements with the City (eThekweni) to try and find some solution to this problem of displacement. Till today nothing has been offered by eThekweni municipality to Kennedy victims who list their homes, everything that they own and had to leave the community under the threat of death. Nothing has been done to mediate a solution so that the displacees can return in safety and that everyone in Kennedy Road can be free to organise freely and safely according to their own choices.

The Mayor's response to the problems at Hostel 17 is welcomed but it raises a lot of questions because after the political violence in Kennedy he only sided with one side. So we are wondering if in this democratic country the people that matter are only people who are party aligned. If you are not aligned to party politics does it mean that you don't need to be protected?

Since 2009 the elected leadership of the Kennedy Road shack settlement have been left homeless, due to the attack that took place in September 2009.

Since then they have been left homeless, without anyone from the government to help with anything. The Kennedy displaced have been trying to engage with the municipality for quite some time to discuss the issue of being offered some kind of a relief due to their displacement. However they have made no progress.

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A, together with the displaced, have been meeting with the Mayor however the Mayor has neglected their issues. The eThekweni municipality has not responded or even given some hope to the displaced. Therefore it was quite surprising to hear that the eThekweni Municipality have promised to assist in Umlazi while there are people who have been displaced since 2009 until to date.

On February 28 2012 at 02:17pm in the Daily News the Mayor said “I am going there to call for calm, to see the extent of the damage and to try to assist people who have been affected by violence.” If he does have the capacity as the eThekweni Mayor, we therefore ask when will the Kennedy displaced be assisted? When will political freedom and safety for all be assured in Kennedy? Is he assisting in Umlazi because the political violence there is caused by the oppositions parties and he is trying to buy their hearts into ANC. The political attack in Kennedy Road in 2009 was engineered by ANC and the mayor is not even mediating into restoring peace or assisting them in terms of housing.

Abahlali will use this month to screen the film ‘Dear Mandela’ which narrates the story of our struggle against the Slums Act. The first screening will be in Johannesburg at Wits University on the 19 March followed by a discussion. The following screening is on the 23 March 2012 at the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine also there will be discussions afterwards. Everyone is welcome to participate in one of the screenings. The film clearly shows that Nigel’s Gumede’s response to the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road was not to condemn the violence against our movement, the destruction of the homes of our leadership that went on for months after the attack or the attempt to ban our movement from Kennedy Road on the threat of death. His response was to attack us for taking the government to court. According to Nigel Gumede this, and not the attack on our movement, was the real political crime.

For comment: Contact Mondli Mbiko: or Bheki Simelane

19 APRIL 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Collectivism vs. Individualism

When our movement was started none of us knew that Abahlali would continue to grow and to become strong enough to be able to tackle issues of national interest. Abahlali like most social movements continues to face state repression, NGO repression, and repression from left academics who still believe that it is their duty to think, represent, and take decisions for the poor. We continue to resist all this pressure to accept that our place is in the shacks and nowhere else. We continue to voice our anger and our frustrations from the dark and confined corners of our universe. We also continue to take our place in our society. We occupy land and we occupy spaces in the media and in public discussions. Sometimes it is not easy. Sometimes it is dangerous. But when it is possible it is possible because we work together. If you are poor your strength can only come from your togetherness. That is all that you have. Without it you are isolated and vulnerable to all kinds of attack. This is why the philosophy of ubuhlali is a philosophy of collectivity and why we work so hard to prevent our movement from collapsing into individualism.

A movement of the poor faces many challenges. There is state repression. There are attempts at co-option by political parties. There are ratepayers and property owners' associations that want to evict us from the spaces that they think are only for them. There are also those forces that try to bring movements into civil society and its logic. There is also the regressive left with its 'rule it or ruin it' approach to poor people's movements. There are shack lords, landlords, traditional leaders and criminals. There is the politics of ethnicity. There are men that don't respect women's leadership. We have to resist all these forms of repression, regression and co-option. We have to stay close to the everyday lives and struggles of our members. At the same time we have to engage the state, some NGOs and the courts to win real victories for our members while keeping our autonomy, and holding on to our vision of a just and equal society, a vision that is much bigger than 'service delivery'.

But our movements do not only face challenges and forces that must be confronted from the outside. Some of these forces also appear within our movements. A number of movements have faced serious crises recently including movements that we have worked with closely. The AEC, LPM and APF have all faced serious problems. There are many causes for this crisis. Comrades get worn down. The stresses of repression often cause comrades to panic and to fight amongst themselves. Comrades can get co-opted by NGOs or political parties. Sometimes very brave comrades who have done amazing things start to think that because of their years of commitment they have a right to be in charge. Sometimes they come under serious pressure from their families because after years of struggling they have nothing for their own families. Sometimes the way in which the media and some donors and NGOs individualize movements has contributed to some of these problems. Sometimes the politics of ethnicity or individual ambition enter movements.

Our movement has often been asked to mediate or advise when other movements have fallen into crisis. We believe that where possible it is always better to work towards unity and that no one should be judged without having a right to present their own side of the story. We believe that it is important to be careful to stick to the proven facts and to avoid gossip. We believe that we all make mistakes and that there must be space to acknowledge mistakes, to learn from them and to move forward. We believe that when comrades with a real record of commitment have made mistakes we must work to bring them back to the true spirit of their movements. We believe that the movements of the poor should not be judged by what people from outside say. We note that NGOs and academics that are angry because movements don't follow their orders have a long history of trying to undermine these movements by gossip, lies and even supporting the state against us and writing academic articles that are just not true. They feel that they have a right to say, in public, whatever they like about people that are poor and black without any evidence. This is not our politic.

All movements will face serious problems at times. We do not believe that movements should be judged because problems arise. We believe that movements should be judged on how they deal with these problems.

Many people have been asking Abahlali in KwaZulu-Natal why it is so different from Abahlali in the Western Cape. To set the record straight, sometime after Abahlali started in KZN in 2005, there was a call from some people in the

Western Cape to have a similar kind of struggle under the leadership of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A. In KwaZulu-Natal it had been difficult to keep the movement together between Durban and places like Pietermaritzburg and Howick. The way that we organise and keep our togetherness is by being together, discussing together and deciding together and distance makes this difficult. Cape Town is even further away. It is a 25 hour bus trip away. Also politics are different in each province. For instance KZN is an ANC led province like 8 other provinces in South Africa but the Western Cape is a DA led province.

We therefore agreed that each province will be independent from each other and have its own autonomy but that each province would work under the same constitution. This meant that the Western Cape would elect its own leadership, decided on its own campaigns and strategies. It also means that each province would manage its own resources independently. Therefore AbM in the Western Cape would be a separate but allied structure that could avoid control of any sort by AbM-KZN. The leadership in KZN is only elected by the members in KZN and the leadership in the Western Cape is only elected by the members in the Western Cape.

We facilitated the launch of Abahlali Western Cape and even sent a delegation to make sure that transparency and democracy prevailed. We were satisfied with the kind of leadership that emerged at that time. We wish to thank the entire comrades who were brave to lead the struggle forward from then. We have no doubt that all the gains won by Abahlali Western Cape were the result of their commitment to equality, justice and democracy. There were many campaigns that were undertaken with courage and strong support from the members. The Right to the City campaign was very popular.

However recently some of the members in Cape Town have approached AbM in KZN to express concern at some developments in the movement in Cape Town. We elected a delegation of some of our best activists to make the 25 hour trip to Cape Town and spoke to many of our members there. We do not want to judge any individuals without them having a chance to explain their side of the story. And we do not wish to take over the organisation in Cape Town. It must continue to elect its own leaders. However after visiting Cape Town we do feel that we have not done enough to advocate and strengthen the philosophy of Abahlalism due to distance between two provinces. Our own struggle to survive repression in Durban has taken a lot of our time and energies.

Abahlalisms has taught us to be more humane, to be honest, to care for others and to work with others without creating a dependence syndrome. The living politic stress that we don't struggle for communities but with communities. It stresses that there will be nothing for communities without communities. It stresses that all leaders must be elected and that they can be recalled at any time (following due process) if there is concern about their leadership style. The living politics rejects any individualism against collectivism.

After visiting Cape Town we wish to acknowledge that in some instances this philosophy of Abahlalisms has been somehow been lost in the way. We note that many good things have been done there and that there are many members who still believe in the movement. However it is clear that there has to be a healing in the movement in Cape Town.

There has been a clear demand from a large number of members in Cape Town that AbM in KZN must support the movement in Cape Town in this healing. We have agreed to do this and have put a process in place. This process will give everyone a chance to express their views, will make no judgments without evidence and will be aimed at strengthening Abahlalisms and Abahlali in Cape Town.

We wish to assure all the comrades' and friends of Abahlali that the movement is working on strengthening the philosophy of Abahlalisms in both provinces and everywhere that Abahlali exists.

Abahlali of the WC will elect an interim structure to take this process forward at 10:00 am on Saturday on the 21 April at QQ section in Khayelitsha. Abahlali in KZN will be sending two delegates to support this process.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Bandile Mdlalose
Mr. TJ Ngongoma

25 APRIL 2012

Press release · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Unfreedom Day March

Friday is freedom day. This means that the time for annual lies to our democracy has come. The time to pretend that democracy and freedom came to everyone in 1994 has come. The time to escort tender entrepreneurs, their families and friends to the big stadiums has come. The time for the rich and powerful to take their platforms in those stadiums to tell the shack dwellers and other poor people that we are all free has come.

But winter is also here and once again the poor are burning. Kennedy Road has burnt. Jadhu Place has burnt. There will be many more fires before winter has passed. What kind of government leaves people to burn year after year? What kind of government rushes to tell the media, year after year, that fires are caused by 'illegal electricity connections' when we all know that it is candles and paraffin stoves that cause most fires? What kind of government wants to blame the poor for their suffering? What kind of government tries to depoliticise poverty by treating the poor as ignorant and criminal when in fact our problem is that we are oppressed?

We understand that it would take even the most progressive government a long time to build houses with all the people and for all the people. But there are so many things that could easily be done right now to stop or reduce fires. There could be lots of taps and fire extinguishers in every settlement. People could get fire proof building materials. The City could stop sending in the police to disconnect people. Shack dwellers could be provided with legal electricity. Roads could be built for fire engines. We are left to burn because we don't count to this government as anything other than voters and people to full stadiums on days like Freedom Day.

Some people are saying that we must be 'educated' to understand the struggle so that we will not embarrass the politicians by mourning 'UnFreedom Day' every year. We understand the struggle very well. It was our struggle too. But we also understand that no human being is supposed to live in fire and so it cannot be denied that we remain oppressed.

Abahlali will therefore still remain celebrating this day as an UnFreedom Day till there is real freedom for every man, woman and child. Freedom means that everyone must be safe. It means that everyone must have a good place to live. It means that everyone must be able to have a decent job or a guaranteed income. It means that the land must be shared fairly. It means that everyone must be able to get good education and travel on affordable and safe transport. It means that everyone must be able to speak and to organize freely. Fire, rape, evictions, disconnection, exclusions, repression and hunger are all enemies of freedom. What freedom we do have, including the freedom that we have created for ourselves, is continually under attack. How can anyone say that this is a free country when activists have been openly chased from their homes, and had their homes destroyed, without the state taking any action to stop this or to investigate this?

We cannot afford to be excluded, oppressed, attacked and burnt in our shack for 364 days a year and then just accept to be told that we are free on Freedom Day. We believe that we should feel freedom for ourselves rather being educated and told that we are free. We would be bluffing the nation and the world if we were to celebrate anything while our children are burnt in shack fires, beaten by big rats, living without electricity, living without adequate water and sanitation, without road access and without refuse collection. We cannot claim any freedom when organised crime and organized corruption in governance continue to ruin our society without any action being taken against those who are carrying out these crimes that keep us in the shacks. Over the years we have made many calls to law investigation and enforcement agencies to investigate some of the crimes of corruption.

Abahlali baseMjondolo will be collaborating with other community organizations, groups and individual activists in Durban, Howick and other surrounding areas in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal to stage a march demanding Real Freedom for everyone. These community organisations include organisations that represent shack dwellers, flat dwellers, street traders, subsistence fisher folk, small farmers, rate payers, climate justice activists and the Right 2 Know campaign.

Our demands include land and housing in our cities, an end to evictions and transit camps, the provision of basic services to all shack dwellers, serious action to address the crisis of shack fires, an end to repression and respect and dignity

for the poor. Abahlali still stands by its position that Nigel Gumedede is a disgrace to our democracy and that he must go if the city is serious about democracy and about housing Durban's poor.

The march participants will be gathering at King Dinuzulu Park (Botha Park) from 8:30 am at the corner of Dr. Pixley Ka Seme Street (West) and Anton Lembede Street (Smith) and the march will finish off at the Durban City Hall by 12 pm. The Memorandum will be handed over to the City Manager Mr S'bu. Sithole, a representative from the Premier's office and a representative from Eskom.

For enquiries call:

S'bu. Zikode
Bandile Mdlalose
Zodwa Nsibande
Mnikelo Ndabankulu

7 JUNE 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo to March in Umlazi Tomorrow

It time for the politicians to keep their promises, we are tired of being lied to and being misled. For so long the people from the shacks have been living under threatening situations yet we get no support from the government. We ask for freedom from evictions, services in the settlements and participatory upgrades and instead we are denied services, evicted and either ignored or repressed.

When we first started to organise in 2005 it was said that the government had a plan to house all the people and that we must be the 'third force' because we had no real reason to protest. They said that there would be no more shacks in Durban by 2010. Now the Municipality has admitted that it will take them 82 years to house all the people currently waiting for houses in Durban! That means that if things stay the same most of us will spend out lives rotting in the shacks and we will die in the shacks.

Our demands for an end to evictions, forced removals and transit camps; for services like sanitation, water and electricity in the settlements and for participatory upgrades are just, legitimate and urgent. Our demand to put the social value of land before its commercial value is just, legitimate and urgent. We are not asking for anything more than what is basic to a decent human life. We are not asking for anything more than that we must be respected as human beings.

We have engaged on these issues with government officials for years. However they never agree to any clear way forward. All that is taking place are delaying tactics and empty promises. We have had enough of politicians who think that they can manipulate our heart giving us empty hopes knowing exactly that they won't recognise our right to be part of this city. It is time that all the people that live in this country are taken seriously.

For years people have been protesting all over the country. The protests are getting more and more. The road blockades are up and tyres are burning in Cape

Town and in Johannesburg. It is clear that the poor will not accept to continue to be oppressed in South Africa.

We will use all our strength and all the power that we have to force our government to recognise us as people who do count in our society. This country and its leaders must come to an understanding that the poor, the marginalised, are also human beings and must be treated as such. As long as our human dignity is not recognised, we will fight to protect, promote and advance our human dignity.

Tomorrow we will be using our right to protest using our freedom of expression – a right that we are determined to defend. We will be expressing that we have had enough of the government who run this country as if they are running their spaza shops. People are not clothes that can be bought with a minimum price, used and thrown aside. We want a better life for all, we want to be equal and to be treated as such.

This is not the time for the government to take decisions for the people. It is the time for the people to start taking decisions for themselves. For almost twenty years this government has told us to be silent while it leads us but it has failed us. It has no plan for us. It is time for the people to lead and the government to obey.

Last year we marched in Umlazi. We gave a memorandum to James Nxumalo while he was still the speaker. We have got no response. Tomorrow we march again in Umlazi.

We will be starting from Mangosuthu passing V section and ending at Mega City where the memorandum will be handed over. The march will start at 9:00am and end at 12:00pm.

Bandile Mdlalose (ABM – General Secretary)
S'bu Zikode (ABM- Acting chairperson)
ABM office

23 JUNE 2012

Press statement · Joint statement

Bheki Buthelezi Still in Custody – Very, Very Tense Situation at the Umlazi Police Station

Unemployed People's Movement (UPM) activist Bheki Buthelezi was arrested at his home in Umlazi early this morning. Activists from the UPM and Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) immediately made their way to the Umlazi police station to demand his release.

The police have been playing ducks and drakes with the protesters at the police station all day. At first they said that Bheki would be released by 2, then at 2 they said that the protesters need a lawyer to get Bheki out. After tense negotiations R500 bail has been paid but now the police are saying that they don't have bail forms and that these have to be fetched from the Isipingo police station before Bheki can be released.

The situation between the police and the protesters outside the police station has been extremely tense. The police sent for reinforcements and have been very, very aggressive and threatening. The comrades outside the police station say that they 'fear that there will be another Tatane in Umlazi'. However the protests will continue until Bheki is released. There can be no compromise with repression.

For comment from outside the police station please call:

Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson

China Ngubane, Anti-Xenophobia Activist

For comment on the broader situation of protest, repression and resistance the media can also contact the following comrades who are all in direct contact with the comrades protesting outside the Umlazi police station

S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo

Ayanda Kota, Unemployed People's Movement

Mazibuko Jara, Democratic Left Front

25 JUNE 2012

Press statement · Joint statement

Charges Against Bheki Buthelezi Withdrawn & the Zakheleni 18 Released

Today all charges against Bheki Buthelezi were dropped and the Zakheleni 18 were released on free bail at the Umlazi Magistrate's Court. It is clear that the arrest of the 18 was politically engineered. The arrestees clearly stated in court that they don't know the reason why they were arrested. As the magistrate asked them why they were arrested they said they had no idea and that they were just having drinks with friends on a Saturday evening when the police simply came and arrested them. The 18 were released on free bail with the understanding that the police have no evidence against any of the accused, that they were not involved in any violence and they are all poor and unemployed.

However surprisingly only 14 of the 18 left were freed through the front door. The other 4 were presumably freed through the back door. The reason for this remains a big question and there is suspicion that there may be an attempt to divide the 18 and to use some to fabricate evidence against the innocent. The fabrication of false evidence against activists has happened to activists before (e.g. like happened to the Kennedy 13).

The Ward 88 community is under threat for fighting for their rights and speaking the truth. Today the supporters of the councillor, Nomzamo Mkhize, openly intimidated and threatened people from the community in front of the police. This raises a question of why they were not arrested because Bheki was arrested for intimidation with no evidence and no witness. However today the police did not take action at the court and instead they just observed what was happening as supporters of the Zakheleni 18 were being openly threatened. Some members of the Ward 88 community now fear to go back to their homes as they were told that they be killed, and this was all in front of police.

Furthermore xenophobic and racist statements were made by the ANC supporters at the court. They said that the comrades who were there in solidarity with the Zakheleni 18 had been bussed in from Uganda and Emhlabeni areas and

that there are people born in other countries (they used insulting language) in our movements. There were also racist utterances made against our comrades from Wentworth and Clairwood and even newspaper photographers. It was said that there are poor Indians in our movements (again they used insulting language). The Ward 88 community however believes that these are just a few ANC loyalists who are closely linked to the councillor and are trying to create division in the community and in the struggles of the poor.

Our movements welcome all poor people without regard to where they were born or what race they come from as long as they are willing to struggle together with us for their own freedom. Our movements work with all people that stand for a world in which everyone counts the same and are willing to become comrades in the struggle for justice. We will never deviate from these principles. However we note that ethnic and racist language was also used by the ANC against Abahlali baseMjondolo when the movement was repressed in 2009. This language is dangerous.

The matter of the 18 was adjourned to the 16th of July at 8:30 in R court.

We welcome the solidarity from all the organisations that were present at the Umlazi police station on Saturday and at the Magistrate's Court today. We call on all progressive organisations to support the community of ward 88 in their fight to be recognised and for justice.

The comrades from Ward 88 members said they have had enough of the struggle of the poor being politicized into ANC games and that it is high time that we unite for justice and peace. We have lived years in poverty, silenced by intimidation and the law. We will use our power outside the court for our voices to be heard. It's time that the government takes the people seriously.

Finally Bheki has approached the state prosecutor and they have returned his docket back to the police station. The prosecutor was not satisfied with the docket because there was no evidence against him and so his case was struck off the role. However the prosecutor said that if police do find some evidence against Bheki they will submit his docket back to court and issue a summons for his arrest. The prosecutor has ordered Bheki to return his bail slip so that the police can refund him. This process was an attempt to lock Bheki, silence the community and sabotage the plans to occupy the Municipal Offices.

Bheki Buthelezi: Unemployed People's Movement
Desmond D'sa: South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
Ayanda Kota: Unemployed People's Movement Spokesperson
Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary
Mnikelo Ndabankulu: Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
China Ngubane: R2K

27 JUNE 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Jadhu Place on Fire Again

Abahlali baseMjondolo's ongoing struggle for land and decent housing for all shack dwellers and other poor people remains the most urgent demand.

This is the season of fire, the season of shack fires, the season of great humiliation and despair, the deadly season. Those who have always criticized the victims of the shack fires as drunkards, unthinking and thieves of electricity would be blind not to understand the truth and the politic of shack fires. We burn, year after year, because we are denied electricity and because we are denied decent housing. When we carefully connect ourselves to electricity the state sends armed men to disconnect us. When we formalise our own shacks the state sends armed men to demolish them. We are forced, sometimes at gun point, to live as we do.

Jadhu Place, a shack settlement in Springfield Durban, has been on fire since 1 a.m. yesterday morning. About 200 people have been left homeless by a fire believed to have been caused by a paraffin stove. This morning at about 9 a.m. the same settlement has just been on fire again. This is very worrying because this section of shacks are government shacks that were built by eThekweni municipality after a big shack fire that ruined the settlement three years ago. Government shacks, called amathini by the people and 'transit camps' by the government, are supposed to be the solution to shack fires. But while they work very well to bring shack settlements under government control as the councillors and their committees control the allocation of the amathini they do not work to stop fires. Fifteen government shacks in the transit camp were on fire this morning leaving about 50 people homeless. We can only be grateful that no one got burnt or injured except for one asthmatic person who had to be treated for inhalation difficulties.

Abahlali has always argued that transit camps are not fit for human beings, are not an adequate alternative accommodation and should not be counted as 'housing opportunities'. In fact they should be recognised as a form of oppression.

The residents of Jadhu Place are sick and tired of the lies of the ANC. It is high time that the failed ANC PROMISES for 'a better life for all' are exposed. Right now residents of Jadhu Place are gearing up to take their struggle back to the streets. For too long we have been lied to and for too long we have demanded housing but only given amathini. We call upon the eThekweni Municipality to urgently provide the decent housing promised many years ago. We call upon the eThekweni Municipality to recognise that shack fires are not a result of our ignorance but are an inevitable result of the conditions in which we are forced to live and to urgently call all membership based shack dweller's organisations to a city wide meeting to discuss practical solutions to address the long crisis of shack fires. If they continue to fail to take the crisis of shack fires seriously we will continue to conclude that our lives do not count to them.

It is not clear right now whether the municipality's Disaster Management will assist with rebuilding materials and all that is needed by the people that have been left homeless or not. All we know is that they have attended those victims of Tuesday morning with the usual few blankets and tin stuffs. Today's victims have not yet been attended to. We kindly ask organisations, churches and individuals to extend their helping hands to this community. As an organisation we are clear that we are struggle for justice and not charity but in times of crises, when people have lost everything, we have no choice but to seek all forms of material support for people that have been left with nothing.

Nkosi Dladla
Mjo Gcabashe
Mnikelo Ndabankulu

30 JUNE 2012

Press statement · Joint statement

Huge Police Raid on Bheki Buthelezi's Shack

At around 4:00 a.m. this morning a group of around 50 heavily armed police officers arrived at Bheki Buthelezi's shack in the Zakheleni shack settlement in Umlazi and demanded to search it. When confronted with the fact that they did not have a warrant they retired and then returned at around 4:50 with a document stating that they had a warrant to search the entire settlement. But they only searched Bheki's shack. They found nothing. During the search a helicopter with a search light hovered over the settlement. Ten activists, all of whom have become leaders in the rebellion in Ward 88, and all of whom have been warned that the police and local party leaders are after them, slipped away during the police raid and are now in hiding.

A plain clothes officer with the fifty or so uniformed officers quietly advised a group of young men to flee the settlement and return to their rural homes as things were going to get dangerous for the residents. As they left the settlement the police said that they would be back to continue their search. After the police had left shots were fired in the settlement. It is not clear who fired the shots and with what purpose but it would not be unreasonable to suspect that the shots were fired by the same armed men that supported the police attack on Tuesday.

This morning two meetings were held. The first meeting was supposed to be between community representatives and the regional ANC structure. However in the end the ANC actually sent the local BEC. The BEC tried to sweet talk the Zakheleni representatives into stopping the protests but the Zakheleni representatives insisted on their right to protest and on the significance and legitimacy of the issues that lead to the protests in the first place – water, electricity, housing and the authoritarianism of the ward councillor and local ANC structure.

The Zakheleni representatives demanded a meeting with the Mayor, all the officials that have received memoranda at various protests but have never responded as well as Nigel Gumede (to discuss the housing situation in the settlement) and Willies Mchunu (to discuss the violence from the police and local ANC supporters). This meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday afternoon.

The second meeting held today was a mass meeting in the Zakheleni settlement. This meeting discussed the repression and strategies to keep the pressure up.

Bheki Buthelezi, Unemployed People's Movement
Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo
China Ngubane, Right to Know Campaign

4 JULY 2012

Combined press statement · Joint statement

Crucial Meeting in Umlazi

The meeting held at Nkonkoni Primary School on Saturday 30 June 2012 failed to resolve the crisis in Umlazi. It was supposed to be between community representatives and the regional ANC structure. However in the end the ANC actually sent the local BEC and there was no progress. The Ward 88 representatives demanded a meeting with various senior ANC leaders in Durban to be held today at 3.00 p.m.

Today is the day that we have all been waiting for. Today's meeting will structure the future of the ward 88 shack settlements and determine whether the protests continue or are placed on hold.

If the officials and people that we are expecting to meet with today do not appear, or if they do appear and there is no progress, we will be left with no choice, but to take on streets again. We have always said that real and urgent issues – negligence and undermining from government – pushes us to go to street. Today is the day for them to come and prove themselves by showing that we count to them and that they are willing to sit and work with the poor.

If the meeting does not take place, we have a peaceful standby plan that will take place.

The meeting is scheduled for today, Wednesday, in Umlazi, at the Nkonkoni Primary School at 15:00pm

Bheki Buthelezi – Unemployed People's Movement (UPM)

China Ngubane – Democratic Left Front (DLF)

Bandile Mdlalose – Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A (ABM)

Des D'sa – South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA)

5 JULY 2012

Combined statement · Joint statement

Occupy Umlazi!

The meeting between senior ANC representatives and representatives from the shacks in Ward 88, Umlazi, was supposed to start at 3:00 p.m. It ended up starting at 5:00 p.m. None of the senior ANC people that were expected pitched up. Only the ANC regional representatives came.

The ANC said that they needed a tangible reason why the community representatives needed to see MEC Willies Mchunu. This was so clumsy! What could be more tangible than the fact that people are currently in hospital due to police brutality and shootings. They could also not give any good reason why Nigel Gumede was not at the meeting. They did not do what they had promised to do.

We told them upfront that there is nothing that we will talk if the people we are expecting are not present. They agreed that they will bring the people that we need from the ANC and so the meeting continued.

The meeting was very tense. As usual representatives of poor people's organisations were treated with contempt. The ANC even said that we are not allowed to call each other comrade as that is only for the ANC. The representative from the ANC regions office told us that she was given a mandate to come and get what was in the memorandums that we have handed over at various protests so that the ANC would work on to it and make a follow up to those officials. We raised a big concern at the system that is being used towards engaging the people. We asked why officials can only act when it is the ANC talking. Does that mean that the people do not have a voice or do not count in this society? Does it mean that only the ANC counts and has a voice?

It felt like we were being treated as children. We were not listened to. We felt like the officials feel that they are degrading themselves when they are forced to come down to the poor and to talk to us as equals.

When the ANC then tried to sweet talk us into discussing the police brutality and shootings without the presence of the ANC we walked out of the meeting.

At the report back after the meeting it was decided to move to plan B.

At 11:00 today we began a screening of *Dear Mandela* at the Zakheleni Creche. After that we will screen a film about Occupy Wall Street. We will use the screenings to create a space for the people to strengthen their power by discussing the issues that face us and how to take our struggle forward. Once the screenings and discussions are concluded we will proceed to occupy the councillor's office. The occupation will be opened by a prayer. We will be praying for all these officials who are undermining the dignity of the people and who does not respect people. We will be praying for our strength to confront oppression.

Noxolo Mkanyi, who was shot in both legs is still battling with pains at eMshiyeni Hospital. Reports say she is not receiving adequate treatment and that doctors simply come and go without attending to her. Her legs are swelling and painful.

We request the media to please come to the Zakheleni shack settlement for themselves, to speak to people, to witness the discussions and to observe the occupation. So far journalists have just been writing reports by phoning someone from the community and then someone from the police or the ANC. The rebellion in Umlazi is a serious matter and it could be much better understood if journalists were willing to come to the settlement, spend time there and speak to people.

The attendance register for the meeting is on the AbM website.

Bheki Buthelezi (UPM)
 China Ngubane (Right to Know Campaign)
 Bandile Mdlalose (AbM)
 Mahedebhe (Zakheleni Community Crisis Community)

6 JULY 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Abahlali rises up to stop corruption and forced removals in Langa TRA

Abahlali baseLanga TRA – 5 July 2012

Yesterday, Abahlali baseMjondolo youth took physical action to block the Housing Development Agency from moving residents of Joe Slovo Informal Settlement into Langa Temporary Relocation Area calling the process corrupt and at the expense of current residents of the TRA.

The SANCO aligned TRA committee is selling TRA structures and houses with the tacit support of the HDA. Many of the current residents of the TRA have also been pushed off the housing lists and large-extended families are being counted as single families and therefore slated for eviction from the TRA once their relatives are allocated homes.

The action by our youth was a last resort as housing officials have ignored our complaints and refuse to consult with us in good faith.

Because of our action, the HDA and the TRA committee has been forced to call a meeting with us for tomorrow at 6pm inside Langa TRA Creche to resolve the crisis.

Background

On 15 January 2005, Joe Slovo informal settlement and adjacent hostels were devastated by a shack fire seriously injuring seven people and leaving about 10,000 people homeless. Some of the fire victims were sent to TRAs in the far away township Delft and were promised houses back in Langa after the completion of Phase 1 of the N2 Gateway housing project. The rest were put in Langa Temporary Relocation Area and also promised houses either in Joe Slovo or in Delft.

After the managing agent, Thubelisha Homes (now renamed the Housing Development Agency) and the Housing Department reneged on their promise of accommodating Joe Slovo residents in Phase 1 and built unaffordable rental

flats in its place, the remaining 15,000 residents of Joe Slovo rose up in defiance of their own pending removal to TRAs in Delft.

Joe Slovo's inspiring struggle which included numerous mega marches in the city centre and an effective road blockade of the N2 freeway, eventually turned public opinion against the evictions and Lindiwe Sisulu's arrogance. Even though they lost a Concourt case on the matter, the Housing Department eventually capitulated – they didn't have the political capital to forcibly remove 15,000 people.

Langa TRA – the old committee

The Langa TRA was built in 2005 to house the Joe Slovo and hostel fire victims temporarily until they could all be accommodated in the N2 Gateway housing project.

That same year, the community elected the first community committee in the TRA with Mr Mbambalala as its chairperson. However, soon the committee in charge became involved in corruption and they refused to call community meetings and submit to the mandate of the people. When confronted by the people who elected him, Mr Mbambalala refused to step down.

In 2011, after it emerged that the committee was illegally selling TRA structures to outsiders, the community broke down five shacks. In June 2011, the community effectively removed Mr Mbambalala and the rest of the committee by force. However, the newly formed HDA refused to acknowledge the wishes of the people and continued to work with this old committee. Eventually, without community support, Mbambalala stopped being active.

Langa TRA – the corruption of the housing list

In July 2011, the community elected a new committee with SANCO member Zukisani Sibunzi as its chairperson. They were handed a housing list with most of us on it. In June 2012, the HDA handed the new committee a list of people who would be allocated houses in Delft and houses were allocated immediately to the people on the list. However, this was a completely different list than the original list we received in July 2011.

We are now furious that all of a sudden we will not be receiving the houses in Delft that we had been promised.

Many TRA residents seem to have been removed from the housing list by HDA who says we do not qualify because of dubious technicalities such as missing birth certificates or problematic/traditional marriage licenses. Once residents bring the necessary documents, however, the HDA still declines the residents' applications and refuses to investigate the matter.

Instead, it seems that the houses are being irregularly allocated to people who don't qualify and often already have houses of their own.

More corruption in the TRA

There is also now evidence of corruption on the new TRA committee. Committee members are selling and allocating TRAs to people who are not from either the TRA or from the Joe Slovo community. Abahlali members have surfaced with first-hand accounts and audio evidence that some of these structures are being sold illegally by committee chairperson Zukisani. There is also evidence that some families who are connected to the committee are getting allocated two TRA structures instead of one. For instance, Zukisani currently has two shacks in the TRA.

As Abahlali baseLanga TRA, we are furious because we are not being consulted and this new committee is also acting without our mandate.

Our leftover youth

It has now emerged that because people are going to Delft, there are new open spaces in the TRAs. Our TRA shacks consist of lots multi-family households, original Joe Slovo fire victims, who are cramped into these 24square meter shacks. The Housing Department is supposed to allocate one TRA structure per qualifying individual of age (unless they are married). However, they are lumping our extended families all into one.

Since the HDA is now bringing in residents of Joe Slovo Informal Settlement into the TRAs to make way for the rest of the N2 Gateway housing project, they are attempting to remove everyone out of the TRA including the extended families (mostly youth) who do not yet qualify for the RDP houses in Delft. The HDA says that our youth will be forced to set up their own shacks in some informal settlement or be dumped in another TRA in Delft.

Our youth and other leftovers of the project feel this is unfair and are refusing to leave the TRA calling on HDA and the Housing Department to allocate some of the empty structures for their needs.

After being ignored, community takes action

The HDA is moving people from Joe Slovo into the TRA at the expense of the residents of the TRA without even bothering to consult us.

As a result, the community of Abahlali baseMjondolo has decided to stop the trucks from bringing in the belongings of Joe Slovo residents saying that these are our TRA structures and we will be left homeless if Joe Slovo residents are moved into the TRA.

Yesterday, we twice prevented trucks from moving people's belongings into the TRA. The police and furious HDA officials showed up and after some heated discussions, they were compelled to agree to meet with Abahlali today at 6pm at the Langa TRA creche. As a sign of good faith, residents then let in the one moving truck of Joe Slovo residents whose shacks had already been broken down by the HDA but refused to let anyone new in until our demands are met and the crisis is resolved.

We call on support and solidarity with our following demands.

Our demands

We demand an independent investigation into why we as qualifying poor shack-dwelling families are being declined by the HDA. We also demand that the HDA work to resolve all technical barriers for residents and that all qualifying residents immediately be put back on the housing list.

We demand that each qualifying family living in the TRA who does not receive a RDP house, keep their TRA structure or get allocated one rather than be forcibly removed from the TRA.

We demand an independent investigation into corruption in the community by the HDA and the SANCO aligned Langa TRA committee. We demand an investigation into the people who are being allocated two houses and the people who are selling these houses.

Cindy
Mr Qona
Jongi

8 JULY 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

TRAs Occupied in Langa

After the rise-up of Abahlali at the KwaLanga TRA's that took place on Friday, Abahlali were told that there will be a meeting between Abahlali, the HDA and the corrupt leadership to reconcile and to work out a fair way forward.

While Abahlali are waiting for that meeting to take place, they are seeing people that they don't know being allocated to the empty TRAs. So today Abahlali had a meeting and they decided as collective that today they are going to occupy those empty TRAs cause they are now being allocated to people while the issue of the corrupt leadership that has been selling them has not been dealt with. At the same time people themselves need a place to stay and are still waiting for the promised meeting with the HDA. What does not makes sense is that the offices of HDA are closed today and new people are being moved in today. By the time we can engage with the HDA it will be too late. Its clear that this corrupt area committee is continuing to sell the TRAs while there are local people who don't have a place to stay in the area.

Viva the spirit of Asijiki! Phansi with Corrupt Committee! Viva Operation occupy TRA's!

Cindy
Mthobeli

12 JULY 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Puntan's Hill Shack Dwellers Blockade Umgeni Road

At around 3 a.m. this morning angry residents of the Puntan's Hill shack settlement blocked Umgeni Road with tyres in protest at their dissatisfaction with Cllr. Bhekisani Ngcobo. When Ngcobo was mobilising for votes he promised them that as soon as he takes office as a councillor he would electrify their shacks. The shacks have never been electrified and last week someone was killed while trying to make a self-organised connection.

Ngcobo has not kept any of his promises. The community have tried several times to talk to him but he has neglected them and ignored their demand. Once more the poor have been used as ladders by politicians. This is why they decided to block the road this morning.

At about 4 a.m. this morning some white drunk guys who were driving a car with number plate NPN 21481 forcibly drove through the protesters. They knocked 3 protesters. One passed away in hospital and two others were badly injured.

Between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m. around 60 police came with vans and big police trucks and commanded the protesters to disperse in 10 minutes. The people refused to disperse. The police then threw tear gases at the protesters and chased them into their homes. They then threw tears gas inside their homes far from where the blockade was taking place. A number of children were exposed to tear gas in their homes. The police also arrested 3 people in their homes. Some of the people that were attacked and arrested in their homes were not part of the protest.

The community is very angry. They are saying that they will continue to raise their voices against the government that has turned a blind eye on to them. They are well aware that when they raise their voices the government will send his police to scare them but they will stand firm.

The Puntan's Hill shack settlement has never been affiliated to Abahlali base-Mjondolo. They chose to support Bhekisani Ngcobo in his campaign to become the first shack dweller to be the councillor of this ward. They have now lost faith in Ngcobo. They approached AbM for support after the police occupied their settlement and we are happy to support them in their struggle.

As AbM we want to say that it is time for the politicians and councillors to stop using the police as their shields when they fail to meet the needs of the people. The police should be there to safeguard the community and not to attack them when they raise their voices to the councillors.

The Zakheleni shack settlement in Umlazi has just recently suffered a similar attack from the police who shot at them with rubber bullets while they were protesting. The community there have now occupied the office of the Ward 88 Councillor, Nomzamo Mkhize.

As Abahlali we always warned the government that the anger of the people goes in many way. We have always tried to get the government to engage the poor seriously and respectfully. But they choose instead to ignore the poor and then, when we raise our voices, to repress us with their police and their thugs.

We therefore repeat our demand for Nigel Gumede to step down. He has failed to respond to the housing crisis in Durban and he has failed to engage poor people in Durban with respect. For as long as Gumede remains in his position protests will continue to be organised from shack settlements across the city.

In Umlazi the community occupation is ongoing. In Puntan's Hill the shack settlement is currently under police occupation. In 2012 the shacklands of Durban don't look that much different to how they looked in the apartheid era. The conditions are the same. The tear gas is the same. The road blockades and police violence are the same. The struggle to be recognised as human beings is the same.

The comrades in Puntan's Hill are nervous to put their names on press statements while their settlement is under police occupation.

Bandile Mdlalose
Mnikelo Ndabankulu
AbM office

16 JULY 2012

Statement · Joint statement

Assault & Intimidation of Action by Umlazi Councillor

ASSAULT AND INTIMIDATION OF ACTION BY UMLAZI COUNCILLOR

Yesterday at around 14:00 pm there was a mass gathering of the continuous occupation that is happening in the People's Office that has been set up next to the Councillor's Office, in Ward 88, Umlazi.

A report was given on how the struggle of Umlazi started and how it got the attention of the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) which had come with lot of promises like getting what the community have demanded from them which was a meeting with Nigel Gumede, the Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure also Willies Mchunu, the MEC of Safety and Community. The meeting of delivering by the BEC sat on Wednesday (04th of July) unfortunately they delivered nothing that was expected and which they had promised. Neither Gumede or Mchunu attended the meeting and the BEC offered nothing but sweet talk.

At the mass gathering of the occupation yesterday it was proposed that the office of the councillor, Nomzamo Mkhize, should be locked as she has done nothing but undermine the community. When people from the community come for office services they are asked to produce ANC membership cards. The councillor has openly stated that the Zakheleni community won't get assistance from her since they did not vote for her. And anyway the office has become a broken place. A group of young boys are smoking dagga in the office. It was agreed that the councillors office will be locked today and that if the locking of the office does not get the attention of the people who were requested to remove the councillor then further steps will be taken. As all these discussions and decision took place some of the BEC members were at the meeting taking pictures and recordings of the meeting.

After the meeting while some of the community members were dispersing and while others were continuing to occupy the councillor's office one lady,

Thabile Ngcobo, who was attending the meeting wearing her FAMWU (Farm Workers' Union) T-Shirt was blocked by the councillor's son's car. He called for his mother, the councillor, and she came with her sisters. They started to question Thabile asking her why did she go to this stupid meeting and why is she wearing this T-Shirt. The councillor then grabbed Thabile and pushed her against the car. Her son started slapping her on her cheek while his friend kicked her. After that the councillor commanded that her son take a picture of the lady claiming they'll use it. They then took a minor blade and cut her T-Shirt and took it.

Thabile went back to the community which was still at the occupation and a decision was taken that a case be opened of Intimidation of Action and Assault. The case was opened but no arrest has taken place. It is clear that the police are working for the councillor and not for the community as a whole.

It is clear that the councillor, Mkhize, will do whatever it takes to stop the people from raising their voice and using their rights of freedom of expression. A few weeks back the councillor used the police to silence the people by shooting them. Now that she has seen that this did not help and the struggle is continuing she is taking the law and action of silence to herself.

This has not stopped the people from their commitment to the campaign of "Nomzamo Must Go!" We request again for the MEC of Safety and Community to intervene in this matter as no arrest took place. We therefore also request for Premier to intervene as the Local Government have turned a blind eye to this.

The occupation continues and the struggle continues.

Bheki Buthelezi
China Ngubane
Bandile Mdlalose

18 JULY 2012

Statement · Joint statement

Update from Umlazi: Zwelethu Train Station Shut Down & Protest at the Police Station

At around 4:00 a.m. yesterday morning activists involved in the Umlazi Occupation and the ward 88 struggle closed down the Zwelethu Train Station. This action was in protest at the failure of the police to arrest the ward councillor, Nomzamo Mkhize, after she and her son assaulted an activist.

There was a stand-off between activists and the police at the train station following which the general secretary of the BEC of the local ANC branch, Sandile, tried to arrange an urgent meeting with Nigel Gumede. A meeting with Gumede has always been one of the demands of the Umlazi Occupation.

At around 7:00 a.m. Nigel Gumede personally phoned AbM Secretary General Bandile Mdlalose to schedule a meeting which has been set for next Monday although the time and venue still has to be decided.

The occupation at the councillor's office continues in Ward 88 and will continue until the issues that led to the rebellion in Umlazi are fully resolved. If the meeting with Gumede does not happen, or if it does happen and is just another talk shop, Plan B will be implemented.

Today the Ward 88 occupiers are following the rest of the country and dedicating 67 minutes of their time to Mandela Day. They are spending 67 minutes picketing the Umlazi GG police station and demanding that (1) Nomzamo Mkhize and her son are arrested and charged with assault and that (2) there is a full and thorough investigation of police violence against activists and (3) that there is a full and thorough investigation of the shooting of two activists in the Zakheleni shack settlement.

Bheki Buthelezi
China Ngubane
Bandile Mdlalose

26 JULY 2012

Combined press statement · Joint statement

Ward 88 BEC Refuses to Go to the People

For the past months the organised poor in Ward 88 in Durban have been fighting for their rights, and the resignation of Nomzamo Mkhize who is the current ANC Ward Councillor.

Their struggle has led to activists being arrested, shot at with real bullets by the police and threats and an assault at the hands of the councillor. Despite all these violations of their right to participate in decision making that directly affects them the activists in Ward 88 did not give up and have shown that they are prepared to continue their fight for justice and their human dignity to be installed.

A strong political decision was taken by the people to occupy the councillors' office to show that they did not want her anymore. It was again a collective community decision that every Sunday at 14:00pm a community mass meeting will take place which will be followed by a daily occupation which finishes everyday at around 19:00pm. These collective actions were decided on because they create space for as many people as possible to participate in the struggle and in the discussions that guide it.

On Sunday 15 July 2012 after the meeting at the Peoples' Office (Occupation area) the councillor, Nomzamo Mkhize, together with her son, asked Thabile Ngcobo why is she attending 'these stupid meetings' and then slapped her, kicked her and took a knife and tore her T-Shirt.

A case was opened on the same day but the councillor was not arrested. On Tuesday morning the community closed the Zwelethu Train Station in protest. When the police to try and force the station back open the protestors asked them why is the Councillor not arrested and yet they are so quick to come and arrest the public. The police and protestors had conflicts which led to the police not being able to arrest any community member.

This result putted enough pressure to the BEC to finally alert Nigel Gumede, the Chairperson of the Housing Portfolio Committee and Infrastructure, that the community is getting out of hand. In the past the community once mandated the BEC to call for a urgent meeting with Nigel and they turned a blind eye to

this demand. But with the pressure from the various protests Gumede quickly called the AbM General Secretary, Bandile Mdlalose to set up an engagement meeting which took place on Monday 23 July 2012. The BEC of the local ANC were also invited to the meeting.

The meeting was the usual game with lot of promises and hope. It was said that development projects are supposed to take place very soon. It also identified the poverty in the area and said that the municipality is willing to act on these issues the community is raising.

A written response was also given from the Mayor to the memorandums sent to him by the struggle in Ward 88. In this document it was suggested that Councillor stop working as the community's anger had been noted and that a political solution will be identified. It was stated that the problem between the community and the councillor needs to be addressed politically within the ward structures. This response points to the ANC BEC as the structure that must resolve the problems.

After the meeting with Nigel Gumede, the BEC and the community representatives had a quick meeting. It was decided that part of the way forward was that a community report back meeting be held. However the community representatives had already decided at a mass meeting at the occupation on Sunday the 22 July that there will be a report meeting which will at the People's Place on Sunday 29 July 2012.

The BEC said that they wanted to be part of that meeting and the community leaders agreed that they can come as they are also part of the community. However the BEC then started saying that the People's Place is not a good place for them to attend a meeting. They started identifying that the area is risky as it might have snakes and there are bottles that may cut them.

This was a huge disrespect to the people as they have been staying there for quite a number of weeks with some sleeping there and none of what the BEC is saying has happened. A huge noise then took place at the City hall took place with the passing of words from both groups. The community representatives started saying that the BEC is stubborn and asking why are they refusing to go to the people, especially if they saying that they represent the people. The community representatives argued that the BEC are no different to the councillor who also refuses to come to the people. It was said that the People's Place reflects directly how the people live. It tells the story of their daily lives. One of the reasons why the shack dwellers in Ward 88 are so angry with the councillor is that

she calls the shack dwellers by bad names. At the City Hall the BEC repeated the councillor's arrogance by saying that the representatives of the shack dwellers are uneducated people that don't understand politics or respect the City Hall. This shows that the problem is not just the Ward Councillor. There is a general tendency to disrespect poor people in the ANC and to treat us as dirty and stupid whereas in fact we are people like all other people but people that are oppressed by a system that disregards our humanity.

These have raised so many questions about what kind of leadership the ANC wants to impose on people in Durban. Should a leader not be where the people want them to be? If so why are they not coming to the People's Place where the people are? Should leaders not respect the people that they say they have a right to lead?

There is a big difference between a structure that comes out of the ruling party and a structure that comes out of the community. A party structure is accountable upwards to the party bosses. A community struggle is accountable downwards towards the people in the community. AbM has always insisted that people have the right to organise and represent themselves and to refuse to be represented by party or NGO structures that are imposed on to communities and struggles from above.

From the start of the struggle in Ward 88 the ANC BEC has never supported the struggle. They did not intervene when people were being beaten by the police or shot in their beds at night. They only intervened when the struggle started to put pressure on senior ANC leaders. Now that the BEC is responding it is demanding that it must run the report back meeting and announce the various promises that Gumede has made to the community.

Whenever people on the ground are able to organise and to win victories the politicians try to distribute those victories through the local party structures and to force people to accept the authority of the party structures.

However this struggle will not be handed over to the BEC. The occupation will continue and the struggle of 'Nomzamo Must Go' will continue until Nomzamo Mkhize resigns. The community has a right to organise itself and to represent itself outside of party structures if that is the free choice of the people in the ground.

Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo
 Bheki Buthelezi: Unemployed Peoples Movement
 China Ngubane: Democratic Left Front

16 AUGUST 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Celebrating the Power of Organised Women

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League will be commemorating women's month on the 18 August 2012 at the New Center Sports Ground in Newlands West. The Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League started on the 09 August 2008, after the formation of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A, which was in October 2005.

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement was formed to bring back the dignity of the shackdwellers as we know that the shackdwellers are taken like people who can't think and who don't count in the society. We only count when it's time to vote. The Abahlali baseMjondolo women's league was started to build the power of women (izimbokodo) in the struggle, in our communities and in the society. So as the women who are living in the shacks we will use this day to bring back the dignity to the women from the shack settlements and to encourage them to fight the following:

- Unemployment
- Abusive and exploitative employment
- Communicable diseases
- Cultural practices that suppress women's dignity.
- Anxiety caused through lack of participatory decision making by government officials
- Political dominance and repression
- Evictions
- All forms of undignified and dangerous housing including the amatins (transit camps)
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of toilets
- Lack of electricity
- Lack of water

- Shack Fires
- Exclusion of our children from schools
- All forms of abuse

We also want to break the silence of those who have suffered rape and others forms of abuse so that they can talk about it with their comrades. Some of them are threatened and frightened to talk so we create safe spaces where everyone can talk freely amongst comrades.

Most of the women who are infected with sexually transmitted diseases are infected because they depend on men financially and so if the man is forcing them to have unprotected sex the women agree. We will also encourage women to be confident to talk about sexual issues with their partners and to find solidarity and strength with each other.

Women living in the shacks cannot make vegetable gardens or make their homes nice because we can be evicted anytime from where we are residing. When people are evicted they often lose jobs and their children often lose places in school. We will encourage all women to resist evictions and forced removals.

On this event we will also encourage women to be leaders in the struggle as women are the people who experience the problems first hand as they are the ones that are normally at home. We will also celebrate the many powerful women leaders that have emerged in our struggle.

The details of the event are as follows:

Date: 18 August 2012

Venue: New Sports Center, Newlands East.

Time: 09:00

Halala Izimbokodo!

Zandile Nsibande

Busisiwe Mdlalose or the Abahlali office

17 AUGUST 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Solidarity with Mine Workers at Marikana Platinum

Klicken Sie hier für den deutschen text.

Abahlali baseMjondolo are deeply shocked by the murderous cruelty of the South African police, and those that give the police their orders, at the Marikana Platinum Mine in the North West. The killing of more than 40 mine workers yesterday by the SAPS is immoral and brings great disgrace on our country. There were other ways and much better ways to handle the situation. Yesterday will always be remembered as a dark day in the long history of oppression in South Africa.

We wish to express our solidarity to all the families of the workers that have been killed and injured. We share your sorrow. You are not alone. We carry our pain together. Your children may not grow knowing their fathers but they will not grow alone. We have to care for each other and stand together as we struggle for a world that puts human beings first and treats all human beings equally. We wish to express our solidarity to all struggling workers. We face the same system that makes some people rich and others poor. We face the same government that refuses to recognise our humanity, which tries to force us to the margins of society and which represses us when we resist.

The ANC have shown no regard for the people of this country. They are putting us in transit camps and trying to keep us in bantustans. They are leaving us to burn in our shacks every winter. They are beating us in the police stations. They are shooting us in the streets. Millions of us cannot find work. A government that kills its citizens is immoral and must be opposed by everyone. A government that kills its citizens has lost all moral right to govern. What happened yesterday is no different from the killings of the apartheid government. This is no different to the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 which claimed 69 lives. It is no different to the Boipotong massacre in 1992 which claimed 45 lives.

Millions of people have suffered in their shacks and millions have suffered with work and without work year after year. Some shack dwellers are also workers and sometimes shack dwellers are too poor to be workers. But we have all

suffered enough at the hands of the police, at the hands of politicians and at the hands of the rich. It has always been our call that real freedom and democracy are still a dream for the poor and the working class. All we see is politicians enriching themselves by stealing public funds that are meant to better people's lives. All we see is that the new government keeps on with many of the worst policies of the old government. All we see is that our struggles are criminalised and repressed. The progressive middle classes are struggling to defend the freedom and democracy that they received in 1994. We are still struggling for freedom and democracy to come.

More than twenty five people have been killed by the police during protests since 2000. Tebogo Mkhonza in Harrismith, Monica Ngcobo in Umlazi and Andries Tatane in Ficksburg are just three of the people that have been murdered in the streets by the police. Activists have been tortured and assassinated. Our movement, like the Landless People's Movement and the Unemployed People's Movement, has been attacked in the night by armed men representing the ruling party. For months after our movement was attacked in the Kennedy Road settlement in Durban in 2009 the homes of our leading members were openly destroyed every weekend while the police refused to intervene. Last year Nigel Gumede, the Head of Housing in eThekweni, publicly said that the ANC was at war with our movement and threatened to kill S'bu Zikode. Senior people in the ANC have set a clear tone for the rest to follow. Poor people have been encouraged to attack and kill each other in the name of ethnicity and nationality. It is time to say enough. It is time to say no more. It is high time that all progressive forces join hands to curb this carnage. It is high time that all progressive forces join hands in a struggle for real justice and real democracy.

We have to recognise that there is a war against the poor in this country. We did not want this war but it has come to us. Today no one can deny that a war is being fought against the poor. The red ants and the police are not here to serve the people. They are here to drive the poor out of the cities, contain us in the human dumping grounds and repress our struggles. We have to stop pretending that the politicians are our comrades when they have chosen to make themselves our enemies. We have to fight the war that has come to us. And we have to fight it in a way that puts human dignity and the equality of all people at the start of our struggle and at the heart of our struggle.

We are aware of the dangers of the South African politic when struggling citizens demand real freedom and democracy. Activists are living under serious threats all over the country. We are aware of the time bomb that the shack

dwellers in this country are sitting on. We have always warned, from the time when we first started to organise, that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. The dangers that we face can come from how people respond to oppression as well as from oppression itself.

There is more protest in South Africa than in anywhere in the world. But the government takes no notice of the people. It responds by militarising the police. It responds by talking about third forces. The local party structures send out armed men in the night. The government wants to make the anger of the people criminal and treasonous. It works behind the scenes to support the armed men that invade our homes and threaten us and our families. We have to accept that this government does not care about us. We do not count to it. When we ask to be heard we are treated as criminals and traitors.

Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape will march to the National parliament in Cape Town at 3:00 p.m. this afternoon together with comrades from other organisations. In Durban we will hold conversations with different structures of our movement and our comrades in other organisations, as well as the churches, to plan a way forward. Global Peace and Justice Auckland in New Zealand will be marching to the South African embassy in Auckland at 1 Kimberly Road at 2pm today. Our comrades in Cape Town and New Zealand march with our solidarity.

We all have to stand together. A war has come to us and we must fight it in a way that makes sure that we never turn into our enemies. We must fight this war in a way that puts humanity against brutality and never in a way that puts one brutality against another. Once your struggle starts to make you like your enemies everything is lost. A politic of war has come to us. We have no choice but to resist. But we must resist with our own politic which is a militant people's politic that starts and ends by honouring the dignity of all people.

S'bu Zikode
Zodwa Nsibande

Abahlali office

Note: At the time when this statement was being drafted some media outlets were reporting that the number of strikers that had been killed on Nkaneng Hill had reached 40. The official figure is now 34.

23 AUGUST 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Marikana Massacre Memorial Service

Abahlali baseMjondolo has held a number of serious discussions about the Marikana Massacre within our movement and with our comrades. It has also been very important for Abahlali to send a delegate straight to Marikana in the North West province to meet directly with striking workers and struggling residents of the Wonderkop shack settlement. We, together with the Unemployed People's Movement, were also able to send two delegates to the meeting held to discuss the massacre at the University of Johannesburg last night. We wish to set the record straight and to say clearly that the account of what has happened that has been given in the media has mostly come from the state. The views and experiences of the striking workers and struggling residents of Marikana has been silenced. It is essential that the media must talk to the striking workers and struggling residents of Marikana and not just about them.

What has also concerned us about some media reports as well as what the state has been saying is that it seems now as if communities are violent and that what we must all pray for is an end to community violence. They say that we are violent nation. They say that this is a tragedy. But they do not say that for a long time the police and various anti-land invasion units and private security companies have been waging a war against the poor. They have been driving us out of the cities and into transit camps and they have especially attacked, beaten, tortured and killed those of us who are still struggling for real freedom, equality and justice. This has been the reality for struggling communities for years. But most middle class people only started to understand when they saw Andries Tatane being killed by the police on television. Now the truth of our democracy is here for all with eyes to see.

The police do not act as peace keepers when there is disagreement between employers and employees or citizens and government officials. They take sides. They are there for the employers and the government officials. They are not there for the people.

And we all know that we are living in a country where every police action is intelligence driven. The police have their spies everywhere and are listening to all the activists' phones. Their intelligence is not used to keep the peace. It is used to repress us.

The reality of police violence against poor people and especially against poor people that are resisting their life sentence of poverty raises difficult questions. Why does the government that so many poor people vote for repress the poor? Why are our votes wanted but not our presence in the cities or in the discussions? Why is the government trying responding to the protests that are happening everywhere with violence rather than support? It is clear that they want to respond to all this anger and protest by beating us back into the dark spaces where we are supposed to be kept. They want us in the bantustans and transit camps. They want us silent.

They want a solution to the reality that this society does not provide for everyone and include everyone that takes the form of violence and intimidation. The only real solution is to work with the poor to build a society in which everyone can participate in decision making and the land and wealth of the country is shared fairly. That is the only way to build a just peace. A peace built on state violence will never be just or democratic.

Abahlali baseMjondolo will be holding a Memorial Service in Durban on Friday, 24 August 2012. We need to mourn the dead and strengthen ourselves for the struggles to come.

We are inviting all churches, shack dwellers, progressive movements, and individuals to attend this service. We are happy that Bishop Rubin Phillip has confirmed his attendance.

Venue: Emmanuel Cathedral, corner of Victoria Street and Queen Street, Durban

Time: 17:00pm to 18:30pm

Bandile Mdlalose
Zodwa Nsibande

30 AUGUST 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

KwaNdengezi Protest to Councillor Ngcobo of Ward 12

The KwaNdengezi community of Ward 12 under Councillor Mduduzi Ngcobo, will be having a protest on Friday. The reason for the protest is that the councillor has failed to engage with the community and has also failed to fulfil his promises to the community.

In 2010 the Cllr called a consultation meeting with the community and the Housing Department about the housing project that would take place in the community. Before accepting the project the community raised concerns about their families' grave yards. They said that a housing project should not frustrate people but improve people's lives. It was agreed that before the project starts another community meeting will be called, to discuss how it should be structured. It was also agreed that as this is a community project therefore it should be driven by the community.

However the promises of the councillor and agreements that they had as a community with the councillor have not been met. The community just saw the project starting without the meeting being called as promised. For more than three times the community have trying to engage with the Councillor by setting up appointments at the councillor's office. But the councillor has not respected them and has not attended these scheduled meetings. After several times of going to his office, the community leaders called the councillor and explained that the agreement that was agreed upon has been not kept. He promised to come to the community and listen to the people's grievances and try to find resolutions. But again he did not do so as he promised.

After several times of trying to engage with the councillor and failing, the community have decided to join Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A. The councillor was not happy about this. Lately he has been saying that as a result of the community joining AbM they no longer have a right to use the community resources like community hall.

The community still have confidence in is the Chief of the area which is Chief Shozi, who is the Chief of Mangangeni. He is still willing to listen to the community and to engage them respectfully and seriously.

However the action of the Councillor in violating the community's rights has left them with no choice but to head to the streets.

The protest will be held at Ward 12, Phase 3 at KwaQhobhoza. It will proceed via Tomtom Road and Thulani Road heading to the Councillor's office where the memorandum will be handed over.

The protest will be held on Friday, 31 August 2012. It will start at 10:00am and continue to 12:00pm.

Thulisile Ndlovu: (Protest Convener)

Mthoko Hlophe: (Chief Marshall)

Khanyisile Mdletshe: (Community Member)

Bandile Mdlalose: (AbM General Secretary)

31 AUGUST 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Housing Development Agency trying to illegally evict resident in Langa TRA – today

For months, the local residents committee in Langa Temporary Relocation Area has been illegally selling government built shacks. Many of the people buying the shacks already have alternative accommodation and are doing it in the hopes that they will ‘cut the line’ and be allocated a RDP house. They don’t need a TRA structure. This corruption has been supported by the Housing Development Agency and we now have evidence that at least one member is directly involved in the corruption taking place. On top of that, HDA apparently has decided to demolish some of the TRA structures – we don’t know why because they refuse to communicate this to us.

As a result, some members of Langa TRA, who are staying cramped up in other people’s homes, have decided to occupy some of the TRAs.

Yesterday, some HDA officials approached a resident and Abahlali member named Tumi threatening to evict him from an occupied structure. They told him they’d come back today and evict him. Luckily, Tumi knows that it is illegal to evict someone without a court order and without providing him with adequate alternative accommodation as provided by the PIE Act.

Thus, when the HDA returns this morning to evict him, Tumi, with the support of other members of Abahlali baseMjondolo in the community, will stand his ground. He will not be moved until he is given his day in court to demand adequate alternative accommodation for himself and his family. He is not demanding a house, he is just demanding a roof over his head. He refuses to be evicted to the streets.

Abahlali members from QQ Section and other shack settlements will be is there to support him.

Cindy Ketani
Tumi

6 SEPTEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Joe Slovo Residents Protest Today, Furious at HDA Corruption

Joe Slovo residents will be protesting in Langa outside the newly built N2 Gateway houses this morning from 8am onwards. Media and other supporters are requested to attend.

Abahlali kwaLanga Temporary Relocation Area (TRA) have been fighting their own battles against corruption by committee members and the Housing Development Agency (HDA) with regard to the allocation of TRAs and RDP houses for residents. Now, it seems that Joe Slovo residents in Langa are also furious at their own community leadership and the HDA.

Yesterday we found out that they accuse HDA of selling the new houses built for Joe Slovo residents to outsiders who are not from the community. They also accuse their own leadership of making sure that they are the first ones to receive housing in this phase of the N2 Gateway housing project – before anyone else from the community receives their long promised houses.

If residents' accusations are true, it would mean that the entire N2 Gateway project is once again hopelessly corrupt. (Remember the previous attempted forced removal of Joe Slovo residents to Delft and the corruption in housing allocation in Delft communities such as Tsunami?)

Representatives from Abahlali baseMjondolo KwaLanga TRA will be joining Joe Slovo residents this morning in solidarity and to find out what exactly their grievances are. We will see if we can make common cause with our brothers and sisters in Joe Slovo.

Tumi

6 SEPTEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Residents of Joe Slovo and Langa TRA erupt in protest against corrupt housing officials and community leaders

Abahlali baseMjondolo kwaLanga TRA

Venue: Mass meeting at Zone 30, Joe Slovo

Date: 6 September 2012

Time: 18h00

Residents of Joe Slovo together with Abahlali baseMjondolo kwaLanga TRA protested tonight against corrupt Housing Development Agency project managers who are working with community committees in Joe Slovo and the TRA to illegally sell houses and TRA structures in the N2 Gateway housing project. We have evidence of corruption by Tami and also by Bukiwe, both high up HDA officials. Many community members have come forward with this evidence.

Today, we protested with the Joe Slovo community who called on the leadership of Joe Slovo to explain themselves. They refused to come to the community meeting. So the community decided to go to the leaders and force them to address our grievances. After a three hour meeting, Sifiso Mapasa from the committee promised to come to a community mass meeting at 18h00 tomorrow, the 7th of September, at Zone 30 park, Joe Slovo. We expect as many as 1,000 angry residents to attend this meeting. We are calling on the HDA to work with us to go door to door and verify each and every person who has received a house or TRA.

Heads must roll for the corruption that has kept us homeless and in shacks.

Media and supporters are invited to our meeting at 6pm.

Cindy (Langa TRA)

Tumi (Langa TRA)

Busisiwe (Joe Slovo shack settlement)

16 SEPTEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseRichmond Farm are taking the eThekweni Municipality to Court

In 2009 Siyanda residents near KwaMashu were evicted by the Dept. of Transport and relocated from their shacks into Transit camps so they could build the road which is known as Dumisani Makhaye (R577). The residents contested the eviction in the streets and in the courts but an eviction order was granted by the Durban High Court and the residents were evicted and relocated on 17 March 2009. However the court order that was given stated that all basic services should be provided in the transit camps and that the residents should all be moved to formal houses within 12 months. Water, electricity and sanitation were not provided and the residents are still rotting in the transit camp. The municipality has simply ignored the court order. Moreover for the past 3 years their children have suffered the pain of walking a long distance to their schools because of the relocation.

The Siyanda transit camp is one of the hundreds of transit camps people that have been built in recent years. People are dumped in these camps and then neglected. Usually the conditions are much worse than in shack settlements. However the government likes transit camps because it can use them to dump people where it wants them to be and because it can take control over the allocation of housing. Forcing people into transit camps is a way for government to enforce its control over the allocation of land and to break independent organisation. Sometimes only party members get a government shack in a transit camp and they are often controlled by the police rather than democratic structures. The eThekweni municipality has claimed that transit camps, which are government shacks, count as formal housing and as the realisation of the right to adequate housing. This is a disgrace and an insult to the intelligence and dignity of the poor and it needs to come to an end.

On 14 October 2009 Abahlali baseMjondolo took the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government to the Constitutional court to fight against the section

16 of the Slums Act in order to prevent forced relocation to transit camps. We won this case and the government has now abandoned its attempt to 'eradicate' shacks by 2014. In Durban the Municipality has also agreed to start providing basic services to shacks, including electricity. However the struggle against transit camps continues.

Siyanda residents together with Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A have taken a decision to take the eThekweni Municipality to court for failing to comply with the court order and also failing to house the residents as agreed upon. Abahlali baseMjondolo does not only stand for the Siyanda residents but we stand against all of the rest of the transit camps in South Africa. Transit camps are not 'adequate' or 'formal' housing. They are an abomination. They are places where people that do not count to this society are dumped.

This court case will take place in Durban High Court on the 17 September 2012 at 09:00 a.m. The court papers are online here.

Mrs. Nxumalo: (Siyanda Transit Camp)
Bandile Mdlalose: (AbM General Secretary)
AbM office

18 SEPTEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseSiyanda vs eThekweni Municipality

The failure of the eThekweni municipality to comply with an order of the court that compels it to house the residents of Siyanda who have been left to rot in the Richmond Farm transit camp has clearly indicated that the City is law unto itself.

Yesterday the Court heard both the sides of Abahlali and eThekweni and held the judgment. The judge said it was going to be handed down in few days. We have just received a call from our legal team saying that tomorrow, Wednesday, 19 September 2012 at 9am the judgment will be handed down at the Durban High Court.

Abahlali wish to thank its legal team from the Socio Economic Rights Institute of South Africa for such a high quality legal representation. Abahlali maintains that amathini (Transit camps) still represent the apartheid style of indignity which must be fought by all means necessary. We believe we have reasonable grounds for success in the court and will continue to struggle against transit camps in the courts, on the streets and in communities.

Bandile Mdlalose Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary
Mrs Nxumalo Richmond Farm Transit Camp
S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo

19 SEPTEMBER 2012

Media statement · Joint statement

Court Victory Against the eThekweni Municipality!

Issued by: Abahlali baseMjondolo and Socio-Economic Rights Institute of SA (SERI)

VICTORY FOR FORGOTTEN SHACK DWELLERS

High Court orders eThekweni Mayor, City Manager and Director of Housing responsible for ensuring compliance with court order to provide houses to evicted Siyanda occupiers Today the Durban High Court handed down a ground-breaking judgment in *Mchunu and Others v Executive Mayor of eThekweni and others*, following a hearing held on 17 September 2012. The decision, given by Acting Judge Nigel Hollis, requires the Mayor of eThekweni, the City Manager and the Director of Housing to take all the necessary steps, within three months, to provide permanent housing to 37 poor families living in a transit camp near KwaMashu, Durban. If they do not, they may be fined or imprisoned.

Today's judgment comes after the Durban High Court ordered the eThekweni Municipality to provide houses to 37 families of Richmond Farm Transit Camp in KwaMashu. The families had been evicted from the Siyanda informal settlement in March 2009 in order to allow for the construction of a road. One of the conditions of the eviction order was that eThekweni Municipality would provide the families with permanent housing within a year. The deadline for this redress expired in 2010, and nothing has been done to comply with the order. The occupiers were simply abandoned at the transit camp, to live in appalling conditions indefinitely. With the assistance of Abahlali baseMjondolo and SERI, they took the municipality to court, demanding the implementation of the 2009 court order.

Today the Durban High Court declared that the Executive Mayor, City Manager and Director of Housing at eThekweni Municipality are "constitutionally and statutorily obliged to take all necessary steps" to comply with the 2009 order.

These three municipal office-bearers must ensure that the municipality provides the housing due to the families for the last two-and-a-half-years, or face being held in contempt of court.

Teboho Mosikili, attorney at SERI, said: “This is a victory for the rule of law. This case has important implications for local government accountability, as it means that municipal office-bearers can no longer hide behind nebulous administrations for the performance of constitutional obligations. Municipal office-bearers are responsible for giving effect to court orders and constitutional obligations placed on municipalities. If they do not take this responsibility seriously, they can be held in contempt and fined or sent to prison. The Mayor of eThekweni, the City Manager and the Director of Housing have simply ignored my clients’ repeated petitions that they comply with the court order. If they now continue to do so, the consequences for them could be very severe indeed.”

According to Bandile Mdlalose, General Secretary of Abahlali: “This judgment is a victory for all the shack dwellers that are dumped to rot in transit camps. We want to express our deepest gratitude to our legal team from SERI. While we celebrate this victory, Abahlali are worried that we may be attacked and receive death threats, as happened after the Constitutional Court victory against the KZN Slums Act when Kennedy Road was attacked leaving two people dead in September 2009.”

Advocates Geoff Budlender SC, Stuart Wilson and Nicole Lewis represented the families in court.

Teboho Mosikili, attorney at SERI

Bandile Mdlalose, general secretary of Abahlali

22 SEPTEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali to celebrate Heritage Day at Lindokuhle Community Crèche

On Monday 24 September Abahlali will be joining many South Africans who still see heritage month as significant in our time. We believe that our culture helps us not only to define our identity but also our humanity as well.

We will be celebrating this day with cultural entertainment that shows the diversity of our communities and our struggle. We continue to insist that everyone in the shacks is from the shacks and is therefore a person who has a valuable contribution to make to the struggle of the poor. We continue to refuse to let politicians and others misuse language and culture to divide and thereby weaken the poor.

But we also commemorate this month as having brought a significant change in our movement. It was on the very day of 24th of September 2009 where our attackers had planned to assassinate us at our Heritage Day event in eMmaus, in Pinetown. It did not work out but on the 26th of September 2009 our attackers mounted a successful attack on us and forced many of us out of our homes in the Kennedy Road settlement in Clare Estate.

This day will never be forgotten by many of us. We had been beaten and arrested and intimidated and banned from protesting before. But on the 26th of September 2009 it became clear to everyone that these repressions were not mistakes, or just problems with local councilors and police stations. It became clear to everyone that it is no accident or oversight that there is no democracy for the poor in South Africa. We either accept our oppression and obey the politicians or we are repressed. This is the reality of this so-called democracy.

The Marikana Massacre did not come out of nowhere. There is a long history of repression of poor people's movements and struggles around the country.

We will have different speakers from different branches addressing us on various issues that keep us in the shadow of injustice. We will also celebrate

the new order handed down in the Siyanda/Richmond Farm High Court ruling (there will be a mass meeting in eMathinini tomorrow to discuss the meaning of the order and the way forward). We will have all traditional entertainments e.g the Zulu dance, Sarafina, various kinds of music, plays and poems. And, of course, the Imfene Dance will be there.

The event will take place at Lindokuhle Community Crèche, Richmond Farm, from 11am to 4pm.

Zinhle Zungu: Abahlali Youth League
Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali Secretary

27 SEPTEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Three Years after the Attack on our Movement, the Kennedy Road Displacees Remain Homeless and in Exile

The attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo in 2009 set a tone for KwaZulu-Natal to become the province where warlordism and the assassination of leaders and activists has become the order of the day. It was also a warning to the poor that we should accept landlessness, homelessness and all forms of injustices and inequality as the order of the day if we want to survive this democracy.

It was on the night of the 26th, 27th and 28th of September 2009 that the whole political plot was concluded and carried out to assassinate the leadership of Abahlali. We know and we want the nation and the whole world to know that this plot was planned at a very high political level in our province. The plot was not just aimed at reigniting the politic of fear and assassination among those of us who refuse to accept fear. It was also aimed at tearing apart our movement – a movement that has brought us together, a movement that has made us realise how much power and value we have when we stand together. A movement that has shown us how we were made poor by colonial rule, by apartheid and by the post-apartheid state. A movement that has insisted that democracy means that everyone has the same right to participate in decision making and that the land, cities and wealth of our country must be shared and managed equally.

After having lost everything we had, including our homes that we once owned, Willies Mchunu, a top politician in this province, said “Kennedy Road has been liberated”. It seems that when the poor are without homes and without safety that makes some people rich people to feel good in this country. This province of KwaZulu-Natal is a good example of how the state believes it cannot be told anything by the poor. It is this city of Durban and provincial politicians that do not believe that Freedom Charter is right to insists that “the people shall govern”. They cannot accept that the people shall govern from the shacks and from any poverty that we are subjected to.

Today is the 3rd year of our homelessness. We had humble homes but were made homeless by the ruling party. We continue save our life sentence in hell and we continue to ask the eThekweni municipality how long is our sentence?

The Kennedy Road Displacees will hold a picket at the Sydenham Police Station tomorrow, Friday 28 September from 18:00 – 19:00, to highlight the injustices of the state in this particular attack. We will not go quietly and we will not go away until the state takes responsibility for what happened. We will light candles and we will submit a memorandum to the Station Commissioner. We will not forget what was done to us three years ago. We will not forget the repression of movements around the country, all the people that have been tortured, all the people that have been murdered by the police on protests and the murders in Marikana.

Zandile Nsibande (displacee)

Sindy Mkhize (displacee)

Bandile Mdlalose (Abahlali Secretary General)

28 SEPTEMBER 2012

Memorandum · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Memorandum Handed to Senior Superintendent De Villiers of the Sydenham Police Station

Three years after the attack on our Movement, the Kennedy Road Displacees Remain Homeless and in Exile We as men, women and children of the Kennedy Road settlement are gathered here tonight to express our deepest pain and suffering at being refused our right to citizenship, safety and freedom by a government that was meant to save all its people – blacks and whites, poor and rich, young and old and of all genders – from suffering, division and oppression with justice, equality and dignity.

Today, we remember with anger how our leadership, its families, our close friends and close comrades were attacked by the gang associated with the ruling party. Today we remember how our homes were destroyed, looted and burnt down for months – often in broad day light. Today we remember how all this happened in the presence of all state security forces without any of their assistance despite our plea for their help. Today we remember how many of us had to deal with trauma in the dark confined corners without any state assistance. Today we remember how our children dreamt nightmares of the incidents. Today we remember how many of us had to leave their jobs and return to their dry rural areas with no jobs and no government presence and nothing but Ubuntu. Today we remember how the Kennedy 12, first the Kennedy 13 suffered in the hands of those who always claim that they liberated this country. Today we remember how our brothers were killed on these days.

Today we remember how the government of the day, from local to national, has pretended not to have seen and known our situation. Today we have learnt how poor people are treated in the new South Africa. Today we can rest assured that the government of the day will never care about the poor. Today we want the whole world to know that the same government they once supported has turned against its own people and become its new oppressors.

Today we make the following demands:

1. Land and safe homes for the displaced families
2. Return or compensation for all personal belongings lost in the attack
3. Immediate arrest of our attackers who still enjoy the protection of the state.
4. Healing process for these families
5. Re-integration in good faith of the displaced families that wish to return to Kennedy.
6. Participatory democracy
7. Real freedom and democracy.

Today we ask how much must we pay for our citizenship? Today we ask much longer shall we serve our sentence in exile?

Today we unite just like how many communities and workers are uniting around the country and around the world against injustices. We express our solidarity with comrades in the mines and everywhere injustices prevail.

Today we wish to state clearly that we will not allow repression by the ruling party and the police to destroy our struggle. We remain committed to the struggle for land, freedom and dignity.

Delivered at _____ on _____ 2012

Received by _____..

22 OCTOBER 2012

Press statement · KwaNdengezi Branch

Road blockade and protests to restore democracy and end corruption in KwaNdengezi and Shallcross

The struggle for land, housing and dignity continues in KwaNdengezi.

Mduduzi Ngcobo, the KwaNdengezi Ward 12 councillor has been terrorizing this community for a long time. It must be remembered that this community had to march on the 31 August 2012 demanding that the Speaker of eThekweni Municipality Logie Naidoo intervene in what the community calls Ngcobo acting as both a referee and a player in new housing project. But as always Logie is only acting as a ceremonial individual. He has never attended to any of the communities complaints about their ward councillors. As the Speaker he is supposed to be a chief whip and principal councilor where communities can report 'lazy and underperforming' councilors but instead he is just always out cutting ribbons in ceremonies of the city. We see no evidence that he performs his real duties. This must be investigated so that the people of Durban can see if he knows what he is supposed to be really doing.

As always when housing projects are built without them being discussed with the local community there are all kinds of serious problems. In KwaNdengezi the contractor is digging in people's yards without ever having spoken with them to build houses that will not be allocated to them. In doing this they also interfere with graves. Houses are being allocated to people from outside the area that are suspected to have bought their houses from the councillor. A

Memorandum of Demands was received by Mr. Desmond Myeza, a Manager from eThekweni Municipal Speaker's Office, on the 31 August but up until today they have not responded. The complete lack of any response to the memorandums handed over at legal marches is the very simple reason why the so called legal march is no longer the choice of communities as they are dumped in the bin.

Today the community has blockaded the main road in KwaNdengezi demanding that the allocation of houses to unknown people from outside the area be stopped.

They are demanding that the allocation process must be open and transparent to all and that the claims of corruption against the councillor who is believed to be selling the houses must be seriously investigated. The road blockade began at 5am this morning. As always the police are supporting the councillor to continue corrupting and intimidating the community. Some activists have been seriously beaten by the police in their attempt to protect corrupt politicians. We request the media to rush to the scene and we also request the media to please speak to protestors as well as the police and the politicians when they write their stories.

In Shallcross

In eKuphumeleleni in Shallcross, the so called Housing officials from eThekweni Municipality and Councillor Nomvula Shembe visited the eKuphumeleleni community to lie to the community and tell them that they are no longer protected by the Durban High Court. In fact the community has a Court Order preventing the municipality from evicting residents. As always the City is just ignoring that order. The community protested and chased the Municipal Officials away on Saturday 20 August 2012. The officials are now saying that they will deploy the army in the area. The eThekweni municipality should know that this is not army state. There has never been any democracy in Durban for the poor. But things are getting worse every day. Non one can get anything without a party card. Bulling, warlordism and assassination have become the order of the day.

Thulile Ndlovu, KwaNdengezi Abahlali baseMjondolo branch
 Albert Ngubane, Chairperson of the eKuphumeleleni Abahlali baseMjondolo branch
 Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General
 S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo

26 OCTOBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Welcoming our Hero and Heroine Back from the United States and Haiti Speaking and Screening Solidarity Tour

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League is excited to welcome home our young activists, Mnikelo Ndabankulu and Zodwa Nsibande, who have just completed a Dear Mandela Screening and Public Speaking solidarity tour of the United States and Haiti. They have spoken to academics, students, on radio stations and to comrades in many places. International solidarity is very important for us to be able to share experiences of struggle with other comrades and for us to make alliances in a time of growing repression. When we were attacked in 2009 our comrades in other countries protested at South African embassies around the world and many of them also protested after the Marikana Massacre. We have hosted many comrades from other countries in Durban and we have also organised in solidarity against repression in Haiti.

Dear Mandela is a documentary about some of the struggles of Abahlali and life in shack settlements. It is about the struggle for poor people to take our place in post-apartheid South Africa. The film shows how we are still struggling for land, housing, basic services, the right to represent ourselves and for dignity against a government that sees the poor rather than poverty as the problem. The film shows how our movement has survived repression.

We wish to thank the producers of this documentary, Dara Kell and Christopher Nizza, for making a film that tells some of the truth about our lives and struggles. They did not come with their own ideas about how our struggle should be. They really tried to tell the truth about our struggle as it really is. It is very important that the truth is told about our struggle against the alliance between the Black Boers and capitalism. We also wish to thank Chris and Dara for the way that they have worked with us and not for us in setting up screenings and discussions.

Zodwa and Mnikelo will be arriving back in Durban tomorrow on Saturday, 27 October at Durban King Shaka International Airport at 11:30am. The Abahlali Youth league will be at the airport to welcome our hero and heroine back home.

Lisa Nene: AbM Youth League

Bandile Mdlalose: AbM General Secretary

Bheki Simelane: AbM Treasurer

27 NOVEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

New Branches & New Struggles in KwaNdengezi & Isipingo

On Sunday the 18th of November 120 people, mainly women, participated in the launch of the new Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) branch in KwaNdengezi. On Sunday the 25th of November we launched another new AbM branch in the Uganda settlement in Isipingo. We currently have 64 branches, 55 in KwaZulu-Natal and 9 in the Western Cape.

Abahlali baseMjondolo Launch at KwaNdengezi

KwaNdengezi

People started joining AbM in KwaNdengezi in early June. One of the community members had been following the Shallcross occupation and approached AbM for solidarity with their own struggle. The problem that the people are facing in KwaNdengezi is that there is a housing project there. No one in the community had been informed about this project. This is a rural area and people live in their own houses and not in shacks. They have an iNkosi and iziNduna. Land is allocated by the iziNduna and is not paid for. Some people have Right to Occupy papers and other people don't have papers. But the right to occupy the land is recognised by all the neighbours and is therefore a real and strong right. After 1994 the land was taken over by the Municipality and the legal authority was shifted from the iNkosi to a councillor.

When this housing project started RDP houses were just built anywhere and without any discussion or consultation. Some people found that two or three houses were suddenly being built in their yards. Fences were just destroyed and houses were built on their gardens and even next to or over their family graves. There has been no respect for the dead and African people have a high respect for the dead. This is an insult to the people and to their culture. Also the houses are not being built for the people in the area. They are going to people unknown in the area and people strongly believe that the councillor is selling them as so often happens in Durban. When people complained about these houses being

built in their yards and on their gardens and graves they were told that their houses were shacks and that therefore they have no ownership or say – no rights at all. However their houses are not shacks. They were built on properly allocated land and are solid structures having as many as five rooms in some cases.

There has been no consultation about any of this and the Community Liaison Officer has only been appointed because she is on the Branch Executive Committee of the local ANC. People are bought at night to the new homes and it is known that anyone who questions the project or the allocation of the houses risks being killed. Everyone knows that there is a very bad record of the eThekweni Municipality allowing councillors to do business with the city and it is rumoured in KwaNdengezi that the councillor has tenders related to this housing project and that he is selling the houses too. One thing that is for sure is that the councillor, Mduduzi Christian Ngcobo, has suddenly grown very rich.

On the 31st of August a protest was organised against Ngcobo, the councillor for Ward 12. The memorandum was received by Desmond Myeza, the manager in office of Logie Naidoo, the Speaker in the eThekweni Municipality. Naidoo was given seven days to respond but there was no response at all. The complete silence of the municipality on this matter has made people to believe that the rumours about corruption must be true.

By the middle of October the community was furious at the failure of the Speaker's Office to reply to their memorandum and so they organised a road blockade on the 22nd of October. Ngcobo came to the blockade with the police. He was armed and he joined the police assault of the protestors. Thuli Ndlovu, who was then the interim chairperson of AbM in the area, was singled out for deliberate personal intimidation and assault.

That night Ngcobo arrived at Thuli's home and started shouting threats and shooting a gun outside her house. She and her family did not sleep that night. The interim committee has opened a case of intimidation against Ngcobo with the local police. They know that of course that a case against a councillor will never be investigated but they wanted it to be on the record.

On the 23rd of October Thuli and other comrades from KwaNdengezi joined the Rural Network protest in Pietermaritzburg together with other comrades from our movement and the Unemployed People's Movement.

Before the launch of the KwaNdengezi branch on the 18th of November there were several meetings. At the first meeting AbM was invited to present

the movement and to explain ubuhlali. At the second meeting an interim committee was elected to work towards the launch – to explain the movement's politics and to mobilise and recruit. The third meeting was supposed to be the launch. It was scheduled for ten. When the AbM leadership arrived the hall was still being used for a church service. But when the church service was over the councillor arrived at the hall in his Navara 4X4, entered the hall with two people and sat in the front. Both of these people were from the BEC of the local ANC and one, Nonhlanhla, is also the Community Liaison Officer for the housing project in the area. The hall then filled up with people expecting to attend an AbM launch. However the councillor started addressing the people saying that they were here to talk about crime and to launch a Community Policing Forum (CPF). He was armed and was very intimidating and threatening. He had armed men moving in and out of the hall too.

However Mr.Mbanjwa, an AbM member from KwaNdengezi, bravely told the councillor that people had come to the hall for an AbM meeting. People started clapping. The councillor tried to ignore what was said but as people became more noisy he started talking about 'strange faces'. He said that he had not been informed of a meeting in his area and that he has to be informed of all meetings in his area and that no meeting can go ahead without his permission. He also said that as AbM are poor it is clear that the movement is coming to the area to steal people's houses and that the people of KwaNdengezi need to organise themselves against criminals that want to steal their homes. There were no police officers present and so this was clearly not a legitimate CPF meeting. Some people wondered if Ngcobo wasn't trying to create his own militia to protect himself against the people that he is supposed to be representing.

Thuli approached the councillor saying that the people wanted to start their meeting. However he refused to stop talking or to allow the meeting to go ahead. As he was armed and threatening the AbM leadership left. This reminded the movement of what happened at eShowe.

Other attempts were made to hold AbM meetings in the community hall but Ngcobo, the councillor, would always lock the hall when he heard that AbM were coming. Meetings had to be held outside. The interim AbM committee in the area went to the Municipality to request access to the hall and were told that they had a right to use the hall. The officials said that it was a community hall and that they couldn't be refused access and that they don't need to pay to use

the hall. They went to the police and reported that they were planning to use the hall and that the councillor had no right to deny them access.

However on the day of the launch the councillor locked the hall and refused AbM access. However the interim committee had organised a big tent and chairs in case they were denied access to the hall and the launch went ahead in the tent. All the while the councillor was driving around. He was accompanied by armed men. The police were with him too. But there were too many people and so he couldn't break up the meeting.

The new AbM branch in KwaNdengezi has the following immediate aims:

1. To stop the project.
2. To force the City to be fully transparent on everything that they have already decided and done (budget, plans, project beneficiaries etc) and to renegotiate the project in a way that respects the rights of the people already living in the area.
3. To ensure that there is a credible investigation into all the allegations of corruption and intimidation against the councillor.

In order to achieve these goals they will continue with mobilisation and also look at getting a court interdict to stop the project.

Warlordism and violence have become the order of the day in Durban and in KwaZulu-Natal. We are wondering why people like Nigel Gumede are sitting back. Do they have something to hide? Are they also benefiting from this project?

Uganda in Isipingo

On Sunday, 25 November 2012 we launched another branch in Ward 89 at Uganda near Isipingo. The problems are the same. Here too when people are supposed to be enjoying and happy when a housing project comes they find that instead they are angry and disappointed. Here people were removed from their shacks and put into transit camps. This community was promised verbally that both those who still live in shacks and those who were relocated to transit camps were going to benefit in this housing project. However as the homes are finished people from outside the area are being put into these houses and the local residents remain in the transit camps. Once again there is no consultation or discussion and there is no allocation policy that is transparent. Twenty one families unknown to the community have been given these homes so far and it

is strongly alleged in the community that these homes are being sold. All our efforts to report these injustices have fallen into deaf ears.

Abahlali in Uganda are making the same demands as Abahlali in KwaNdengezi – the project in their area must be stopped, everything made transparent and renegotiated on an open and democratic basis.

Thuli Ndlovu KwaNdengezi Abahlali Chairperson

Zwelethu Nomdidi Uganda Abahlali Chairperson

Sbu Zikode Former Abahlali Chairperson

30 NOVEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Breaking the Silence on Woman Abuse

Each and every day is a challenge to women who are facing different kinds of abuse. It is often hard for them to speak out about it. Some of the women are abused by their boyfriends or husbands. Others are abused even within their families by their family members and because they are woman they feel that they must keep quiet about it. Women are also abused by landlords, government officials and politicians. Some rich women are also abused by the men in their communities but rich women are not abused by government officials and politicians. Being poor makes a person vulnerable to all kinds of abuses because poor people are not taken as people that count in this society. We are not taken as people with rights. In fact keeping some people poor is a kind of lifelong and day to day abuse too.

While the 16 Days of Activism and World Aids day are happening the Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League will be having a workshop with women and sharing our experiences and discussing our solidarity in the struggle to end all abuse against all women. We will also be educating each other about our rights as woman. We will also be having a time to talk about our problems as woman, problems that we are sometimes unable to talk about in other spaces. We will have the opportunity to break the silence as woman. Most of us as woman when we are abused we feel ashamed to talk about our abuse. But on this day we will be having that opportunity to take off the mask and speak about our problems as they are.

Part of our problem as Abahlali woman is the issue of shelter. While politicians who act to represent us are living in fancy homes we as woman have to suffer being homeless to the extent that we can do anything to get shelter and food for our kids. Not even the government is willing to attend to us and yet they pretend to be concern about us as woman. There is a lot of talk about women. There is no action in solidarity with women.

We are also aware of the campaigns that they are going to have which do not really accommodate our real issues of being homeless. The only time we

will see that the government has a real interest in us as human beings is when they decide to sit with us and listen to us in our shacks rather than just always talking about us on the televisions.

We will also be commemorating our late Heroes and Heroines who died because of this pandemic (HIV/AIDS). We have lost many comrades. We will also be healing our hearts as women to those who are infected and affected by this pandemic. We are also encouraging all the women to know their status, to disclose to their partners and live up to their status.

We will be having our event for the 16 Days of Activism and World Aids day tomorrow at Diakonia Council of Churches on 1 December starting at 8 and continuing to 3. We will be partnering with People Opposing Woman Abuse (POWA) for this event.

Zandile Nsibande: (AbM- Women's League)

Busisiwe Mdlalose: (AbM- Women's League)

Bandile Mdlalose: (AbM- General Secretary)

1 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Protest at Government Failure to Assist Shack Dwellers After the Storm

The huge storm that hit Durban last night has left several communities reeling. People's homes have been flooded and some have been washed away.

As always shack dwellers we are more vulnerable to these disasters than most other people. For years we have been trying to engage the eThekweni Municipality around both their failure to take adequate measures to protect shack dwellers from disasters like fire and floods and to offer proper support to shack dwellers after disasters. But the municipality only gives its time for the people for political issues and not ever for issues of development.

The Kennedy Road settlement is one of the places that has been badly affected by this storm. When Nigel Gumede and others came to the settlements after we were attacked there he promised that the people would be housed by February 2010. They remain in their shacks. All they have received are the usual lies.

Things are also very bad in the Quarry Road settlement. This settlement has a river one side and a steep road running down towards it on the others side. Each and every time there is rain the Quarry Road residents fear to sleep at night because of not the knowing whether or not their houses will be washed away. Councillor Bhekisani Ngcobo in Ward 25 has said that he will make plans for the community to be safe but today they are sweeping water from their homes.

In KwaMashu residents are suffering the same. Councillor Lucky Mdlalose in ward 41 has not intervened to offer them assistance. The vales were full of water, houses started to drown, even cars were almost washed away. This has been happening for several times. What has really angered the community this time is that the councillor came to the community after the storm but he would not go inside to see the disaster for himself. He said that he is not going to come inside the settlement to see the homes which are damaged because it a mess. The residents feel that councillor does not have support and care for his ward so they

have blocked the road. They are now they are demanding that the Municipality intervene to this matter.

Other communities that have been badly affected by the storm are KwaNdengezi and Shannon Drive.

We can't keep living like this. When we are not burning we are being flooded. We need land and housing in the cities. We need proper drainage, toilets and electricity. We need the right to be able to represent ourselves in all matters affecting our communities. We need a municipality that works for the people, for all the people, and not for the politicians who only want our votes. We will not accept being forced to live without safety or dignity.

Sindi Maluleka, Kennedy Road
Jabulile, Kwa Mashu
Thuli, KwaNdengezi
Bandile Mdlalose, AbM General Secretary
Mnikelo Ndabankulu, AbM Spokesperson

4 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo Takes the Minister of Police to Court to Account for Police Repression in Durban

On the 12th of September 2006 S'bu Zikode and Philani Zungu, then the chairperson and deputy chairperson of Abahlali baseMjondolo, were arrested on their way to a radio interview and subject to severe assault in the Sydenham Police Station. When people in the nearby Kennedy Road shack settlement rallied in support of Zikode and Zungu they were attacked by the police and Nondumiso Mke was shot in her knee with live ammunition. The arrest and assault from police at the hands of the police was highly politicised and followed intimidation from senior politicians that including a warning that the movement must stop its communication with the media. For background to this see the statement online at <http://abahlali.org/node/72>

The article that was published in the Mail & Guardian after the arrest and assault is online at <http://mg.co.za/article/2006-09-16-i-was-punched-beaten> The article that was published in the Sunday Tribune is online at: <http://abahlali.org/node/883>

There is an Abahlali baseMjondolo statement from 2008 that gives a good overview of the repression that the movement faced in its early years. It is online at <http://abahlali.org/node/3249>

The statement from the Socio-Economic Rights Institute is below.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Zodwa Nsibande
S'bu Zikode

5 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

SAPS Attempt to Illegally Ban Protest in Durban

The Abahlali baseMjondolo branch in the Palmiet Road shack settlement in Clare Estate, Durban, has decided to march on the Ward 23 councillor, Themba Mtshali. They have been supported in this decision by all other Abahlali baseMjondolo branches in the ward.

Mtshali is one of the shack dwellers who became a councillor in the last local government elections as part of the ANC's strategy of trying to contain our movement – a strategy that has included serious repression and intimidation, attempts at co-option, channelling our victories through ANC structures and bringing non-AbM shack dwellers into positions of leadership in the local party structures. However like all other councillors Mtshali is remoted from above and is only an instrument for implementing top down decisions by the party and municipal structures. He does not engage people democratically. In fact it is impossible to even arrange a meeting with him. He has failed the people of Ward 23 and in particular he has failed the poor of Ward 23. Even though he was poor himself a few years ago he is now a councillor and so, as with all councillors, we are not worthy of respect in his eyes because we are poor.

The march has been planned for Friday 7 December 2012. The march will begin at the Palmiet Road shack settlement, move down O'Flaherty Road, and onto Quarry Road and then end at the councillor's office in the Aquarius building on Mountbatten Drive. Our demands will be issued to the councillor and to the premier. We have made it clear to the premier's office that we have no faith in the office of the Speaker of the eThekweni Municipality and that this is why we are jumping straight to the provincial level in this matter.

The demands that will be issued by this march fall under three categories:

1. That basic services like water, sanitation and electricity must immediately be provided to all shack settlements in the ward.
2. That negotiations must immediately begin to secure land and decent housing in the ward for all shack dwellers living in the ward. We will not accept

forced removal to transit camps in the human dumping grounds outside the city.

3. That all development and decision making in the ward must happen in a genuinely participatory and democratic manner.

We know the law governing the right to organise protests very well and we have complied with all of the necessary steps to organise a legal march. We also know all of the old dirty tricks that are used by the police and politicians to deny people the right to march or to delay the provision of this right until the very last minute in order to frustrate mobilisation.

We gave written notice of our intention to hold a march on 19 November 2012. We received a stamped acknowledgement of the receipt of our letter of notice. When we received no reply we followed this letter up with a number of phone calls. We were told that there was no record of our letter. We then wrote a new letter and when we delivered that letter we were told that in fact our first letter had been found. Then we received a phone call saying that we need to direct our application for permission to march to an office in the Outer West. The numbers that we were given were never picked up. These tactics of 'losing' notifications, suddenly changing the office at which notifications must be given, giving phone numbers that are never answered and so on are all typical ways in which attempts are made to frustrate the right to protest. These are all old tricks. Lately a new tactic has been to say that permission cannot be given for a march unless the people who that march is protesting against or making a demand to have agreed to accept the memorandum. This is completely illegal. In fact the law says that we only have to inform the City that we will be marching – there is not even any legal requirement to apply for permission and there is no such thing in the democratic law as a permit to march. That was a requirement of apartheid law but municipalities just carry on as if the law was never changed.

Yesterday an officer from the Sydenham Police station called Ntombemhlophe Zothwa, the march convenor, and asked her to come to the police station. He also said that he was aware that this was an IFP march. He gave his name as Solomon.

Ntombemhlophe also received another call to attend a Section Four meeting today at 9. AbM attended this meeting. It was chaired by Captain Govender from the Metro Police. She was a good chair. She was fair, polite and respectful to everybody. Officer Solomon was also at the meeting though. He said that the

march could not go ahead as we have not received a permit from the Reservoir Hills shopping mall which is on the route of the march. He also said that we need a permit to march from the owner of the Aquarius building where the councillor has his office. The march will only pass the shopping mall (which was built on the site of a shack settlement that was illegally demolished a few years ago) and it will not go inside. But now we are being told that we must get permission from the owners of a building that we will pass on our march as well as the owner of the building in which the councillor has his office. There is nothing like this in the law. And our movement has never once damaged any building, or caused any other damage to property, on any of our marches. We have been violently attacked by the police but we have never caused any damage to any property or harmed any person on any one of our marches. Saying that we cannot organise a legal march unless the property owners give us permission is a new addition to the long history of dirty tricks used to deny us our right to protest.

Also this morning S'bu Zikode received a call from Nigel Gumede, who is head of housing in the eThekweni Municipality. In the past he has made an open death threat against S'bu. However today he was polite. He was saying that they should meet and that there was no need to march as they could sit and talk. He also said that he knew that this would be an IFP march. S'bu told him that all attempts to talk had failed and that the march was going ahead. He also said that the movement has a long experience of this very old dirty tactic of saying that there is really a third force or a political party behind protests. When AbM marches on the ANC they often say that the march is really organised by the IFP, Cope or the DA. When we march on the IFP or the DA they say that the march is really organised by the ANC. None of the political parties can understand that as poor people we can think and act for ourselves. They are all failing to understand the difference between being poor and being stupid. S'bu explained this clearly to Gumede and told him that this march would be an AbM march.

We wish to make it very clear that:

1. This attempt to deny us our basic democratic right to protest is totally illegal.
2. We will not accept this attempt to deny us our basic democratic rights.
3. The march will be going ahead.
4. If necessary we will take legal action to secure our right to march and if necessary we will march in defiance of any unlawful bans on our right to protest.

We also wish to note that it is clear that Officer Solomon is clearly being used by politicians to undermine the rule of law in order to deny us our basic democratic rights. The SAPS in Sydenham have done a lot to improve their relationship with the poor communities in the area, and with our movement, since the new commanding officer, De Villiers, was appointed. However if they wish to be credible then Solomon must be isolated.

We also wish to note that the Premier's Office has acknowledged receipt of our letter and that we have had good co-operation from that office.

Ntombemhlophe Zothwa, Secretary of the Palmiet Abahlali baseMjondolo branch
S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo

6 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Threats of Violence Against Tomorrow's March

Our movement often gets reliable information from within the ANC and government structures from people that are sympathetic to our movement and our struggle. Today we have been informed by a number of highly credible sources that the Ward 23 Councillor, Themba Mtshali, and the chairperson of the local BEC of the ANC, have been mobilising people to disrupt our march tomorrow. We have been told that they aim to prevent the march from going ahead and to use their own violence to justify the illegal ban on our march.

The people that are being mobilised to attack our march are being told that they will be attacking the IFP tomorrow. The people that were mobilised to attack our movement in Kennedy Road were told that they were attacking COPE. In light of the recent violence between the IFP and the ANC in Durban this new lie saying that we are IFP is a very dangerous lie. We note that Nigel Gumede, head of housing in the eThekweni Municipality, and Officer Solomon in the Sydenham SAPS are also spreading this lie. KwaZulu-Natal is the capital of the politics of warlordism, political assassination, police violence, torture and murder. Threats of political violence always have to be taken seriously here. Political violence has become normal here.

It is an important principle for our movement that the people on the ground, the ones who are most affected by what happens in any situation, must be the ones to take the decisions about how to respond to that situation. Our plan at the moment is to go ahead with our peaceful march despite the illegal ban by the police and the plans to attack the march by the local ANC. This will be an act of non-violent civil disobedience in support of our basic democratic freedoms. We are hoping that by exposing Mtshali's plans in advance we will make it difficult to continue with them. However if the police threaten violence or attack the march without warning, or if the plans by the local ANC to attack the march materialise, we will be guided by the marchers and local residents in deciding how to respond.

If there is any violence tomorrow it will come from the police or the ANC or both. If there is any violence tomorrow serious questions will have to be asked as to how it is that Nigel Gumede, Themba Mtshali and Officer Solomon are all saying that our march will be an IFP march in ANC territory at a time when there is high tension between the IFP and the ANC in Durban.

The only democracy for the poor in Durban is the democracy that we have built for ourselves and that we have to constantly struggle to protect from the politicians and those police officers that are remoted by the politicians.

Ntombemhlophe Zothwa, Secretary of the Palmiet Abahlali baseMjondolo branch
S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo
Zodwa Nsibande, Abahlali baseMjondolo

7 DECEMBER 2012

Memorandum · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Memorandum of Demands to the Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal Dr. Zweli Mkhize and Cllr Themba Mtshali

Memorandum of Demands to the Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal Dr. Zweli Mkhize and Cllr Themba Mtshali – Delivered by a March on the Offices of Themba Mtshali on Friday, 7 December 2012

We, the residents, men and women, of Ward 23 and members of the Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA in KwaZulu-Natal are democrats committed to the flourishing of this country. We speak for ourselves and direct our own struggle. We have been mobilized by our own suffering and our hope for a better future.

It is time to take seriously the fact that land is a serious problem in our country. It is time to take seriously that land was stolen from our ancestors and that this has impoverished us. It is time to take seriously that housing development in this city is a corrupt mess that does not just leave us without houses or services but has also terrorized our communities.

For too long politicians, including Mtshali, as well as some civil society organisations and others with power have been treating us with disrespect and indignity. We are determined to restore our dignity.

For too long Mtshali has been playing hide and seek with us, avoiding us. We demand that he engage us with respect and dignity. This is Not just an issue of service delivery. It is also about democracy, governance from below and dignity.

For too long Abahlali baseMjondolo have been subjected to state repression, displacement, evictions, arrests, beatings, torture and death threats. We demand the right to organise freely and without fear.

For too long Themba Mtshali and his armed bodyguards have been terrorizing us without regard for our humanity, our citizenship or the rule of law. He has lied to our communities with no respect for the shack dwellers and the poor. Mtshali has failed the residents of Ward 23.

For too long the provision of basic services has been denied to us. We demand the provision of all basic services such as water and sanitation, electricity, road access, refuse collection etc.

For too long the Promised Land and housing have become the lies of every new councillor that comes in to place. We demand an end to the lies and the beginning of an open, honest and democratic partnership between the people and the government that can drive development from below.

For too long the commercial value of land here in eThekweni and many other areas has been put before its social value. We demand that the social value of land come before its commercial value.

For too long we have been living under constant threats of eviction in our own country. We demand an immediate end to all evictions. We demand land security.

For too long the right to the cities has been denied to the shack dwellers and the poor in this country. We demand the right to live in cities.

For too long the right to decent housing has been turned into forced removal to transit camps. We demand an end to all amathini. They are Not meant for Human habitation.

For too long those of us whose houses were flooded by storm remain homeless and vulnerable without Mtshali's aid.

For too long local jobs have been only given to ANC members. In Ward 23 jobs only go to Mtshali's volunteers, that is those who campaigned for him, and to Mtshali's friends.

For too long we have been subjected to crimes in the shacks. We demand safe homes and communities like respectable citizens.

For too long our communities do not have crèches for our kids and community halls. We demand that crèches and community be made available to us.

We are prepared to fight for these rights in courts and in the streets. Just like people around the country are concerned about the Marikana massacre, we demand that the government at all levels immediately come to the aid of the affected families and meet the demands of all struggling workers.

Just as people around the city, the country and world are uniting in support of our struggle we express our support for our comrades in Marikana, on the farms in the Western Cape and elsewhere.

If this memorandum is received without conscious Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA will consider engaging in non-stopping protests.

Handed over by_____on_____.at_____

Signature_____.

Received by_____.on_____.at_____.

Signature_____

Miss Ntombemhlophe Zothwa

Eric

Miss Bandile Mdlalose

7 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

ANC Intimidation in Clare Estate this Morning

March Gets Underway Despite ANC Intimidation in Clare Estate this Morning

From early this morning Ward 23 councillor Themba Mtshali went from shack settlement to shack settlement in Ward 23 intimidating people and warning them not to participate in today's march – which was been unlawfully banned by the local SAPS. Mtshali was accompanied by his BEC and his (always armed) bodyguards.

There was also a large police presence in the area. The police were heavily armed and had two water cannons. In light of the fact that it was the police that unlawfully banned the march and their history of violence against our movement – and their support of violence against us from the ruling party – their presence there may also have been a form of intimidation. We know that their work is often to protect the politicians – not the people or what's left of our democracy. However the marchers were able to assemble and to begin the march. The police did not try to disperse them so it seems that they have backed down from their ban in face of the pressure. There is also a strong media presence. However ANC supporters have massed at the councillor's offices and are saying that they will block us from delivering our memorandum.

Abahlali baseMjondolo have been joined by comrades visiting from Take Back the Land in the USA on this march.

For up to the minute information on the unfolding situation

Ntombemhlophe Zothwa

Zodwa Nsibande

23 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Shack Fire in the Kennedy Road Settlement

At around 4am a fire hit the eShishunqa section of the Kennedy Road settlement in Clare Estate in Durban. Around twenty shacks were gutted. There have not been any reports of injury or death.

One of the people whose home was destroyed was planning to return to her rural home tomorrow and lost all the food and money for stokvel.

Shack fires are not just accidents or natural disasters. They are a result of the way in which we are forced to live. Our movement has been struggling since 2005 for shack fires to be recognised as a political crisis resulting from the contempt with which poor people are treated in this society. This struggle continues. Everytime there is a fire the police and municipality issue statements blaming the fire on alcohol or what they call “illegal electricity connections”. They say these things without making any attempt to find out the real cause of fires. The most common cause of fires is in fact candles. For this reason our struggle against the fires has always included a struggle for the immediate electrification of all shack settlements. When we started our struggle the eThekweni Municipality refused to electrify shack settlements and sent out armed men to disconnect people who connected themselves. As a result of our struggle this inhumane policy has being overturned and a start has been made with electrifying shack settlements in Durban. However the process is too slow and like everything else in this municipality it is being channelled through the local structures of the ruling party rather than being developed as a universal right for all residents.

The affected residents have not yet had any contact from the Municipality’s Disaster Management Services. We are calling for speedy, effective and non-partisan support for all affected residents.

Any solidarity with the families that have lost their homes and all their possessions will be warmly welcomed.

Sindy Maluka
Mnikelo Ndabankulu

25 DECEMBER 2012

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Devastating Fire Rips Through the Palmiet Settlement

At around 23:00 last night a fire ripped through the Palmiet Road shack settlement in Durban. 85 houses burnt down, around 150 people have been displaced. 2 people were badly burnt and another was injured as she fell while running from the fire.

Shack fires are no accident. They are political – a direct result of the contempt with which poor people are treated in this society.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Ntombenhlophe Zothwa

19 JANUARY 2013

Press statement · Langa TRA Branch, Western Cape

Residents in Joe Slovo and Langa TRA continue to be sidelined by corruption

We as Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM) are not satisfied by the way the government treats our communities. The worst part is that those who are richer do not feel ashamed to steal from the poor. We have been crying to our government, but we have been ignored.

The only thing we are fed by these people we are looking up to is lies. In the Langa TRA's, ever since the Housing Development Agency (HDA) took over, corruption has increased. People have been robbed of their houses. They have been told to sign in order to get their housing but nothing came up. Later they were told the houses they had signed for were not theirs. These families now are stranded. They are being kept by their extended families.

When ABM managed to meet with HDA to address these issues, Mr Khoza denied that he was responsible for telling people who must relocate. He said they are just a project and we must address the matter to Sobambisana. We as ABM know nothing about Sobambisana. All we know is that it is HDA who relocates people. Mr Khoza wanted ABM to join the allocation committee. We not want to become partners in corruption. We want Mr Khoza to fulfill his promise to make a thorough investigation of corruption first. The culprits must be removed. But as yet we have heard nothing about Mr Khoza's investigation.

We asked Mr Khoza to stop demolishing TRA's because they are needed. He said HDA jointly agreed this with the province and City of Cape Town. We want Mr Khoza to fulfill his promise to renegotiate this question with the province and City.

ABM believes that HDA is incompetent. It loses applicants' forms. We want to know why there are still in the TRAs victims of the 2005 fire in Joe Slovo, who were promised priority for housing. There are people who came after the fire who are already in houses. This is a reason we are talking about corruption.

We also know that the City is aware of our problems but is turning a blind eye to them. We would be happy with input from the City. ABM pleads with the government to stop making empty promises. The government talks of fighting corruption, but there are still no changes. We have asked the Human Settlement Department to verify the allocation of houses. We know that without verification, the right people will never get their RDP houses. ABM needs to be included when verification takes place. We will be happy if those who are in houses which do not belong to them are removed immediately.

People are tired of waiting. There is plenty of empty land, even around Khayelitsha. Presently that land is used by criminals, to assault and rape. Houses can be built on empty land by the unemployed, if they are trained and paid by government. Our government must take full responsibility for the people. Government must listen to people, because government is government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Cindy Ketane
Tumi

27 JANUARY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Protesters Threatened in KwaNdengezi

Abahlali KwaNdengezi are currently engaging in a protest against corrupt and authoritarian development. Abahlali KwaNdengezi have had no choice but to defend their homes, their graves, their culture and of course their dignity against the eThekweni Municipality's failed housing project in their area. They are currently protesting against a corrupt housing project that is being imposed on people from above without consultation or respect. Once again we see that failing political leadership creates hatred and violence in our communities.

Abahlali baseMjondolo in Ward 12 and the leadership of the movement have done all it can to engage councillor Mduduzi Ngcobo (Nqola), the Office of the Speaker in the eThekweni municipality and the office of Nigel Gumede (Human Settlements and Infrastructure) on the crisis in KwaNdengezi. However they have all failed to respond to our warnings about the crisis in the area.

On the 31 August last year the community had to protest against the City's stealing of residents' yards in the name of development and in some instances allegedly selling the RDP houses that they built on people's yards, and over their graves, to people who are not from the community. The memorandum that was handed over was, like many others, thrown in the bin and has never been responded to. Many people's homes were destroyed and replaced by houses built for those who are not even known by the families and the community. The politicians are misusing this housing project to get wealth and power for themselves at the expense of the community.

What choices are we left with when political leadership is in such crises that councillors, like Nqola did threaten to shoot residents in the broad day light? A case of intimidation by the local councillor was reported to the police in September 2012 (Case 197/09/2012). But it was never investigated until today just like the case of intimidation by Nigel Gumede that was reported to the police in 2011 after he made an open threat against S'bu Zikode. The crisis of political leadership means that the political leadership are leaders unto themselves and a law

unto themselves. They have wandered far from the people and are now exploiting the people instead of serving the people. The politicians are ensuring that 'development' is there for their own interests and not to meet the urgent needs of the people. The police are there to protect the politicians and not to serve the people equally and fairly.

We request the media to rush to KwaNdengezi in Pitoli section to witness the hijacking of people's right to housing. We request the media to see for themselves how the City creates war in our communities in the name of delivery.

Moments ago isosha lomkonto wesizwe [ex-MK soldier] uNhlanhla Mkhize threatened the protesters and pointed them with a gun. The community was marching and also saying slogans against corruption. Mkhize then came out of the house and pulled a gun. It became clear that he is doing this because he is one of those who bought a house.

We demand that this project be stopped, fully investigated and that all future development in the area be undertaken in an open and democratic manner.

For more information on the crisis in KwaNdengezi please see: <http://abahlali.org/taxonomy/term/3434>

Thulile Ndlovu: Abahlali KwaNdengezi Branch
 TJ Ngongoma: Abahlali baseMjondolo
 S'bu Zikode: Abahlali baseMjondolo

29 JANUARY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Four Arrests in KwaNdengezi

During a protest on Sunday 27 January 2013 people of KwaNdengezi were threatened at gunpoint by an MK Veteran who is one of those who allegedly bought the corrupted RDP houses of the people of KwaNdengezi. We opened a case of intimidation against this man but it was never investigated and he is still not arrested for that.

Yesterday at around 03:00 p.m. the same MK Veteran and the councillor of the area, Mduduzi Ngcobo, came with the police and pointed out which protesters they wanted the police to arrest. This is how it usually works – the councillors tell the police who to arrest.

Four people were arrested. Two have been charged with public violence which is the charge that is always brought against people arrested while protesting even when their protest is 100% peaceful.

They are due to appear in Pinetown Magistrate court A this morning.

Abahlali will be out in our numbers to give them support.

Thuli Ndlovu: AbM KwaNdengezi Branch
Bandile Mdlalose: AbM General Secretary
S'bu Zikode: AbM Former President

29 JANUARY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Update from the Pinetown Magistrate's Court

Abahlali baseMjondolo were at the Pinetown magistrate's court today in our numbers where one of the four comrades from KwaNdengezi appeared on one charge of assault. Comrade Mandla Hlophe was released on warning. His matter has been adjourned for the 19th of February 2013.

The other three comrades were not brought to court on the ground that more charges are still to be laid on to them. Right now we are told that at least four charges are laid against each one of them: public violence, damage to property, assault with gross bodily harm (GBH) and robbery. We have no doubt that all these charges have been fabricated and that this will become clear if this matter ever goes to trial.

As we all know that the state will try by all means to protect its corrupt councilors, corrupt politicians and corrupt officials by making the poor pay for speaking out against its corrupt activities. Now Nqola, the warlord Councilor of the area, has managed to instruct the police to arrest those that are a threat to his kingdom and to protect the MK veteran from being arrested despite having openly threatened comrades with his fire arm and despite a case open being opened against him.

Tomorrow Abahlali will again go to the Pinetown magistrate's court in our numbers to support the three comrades who are still in custody. They are Sindisiwe Mabaso, Mr Madlokovu and Mlungisi Hlongwane.

This is a political case. It is not in any way a criminal matter. This is how a state forces the struggle of the poor off the streets and out of the communities and into the courts where it is known that we are weak. But with the support of our members and friends we are going to make sure, as we have done so often, that justice serves the poor.

Thuli Ndlovu: KwaNdengezi Branch
 Bandile Mdlosiwe – General Secretary
 S'bu Zikode – Former President

30 JANUARY 2013

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Further Update from the Pinetown Magistrate's Court

Sindisiwe Mabaso, Mr Madlokovu and Mlungisi Hlongwane appeared in court today. All charges were withdrawn against them except for the charge of public violence – which in South Africa usually means nothing more than that a person attended a protest that a councillor or politician didn't like.

Bail has been set at R1 000 for each comrade and we are hoping to have them bailed out by 4:20 p.m. this afternoon.

Thuli Ndlovu: KwaNdengezi AbM Branch
Bandile Mdlalose – AbM General Secretary
S'bu Zikode – Former AbM President

1 FEBRUARY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Non-Elective Annual General Meeting

Abahlali baseMjondolo Non-Elective Annual General Meeting

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA will be holding its Annual General Meeting tomorrow at the St. Paul's Church (Rubin Hall) in central Durban. The meeting will begin at 10:00pm tomorrow and finish after 2:00pm. The elective AGM will be held in October this year.

All branches and affiliated settlements in good standing have been invited to elect and mandate representatives to attend this meeting. Those representatives will then report back to the next meetings of their branches and affiliated settlements.

This meeting will give our membership an opportunity to discuss the state of the movement and the challenges we face, to reflect on how we are doing in dealing with those challenges and to make sure that the elected leadership is held accountable in an open public discussion. We will be able to deliberate on our strengths, challenges, threats and opportunities. The living politic and ubuhlalism will also be discussed.

We remain committed to our politic of dignity. Our movement struggles for a future world in which every one must count – a world in which land, wealth and the right to speak, to be heard and to decide together is shared fairly. But our movement also insists that it is necessary, right now, to organise and to think and be together in struggle in such a way that everyone counts. The struggle is for dignity and it is founded on dignity.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (AbM Spokesperson)
 Zodwa Nsibande (AbM Youth League Secretary)
 Bandile Mdlalose (AbM General Secretary)

28 FEBRUARY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

All Charges Against One of the KwaNdengezi Four Dropped

All charges against Mandla Hlope were withdrawn in the Pinetown Magistrate's "C" Court this morning.

Hlope is one of the KwaNdengezi Four arrested on the 28th of January following protests against corruption and intimidation in the area. Residents of the area have accused the local councilor, Mduduzi Christian (Nqola) Ngcobo, of corruption and intimidation. Ngcobo ordered the police to arrest the four. Hlope was charged with public violence and assault.

The three comrades that still have charges remaining will appear on the 13 March 2013 in the Pinetown Magistrate's Court.

As Abahlali noted these charges against all four comrades were fabricated and meant to redirect our focus away from the politic of truth. We are pleased that justice has been served for Hlophe but remain concerned that councilors can order the police to arrest comrades on fabricated charges. Why should the poor suffer before the truth could be told? Why should our struggle for land and housing be forced to the courts when we expose corruption in housing?

The politic of truth leads straight to arrest. Usually there are multiple court appearances before the charges are dropped. Yet Nqola, the KwaNdengezi councilor (Ward 12), has allegedly knocked a child to death in his car and yet he remains without arrest. Comrades have laid charges of firing guns and intimidation against him but they remain uninvestigated. Many community activists cannot even sleep in their homes up until today as Nqola and his hit men allegedly patrol KwaNdengezi firing gun shots into people's homes every night. People who are claiming to be terrorized by Nqola's gunmen cannot receive any assistance from the police.

We call upon all democrats to oppose all forms of violence and intimidation perpetrated by Nqola. The eThekweni municipality and his party have decided

to pretend as if they do not know about Nqola's conduct in the community. Despite memoranda being handed over and several calls being made to the Office of the Speaker nothing is said or done. We think this may be because they are benefiting from the housing project that has terrorized this community.

Our demands are very clear. If the Municipality and the ruling party really believe in democracy and the Bato Pele principles they must act immediately to investigate all the claims of intimidation against Nqola. They must stop the allocation of houses in the housing project until there is genuine consultation with community and open and credible investigation into the allocations of corruption. They must stop demolishing people's yards and houses. They must stop interfering with people's graves. This is not acceptable in any culture.

Abahlali have also received the news that the KwaNdengezi Station Commissioner who has ruined the reputation of the police station there is being fired today. We welcome this news with the hope that a new Station Commissioner will work honestly for the people of KwaNdengezi. Thus Nqola's conduct will be dealt with accordingly.

Thuli Ndlovu (Chairperson of the KwaNdengezi AbM branch)
Sbu Zikode
Bandile Mdlalose

28 FEBRUARY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Launch of the Sweet Home Farm Abahlali baseMjondolo Branch

The Sweet Home Farm community will be launching its branch under the banner of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement South Africa, this coming weekend on the 2013-03-02 11:00 in their Local Community Hall next to St. Barnabas Anglican Church. One should remember that, this is a membership based organization struggling for the restoration of human dignity of the majority of poor South Africans. Sweet Home Farm is situated in ward (80) eighty, Philippi in Cape Town, a place where people live in shacks.

Although the community is receiving some services such as clean running water, refuse removal and electricity, we are now tired of waiting for proper and adequate housing. Many promises have been made to us but those promises have never materialized. Sweet Home Farm community stands firm in saying it is now the time when the Cape Town Municipality must talk to us not about us, since we strongly believe that there should be nothing for us without them. We thus believe that the bottom up system is the answer to the social and economic challenges that we face.

This community feels it is the right for the poor majority to stand up, organize and unite in the struggle against all kinds of injustices and inequalities (that divide us) under a non-party political organization since party politics divides the communities instead of uniting them. Therefore the organization of Abahlali baseMjondolo has opened a platform for any individuals and or groups from different political party backgrounds to join in the struggle for the restoration of human dignity, decent housing and services on well located land and democratic struggle for a genuinely democratic society in which the land and wealth will be shared fairly.

Siyamboleka James
Lindiwe Kuthwane
Sipho Dlutshel

As of today there are 596 paid up card carrying AbM members in Sweet Home Farm.

6 MARCH 2013

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Protocols are a waste of time for the poor; Appointments are delaying tactics while we suffer

Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League Marched into the Durban City Hall Today

On Saturday 2 March 2013, Abahlali baseMjondolo Woman's League had its General Meeting. The KwaNdengezi branch was present and shared their painful story of living under constant threat from their Ward 12 councillor and that they are not even sleeping in their own homes due to threats.

They cried about the councillor, Mr Mduduzi Christian Ngcobo, who, during the day, is a councillor for the eThekweni municipality but then by night becomes a dangerous hit man. He goes around knocking on peoples' doors warning them not to interfere and challenge the corrupt RDP allocation process.

These days the situation has become even more volatile: gun shots are now heard every night. One of the nights, "Gogo X", an elder AbM member, told us that she heard gun shots from the councillor's activities very close to her house. Gogo X kept quiet during the shooting and because the sound was coming closer and closer to her door, she closed her children's mouths to prevent them from screaming. The following morning, she found some cartridges on the ground next to her home. Gogo X has asked not be named because Cllr. Nqola sends death threats to such activists who speak out.

Every time these incidents take place, community members report it to the police station. But still, police are doing nothing about the shootings even though they know Cllr. Ngcobo is involved. Yet the whole community of KwaNdengezi has little doubt that Councillor Mduduzi Christian Ngcobo of Ward 12 goes around with a group of armed men threatening Abm activists in the area. The community is in fear because they know his dangerous background. Many incidents have happened including the killing of a child who was run over by his Navara bakkie. Yet despite the reports and cases against him, the police refuse to take any steps against him.

Commissioner Dlamini of the KwaNdengezi SAPS Station was fired last week on Friday. We are aware that one of the reasons he was fired is because he has been hiding all the cases against Cllr Ngcobo under carpet and preventing them from being investigated. We hope that now the cases will now be taken seriously.

Once again, this morning at around 01:00am we heard some cars driving around near Abahlali member's homes. Soon gun shots could be heard firing at the home of the Abahlali baseMjondolo chairperson in the community. Luckily, no one was injured. However everybody knows that chairperson Thuli Ndlovu's house has been attacked many times in the past few months – the bullet holes at her home show that she has been targeted.

Because of this violence, Women's League of Abahlali baseMjondolo took a decision that it was time they march inside the City Hall offices to demand the intervention of the Speaker Logie Naidoo in this matter. People are now living in fear and the municipality better do something about it.

This morning at 10h54, 20 Abahlali women marched inside the premises of City Hall. We were however prevented from entering to see the Speaker. After a long argument only two members were allowed inside to see the Speaker and they represented the other women who were present.

We were, however, shocked and angry that Mr Desmond Myeza, the Manager at the Office of the Speaker and the same person who received our memorandum on 31th of August, attended to our concerns. Mr. Myeza has up until today never responded to this memorandum. However, Mr. Myeza shamefully and heartlessly told us that the Council cannot help us; "this is just the matter for the police". He even refused to arrange any meeting pertaining this issue with Cllr Ngcobo. He argued that the matter had nothing to do with politics. As it was a criminal matter, he suggested that we women go to SAPS. Mr Myeza further denied that it is the Speaker of the Council's responsibility to call into order unruly, corrupt and violent councillors.

It was shocking and painful that the Municipality is protecting violent and corrupt councillors and is not even willing to wipe the tears of old grannies that have gone to them for help. It is clear that the Municipality is running away from taking responsibility for its councillors' actions. "Comradism" is still an order of the day.

Yesterday we read in the papers that Councillor Logie Naidoo has dismissed DA councillors, but we know that when it comes to ANC councillors, he protects them.

- We demand that the housing project be stopped immediately and an open and democratic public meeting be held with KwaNdengezi community immediately.
- We demand that Cllr. Nqola steps down pending investigations regarding the serious allegations made against him.
- We demand that the eThekweni Municipality not be run like a spaza shop.
- We demand that the Speaker, Logie Naidoo, and the Mayor, James Nxumalo, intervene into this matter.

Every human being has the right to sleep peacefully in their own homes. We are tired of councillors who abuse people because they know that they are protected by their comrades. Sekwanele! Enough is enough!

Thulile Ndlovu KwaNdengezi AbM Chairperson
 Mrs B. Nxumalo (MaShezi) AbM Coordinator
 Bandile Mdlalose AbM Secretary General

8 MARCH 2013

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Letter to the Head of Community Participation in the eThekweni Municipality on International Women's Day

Today's is the International Women Rights day, dedicated to affirming and demanding rights for woman around the world; we as the Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League do the same. It is nice that we have these rights on paper but it remains a shame in our country that such important rights are not respected and are routinely violated. It is disappointing that we as women have such rights, but are still abused by the government are forced to live without basic services like water, electricity and access to housing. Moreover, women and children being sexually and physically abused everyday.

Today is the day we express our anger at the manner in which the lives of women and children have been undermined by rapists both figuratively and literally. The women and children of this country, continue to be abused and killed, while men continue to be free and enjoy all the rights in the Constitution. We are South Africans and we also have rights protected by the Constitution.

Women and children in this country are living in constant fear – sometimes the situation is worse than being in a prison. Women still suffer the combined oppression of power-based gender violence, inequality and poverty. Politicians and police continue to ignore incidence of oppression against women as if they are happening on another continent. Women and children in informal settlements continue to be victims of rape every minute of every day. Only a few days ago, a young girl age of 12 years was raped and killed in Umlazi. This case is just one incident that has been ignored and which we want to highlight – but the list is endless.

As the Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League, we are saying Sekwanele! Enough is enough! We have noted the failure of the government to protect women and deal with gender based violence. Our country's laws continues to

protect the perpetrators of such violence while the victims are left defenceless from the attackers.

What is worrying is the low rate of arrest for these kinds of abuse (when compared to other crimes) and the willingness of the court to give perpetrators negligible bail conditions. These same perpetrators are able to get out and go kill their victims while on bail.

The Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League therefore took a strong decision to write a letter of demand to the Head of Community Participation in EThekweni Municipality. As the Abahlali baseMjondolo women who are amongst the poor people of Mzansi, we will not stand living next to criminals who continually hurt and oppress us. And we believe that justice delayed is justice denied.

Zandile Nsibande – Women League
Sindi Mkhize – Women League
Busisiwe Mdlalose – Women League

14 MARCH 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Victory for KwaNdengezi

Three comrades from KwaNdengezi had all charges against them withdrawn in the Pinetown Magistrate's Court yesterday. Their arrest followed a protest against the alleged selling of RDP houses by Nqola, the Ward 12 councillor. Four comrades were arrested to shield Nqola's corrupt allocation of houses and his attempts to intimidate comrades organising in the area. Mandla Hlophe, one of the four, had all charges against him dropped on the 28 February 2013, by the same court. The three comrades who had all charges against them withdrawn yesterday are Cde Ephrame Hlongwane, Cde Mndeni Nene and Cde Cindy Mabaso.

The dropping of all charges against the KwaNdengezi Four has proven that the charges were fabricated and meant to divert and depoliticize our agenda. Abahlali of KwaNdengezi will have no other choice but to continue to expose and fight all forms of corruption, especial by politicians, at all levels of our society. We continue to demand clean housing developments that are co-designed and managed with the community. We continue to demand that transparency and democracy become the order of the day. We will campaign for what is right for our all communities including kwaNdengezi. We have called on the African National Congress to investigate all claims made against Nqola including the firing of shots into activists' homes and the killing of a child by his Navara motor vehicle. The eThekweni municipality and the Office of the Speaker have shown their unwillingness to investigate the allegations against Nqola and for this reason people are concluding that they must be protecting Nqola because they are benefiting from his conduct. We call upon all democrats and progressive forces to unite and isolate corruption, thuggery and the abuse of power by politicians. It is completely unacceptable that people raising questions about corruption find themselves threatened and have shots fired into their homes with the result that they do not feel safe to sleep in their homes. As we have been saying for many years there is no democracy for the poor in South Africa.

We express our gratitude to the Abahlali baseMjondolo membership, particular the KwaNdengezi Branch, for standing firm against injustices. We are proud to have a partnership with the Churchland Program who continues to journey with us on this difficult journey. We also thank Abahlali baseMjondolo Friends nationally and internationally for their consistent commitment to the idea that our humanity counts as well. And of course our legal team Pienaar & Pretorius Inc.

We hope that the time will come for the South African government to recognise and respect our humanity as well.

Thuli Ndlovu (KwaNdengezi Chairperson)

S'bu Zikode (Former Abahlali President)

Bandile Mdlalose (Abahlali General Secretary)

19 MARCH 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Nigel Gumede Must Go

Everyone knows how serious the land and housing crisis is in Durban. According to the eThekweni Municipality there are more than 400 000 shack dwellers waiting for houses in the city. There are also 11 000 families rotting in transit camps. But the city is failing to build enough houses for the people. The Sunday Tribune reported that they only built 1 268 houses in the last financial year. And these houses are more like dog kennels than homes. Every year money from the housing budget is returned unspent. And after the scandals around the Manase report, Nqola and S'bu and Shauwn Mpisane everyone knows how bad the corruption is. Many people have been killed in struggles over housing. Cato Crest is just one example. We have also seen people being killed in places like KwaNdengezi and Uganda. Calls, letters and marches to the housing department go ignored. Court orders are also ignored. We have called for a public citywide list for the people in need of housing so that there could be transparency in the housing allocation. But the politicians refuse this idea so they can corrupt, monopolize and politicise housing delivery.

All of this clearly shows the failure of the housing department under Nigel Gumede. There is something very seriously wrong when people are living under the shadow of death in a democracy. Gumede is looking for someone to blame for this failure and he has chosen to blame 'criminals' and 'migrants'. We keep hearing in the media that he is blaming 'criminals' and 'migrants' for the land and housing crisis. He says that land occupations are organised by shack lords, and he says that migrants from the Eastern Cape are causing the backlog in housing delivery. Sometimes he says that people from small villages in rural KwaZulu-Natal are also part of the problem but his focus on people from the Eastern Cape is clear.

His comments are very dangerous to the nation that is still reeling from the so-called xenophobic attacks of May 2008. It is well known that Gumede has hatred for people coming from the Eastern Cape. After the attacks on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009, attacks that were organised on an ethnic basis,

he came to the settlement and said that Mpondo people “use dangerous muthi”. A person with these prejudices is not a suitable person to be governing the city. And Gumede is not the only politician to blame the land and housing crisis on migrants. Some councilors, in Mayville have made similar comments and the Mayor, James Nxumalo, said the same thing in a mass meeting in Marianridge after the protests there. Nxumalo clearly said that the reason that there is a huge housing backlog in the city is that it is caused by the migrants coming to Durban.

The politicians are showing the person from the Eastern Cape as a person who is coming to Durban to steal your house. They are setting the stage for another attack, another war against people from the Eastern Cape or people from other countries.

After the attacks in Kennedy Road in 2009, attacks where our movement was said to be “an Mpondo organization”, Gumede said that the people that were able to remain in the settlement would be housed by February 2010. It is 2013 and there is no development in Kennedy Road, or in Foreman Road, Jadhu Place, Pemary Ridge, Quarry Road, etc, etc. Is this the fault of people from the Eastern Cape? Even in places like Joe Slovo where houses are being built they remain in the hands of the people not in the area. We have proof that we have reported of the people whose homes were given to somebody else while the rightful owners remain in the shacks. But Gumede fails to investigate and correct this. Such corruption is rife in KwaNdengezi, Isipingo, Shallcross, Khulula, Joe Slovo, etc, etc. If the government is serious about fighting corruption they must come to us. We will gladly give them the information. Is this corruption the fault of people from the Eastern Cape? Is the enrichment of the Mpisane’s in the name of the poor the fault of people from the Eastern Cape?

And we know exactly where this idea that African people must remain in rural areas comes from. Like the transit camp it comes straight from colonialism and apartheid. Once again Gumede’s comments raise the question of whether he is fit to hold his position in our lifetime.

The idea that land invasions are all organized by criminals who want to be shack lords is also a colonial idea. No one likes to live in a shack. People come to the city because they are looking for jobs. People move to shack settlements or occupy land because they have no other alternatives. The people that are really profiting from the suffering of the poor in this city are people like Cllr Nqola or S’bu and Shauwn Mpisane and there are many Mpisane’s in this city. And the

City represses democratic organisations in the shack settlements and supports authoritarian organizations that take their own little share of the corruption in exchange for controlling the people for the politicians. It is clear that Gumede is collaborating with people like Nqola in KwaNdengezi who rule through the barrel of a gun.

Why does Gumede want to deal with shacks with bulldozers? Why does he say that security must be “beefed up”? Gumede says that everyone that opposes evictions is a shack lord. But each shack is home to its own human life. No one can support an eviction that leaves them homeless. Gumede thinks that the land and housing crisis can be dealt with by more security, more evictions and more repression. However it is clear that the only solution is more land and more housing.

Everybody knows that Gumede is a Big Man. He wants to show what a Big Man he is. He wants to show that he doesn’t respect his own Mayor, that he doesn’t respect court orders. On his understanding his success as a politician is demonstrated by showing that he doesn’t have to abide by the law.

It would be good to hear from the City at what stage will they consider Gumede to be a failure? How many people must rot in transit camps, die in fires, be evicted, arrested or assassinated before they will consider Gumede to be a failure?

Thembinkosi Qumbela would be alive today if the housing department had a leader of a human nature.

Evictions are a curse. Transit camps are a curse. No politician that keeps evicting and keeps building transit camps can be said to be a servant of the people.

We do not see Nigel Gumede as a leader. We see him as an oppressor. And it is not just our movement that sees Gumede in this way. In settlements across the city people see him as a gangster, as a person to be feared, as a threat to society.

Nigel Gumede’s statements are insulting and dangerous. We will continue calling and working for the unity of the poor. A person is a person where ever they find themselves and all people have the same right to decent housing. The government has failed to address the land question and there can be no resolution of the housing question if the land question is not resolved. We will continue to struggle for the social value of land to come before its commercial value and for the social value of land occupations to be recognized.

The occupation of vacant land is a political act. It is an act that can take us towards a more just city. When the government fails people will come up with their own ideas and they will implement them. When the government violates the law and evicts people, leaving them homeless, as in Cato Crest, then the people will not accept to be told that they alone must respect the law.

When will the Municipality and the ANC take action against Nigel Gumede? We are calling on them to act before there is further bloodshed. If we had strong and honest leadership that respected everyone's right to the city we would not be living in the shadow of death.

We pass our condolences to Thembinkosi Qumbela's family. We don't know the truth of what happened in Cato Crest. There are many different stories. But we know that he was at the centre of the housing struggle in Cato Crest before joining the ANC. We also note that he was Xhosa speaking. We call for a credible and public investigation into his death. This city cannot afford another political killing to be swept under the carpet or for the police to fabricate evidence once again.

Bandile Mdlalose
Mazwi Nzimande
S'bu Zikode

20 MARCH 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Anti Wonga, Crime and Rape Protest in KwaMashu on 21 March 2013

As tomorrow is Human Rights Day the Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League will be holding a protest on some of the issues that are concerning the youth.

Our protest will raise awareness and concern about the use of the drug called wonga that many of the young people had been involved into. This drug is a killer to our young people who are our treasure. We as the movement regard our young lions to be the future of our country. The most difficult thing is that once people crave this drug they commit crime like stealing things and sell them to get this drug. Once they consume this drug some people also commit other crimes like rape.

Young people turn to drugs like wonga because they have no hope for their future. They are trying to dull their pain and their fear for their future. The government must provide more rehab centres as the waiting list for rehab is too long. The police must also arrest the sellers of wonga. But we also need to build a society where young people are respected, given good education, access to good sporting and cultural facilities and can look forward to decent work and a life in which they can become respected members of the community. When young people find that they are dumped in transit camps how they trust that the society care for them? In fact it is clear that many of us are seen as a problem to be kept out rather than a treasure to be treasured.

The whole country is talking about the crisis of rape. Our movement has raised this issue since it was first formed in 2005. We have constantly said that poor women are at high risk of rape because shacks are easy to break in to, we don't have toilets, our places are dark, we don't have safe transport and some police officers consider all poor people as criminals.

KwaZulu-Natal has a highest number of cases of elderly women who are being raped. Recently in Umlazi a child was raped and killed and the body was found in the bush inside the School. It is clear that the people who do this are

people who are known by the community. The protest will raise the concern that it is our human right to live in a safe society. We will state clearly that all people have the right to be safe wherever they are, whatever the time is and whatever they are wearing. After careful discussions we have concluded that the struggle for equality is not just between rich and poor – it is also within the community and the home.

The march will also be raising concerns that the police are not doing enough to protect the society as they suppose to be doing. We do not want a police force that treats all poor people as criminal. We do not want a police force that represses our struggles. We want a police force that is there to make sure that all people are safe all of the time and everywhere.

The demands of this march will be the following:

- We demand the closure of the scrap yard at Old J section in KwaMashu, where the drug addicts sell things that they have stolen.
- We demand that the police arrest people who are selling drugs such as wonga in our community.
- We demand access to caring rehab for all drug addicts in our community.
- We also need the laws that are supposed to protect us against crime and rape in our society to be taken seriously and for all people's lives and dignity to count the same to the police, courts and media.
- We demand that the police do their job as they are supposed to and do not work with drug dealers.
- We need police to monitor shebeens in our community as they are the hub of crime.
- We more security in our schools so that what has happen in Umlazi should not happen again.
- We need a guaranteed income for all young people and a serious programme to create decent work for young people
- We need the education crisis to be seriously attended to
- We need decent sporting and cultural facilities for all young people

The march is planned for Thursday 21 March 2013. The march will begin from Siyanda Mazulu Primary School to emagameni tuckshop, U-CC Church, Chama station, to main road to Malandela up to outside TV Park at KwaMashu Station.

We also wish to note that as always until now we have still not got the permit for the march although we followed all the rules and gave our notification in good time. And we also wish to note that the ward councillor of ward 41 is trying to hijack our march and has just announced his own march at the same time, on the same route and on the same issues.

We wish to make it very clear that:

- We will not accept this attempt to deny us our basic democratic rights.
- The march will be going ahead.
- If necessary we will take legal action to secure our right to march and if necessary we will march in defiance of any unlawful bans on our right to protest.
- We also wish to note that the Station Commander of Kwashu SAPS E section has acknowledged receiving our Memorandum and that we have had good co-operation from her office.

Zodwa Nsibande
Smangele Luvela Deputy Convener

30 MARCH 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Murder in KwaNdengezi

On Good Friday those of us who are Christians remember the murder of Jesus Christ who spurned the rich and walked with the poor. We never forget that Jesus Christ was murdered by the state for the crime of taking the side of the poor.

This year Good Friday in KwaNdengezi was marked with the blood, terror and grief of the poor.

At around 22:00pm on Thursday night Dumisani Mdletshe, a 31 year old man whose family live in KwaNdengezi although he no longer lives there, went to the home of a well known, well respected and brave AbM leader in KwaNdengezi. He kicked open the door and entered the home. He had a bush knife. He attacked her grandmother and her uncle and killed them both. They were both AbM members. He then asked for the AbM leader who had escaped in the dark. We are not giving her name until we have secured a safe house for her.

Mdletshe then went to another home, kwaShozi, which is about 2 kilometers away. Here he attacked Mr. Shozi who is the father of another well known, well respected and brave AbM leader. Mr Shozi fought back with the help of his sons. They overpowered their attacker and called the police who arrested Mdletshe. However Mr. Shozi, who is the head of that household, is in hospital in a critical condition.

Neighbours and family members of Mdletshe were shocked at what he had done. But they confirmed that he has no record of mental disturbance. He remained calm while he was attacking and killing which makes people think that he has done this before.

AbM leaders in KwaNdengezi, including the two whose homes were attacked on Thursday night, have been subject to serious, ongoing and armed intimidation by the local ward councillor and his thugs for a long time. Shots have been fired into their houses at night. They have often had to sleep outside. We have said very clearly that the Councillor of Ward 12, Mduduzi Christian Ngcobo, who is known as Nqola, is a gangster, a warlord. On the 6th of March

the AbM Women's League entered and occupied the City Hall to demand that the serious accusations of intimidation and corruption against Nqola be investigated. They demanded that the City Council take his threats seriously and act to secure the safety of our comrades in KwaNdengezi. They did nothing. They said nothing. We do not count to them.

We have no clear evidence of Mdletshe's motivation. But he made no attempt to rape or to steal. It seems likely that he was hired to execute a political mandate just as it seems likely that the killers of Thembinkosi Qumbela in Cato Crest two weeks ago were hired to execute a political mandate. If this proves to be true then the blood of KwaNdengezi will be on the hands of the City Council and especially the Speaker, Logie Naidoo, whose office we occupied to demand action against Nqola. But the blood of KwaNdengezi will not only be on their hands. The media, the NGOs and the churches all failed to take our warnings seriously. With some exceptions it is clear that our lives do not really count to these people too. It is not just the ANC that have contempt for the poor. Words are just words. It is actions that count. Talking about us is not the same as walking with us.

When we stand up for the dignity of our lives we are being killed on the mines, in the farms and in the shacks. We are being killed by the police and by the ANC. This is the reality of what is known as democracy in South Africa. There is no democracy for the poor other than the democracy that we create in our own struggles.

The Community Policing Forum (CPF), the Councillor, and the Minister of Safety and Security did not pitch up to express their condolences with the family. Our leaders, elected directly by our members, have left their homes that they had traveled long distances to reach to be with their families for Easter. They have left their religious services and holidays. They are there with the bereaved, the injured and frightened. They are there in the dark where any danger can lurk.

Today we call upon the nation, the whole nation, to help us ask two questions: Why is the ANC and the eThekweni Municipality keeping Nqola and failing to investigate the allegations of corruption and intimidation against him? Who is benefiting from Nqola's use of violence and the barrel of guns to rule and police the KwaNdengezi community?

Today, on the eve of Easter when Christians remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have one question to poor people struggling across the country:

How many of us must die before we rise up, defeat the forces of oppression and their politic of fear and death and build a new society that recognises the full and equal dignity of every person?

We will not stop our struggle until the land, wealth and power of this world are shared fairly.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (AbM Spokesperson)

Bandile Mdlalose (AbM General Secretary)

T.J Ngongoma (AbM DC Chairperson)

17 APRIL 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The suspect in the KwaNdengezi bush knife murders and Ward 12 Cllr Nqola Ngcobo return to Court

Abahlali bakwaNdengezi with the support of Abahlali baseMjondolo in general will be going to the Pinetown Magistrate's Court today.

We will be protesting at the bail application of the accused in the KwaNdengezi bush knife murders. We will demand that bail be denied in the interests of the safety of the community and that there be a thorough investigation into these murders that looks closely at the motive for the killing. It will be remembered that last time the magistrate had ordered that the suspect's state of mind be examined by relevant doctors. The suspect had killed two comrades in one Abahlali family and then ran to another Abahlali family where he assaulted Mr Shoji. This was in a community where Abahlali members have been under serious intimidation, including threats of violence, for some time.

The councillor of the area Cllr Mduduzi Christian Nqola Ngcobo is due to appear in the same court today. He is appearing on charges of intimidation. Ngcobo who has become a threat in this community is well known for his undemocratic and thuggish behavior in the community. He has demolished people's houses without a court order. He has built houses on other people's land and then allocated them to people who are not from the area. It is widely alleged that houses have been allocated on the basis of bribery rather than social need. Ngcobo has also fired live ammunition at people. He has also allegedly knocked a child to death with his car early this year.

Nqola has got away with all of this and the eThekweni municipal Housing Unit and the Office of the Speaker have protected him. We do not know if some officials in eThekweni municipality benefit out of his activities. What we do know is that both the ANC and eThekweni municipality have failed to investigate him. They have decided to listen to him and to protect him instead of listening to the community and protecting the community.

We will also be protesting at Nqola's court appearance. We will be making it clear that Abahlali will not allow politicians like Nqola and killers that come out of the night to destroy our communities. We demand that the ANC and the eThekweni Municipality investigate Nqola's conduct in KwaNdengezi. We demand that there is a transparent and democratic development process and housing allocation in eThekweni. We demand that there is a fair and open housing list for all the people of eThekweni.

S'bu Zikode Abahlali baseMjondolo Chairperson
Mnikelo Ndabankulu Abahlali baseMjondolo Medial and Liaison Activist
Thulile Ndlovu Kwa Ndengezi Abahlali Chairperson
Bandile Mdlalose Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary

20 APRIL 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo case against the Minister of Police Returns to the Durban High Court on Monday, 22 April 2013

On the 12th of September 2006 S'bu Zikode and Philani Zungu, then the chairperson and deputy chairperson of Abahlali baseMjondolo, were arrested on their way to a radio interview and subject to severe assault in the Sydenham Police Station. When people in the nearby Kennedy Road shack settlement rallied in support of Zikode and Zungu they were attacked by the police and Nondumiso Mke was shot in her knee with live ammunition. The arrest and assault from police at the hands of the police was highly politicised and followed intimidation from senior politicians that included a warning that the movement must stop its communication with the media. For background to this see the statement online at <http://abahlali.org/node/72>.

The article that was published in the Mail & Guardian after the arrest and assault is online at <http://mg.co.za/article/2006-09-16-i-was-punched-beaten>.

22 APRIL 2013

Media statement · Joint statement

Minister of Police to pay damages to Abahlali members for police brutality

Police ministry agrees to pay damages after police brutality against Abahlali baseMjondolo members in 2006

Today, the Durban High Court ordered the Minister of Police to pay a total of R165 000 in damages to two members of shackdwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo – Sbu Zikode and Philani Zungu – and one resident of the Kennedy Road informal settlement. The order, made by agreement, comes after officers from Sydenham Police Station illegally arrested and assaulted Zungu while he and Zikode were travelling to a radio debate with the then KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Housing, Mike Mabuyakhulu, in September 2006. Other officers from Sydenham Police Station then illegally shot a woman at the Kennedy Road informal settlement. The woman was part of a crowd which had gathered to demonstrate against the arrest of Zikode and Zungu.

SERI, together with Trudie Nichols Attorneys in Durban, represented the three in a trial that took place from 5 to 7 December 2012. The trial was due to continue today, but the Minister of Police agreed to pay damages without taking the trial further.

Zikode and Zungu were stopped by the police on 12 September 2006. Their vehicle was searched. When Zungu asked why he was being searched, a constable from the Sydenham Police Station told him that “a black man is always a suspect”. Zungu was then placed in a headlock and began to suffocate. When Zikode tried to stop Zungu from being strangled, he was assaulted and handcuffed. Both Zikode and Zungu then were arrested and taken to Sydenham Police Station, where they were handcuffed and repeatedly beaten over an extended period by Superintendent Glen Nayager, who has died since the incident.

Ironically, Zikode and Zungu were later charged with *crimen injuria*, assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest. These were later dropped because the Prosecutor thought them so “trivial” as not to warrant a prosecution.

Upon hearing of Zungu and Zikode's arrest, members of the Kennedy Road informal settlement community gathered at their community hall. They intended to march to Sydenham Police Station to demand that the two men be released. Before they could do so, the Sydenham police officers dispersed the crowd with live ammunition, tear gas and rubber bullets. There, a woman employed as a domestic worker was shot in the leg while trying to retrieve a cell-phone she dropped as she was running away from the police. She was later hospitalised.

According to Bandile Mdlalose, secretary of Abahlali baseMjondolo: "The amount to be paid does not match the crimes the police have committed and continue to commit against ordinary citizens. The issue here is the principle of the case. The dignity of the poor will be realised sooner or later. We know that the police were acting on the instructions of senior politicians. We hope that the police who allow themselves to be used by politicians and abuse their power will soon be out of their jobs."

According to Teboho Mosikili, SERI director of litigation: "The abuse of power by the police and misuse of the criminal justice system to silence dissent is extremely worrying. It is part of a string of incidents over the last few years in which community-based activists have been targeted by police officers, and the police have shot protesters first, and asked questions later. It is important that the Minister of Police is held accountable for the wanton violence often committed by police officials."

The Minister will pay the costs of the trial.

Advocates Paul Kennedy SC and Stuart Wilson represented the plaintiffs in court.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali spokesperson
Teboho Mosikili, SERI director of litigation

24 APRIL 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

UnFreedom Day in Cape Town

UnFreedom Day 2013 in Cape Town

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA, a democratic and membership based organization, has held its UnFreedom Day event in Durban every year since 2006. This year UnFreedom Day will be held in Cape Town for the first time. UnFreedom Day will be mourned at the Sweet Home Farm Community Hall in Philippi, on 27 April 2013. The event will begin at 09:00 in the morning.

Our movement is growing in Cape Town. We will be launching in Delft on Thursday. There are now also requests to start branches in Mdantsane and Bizana in the Eastern Cape.

Our movement stands for the full restoration of the dignity of all people who live in South Africa. We are a movement of the poor, by the poor and for the poor. The poor, and especially the black poor, have been left out of this new South Africa. The time has come for us to organize to take our place in this country. We are working, from below, towards the realization of a free society in a country where there is Peace, Justice and Equality. It is clear that in order to achieve Peace, Justice and Equality we will have to make sure that Land, Wealth and Power are shared fairly and equally and that no one is allowed to operate as if they are above the law of the land and no one is treated as if they are beneath the law of the land.

It is an urgent priority that all evictions must stop, that people must be allowed to occupy unused land and that the government must act to put the social value of land before its commercial value.

We will not see progress in this country until we as the poor are able to build our political power. We will not be able to build our political power if our struggles are constantly repressed. It is therefore an urgent priority that we must be allowed to organize freely and that repression of our struggles and organisations must stop.

We are always told that the Constitution of this Land is the Supreme Law of this country. Yet some of the Politicians, some of the Police and some of the Government Officials are the first to break the law. They act as if they are above the law and we are beneath the law. The protections that the law offers to us on paper are denied to us in reality. There must, on paper and in reality, be one law for one country. We are not yet free until everyone learns and realizes that one's freedom ends immediately where the freedom of others begins and that, therefore, in order for us to enjoy our rights peacefully, one must not practice one's rights while trampling on the rights of others.

This movement is determined to build a peace loving Nation, that will produce God fearing leaders – leaders that will put the people, all of the people, before their own personal gains and selfishness. No leader should ever become rich through politics. Mothers and Fathers should raise families with a clear conscience, where children are brought up in a more responsible manner for them to become good, loving, caring, honest citizens committed to peace and justice and respect for all other people. No woman should feel unsafe in the streets or in her home. No one should fear that the government will evict them. No one should have to live in mud and fire. No one should fear that democratic organising will lead to repression. We look forward to a true nation which will stand as proof that all humans were created in the image of the Almighty God the Creator and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Join us on this historical day. You will never regret.

Siyamboleka James
Thembani Maqwazima
Cindy Ketani
TJ Ngongoma

26 APRIL 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

UnFreedom Day in Durban

UnFreedom Day 2013 in Durban

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA, a democratic and membership based organization, has held its UnFreedom Day event in Durban every year since 2006. This year UnFreedom Day will be held in Durban and in Cape Town.

UnFreedom Day will be mourned at the eThekweni College, Springfield (adjacent to the Kennedy Road shack settlement) in Durban on 28 April 2013 and at the Sweet Home Farm Community Hall in Philippi in Cape Town on 27 April 2013. The event will begin at 09:00 in the morning in both cities.

We wish to acknowledge all the sacrifices made by many South Africans in the name of freedom and all of the gains that have been won. We also wish to salute all the international communities who fought hard with us to defeat apartheid. But we are sure that this is not the real freedom that so many people struggled and had suffered for. We do not want in any way to undermine the struggles of the past or the real gains that have been won. But who can say that they are really free when they must live without land, without homes, without jobs and without dignity? Who can say that they are really free when they do not have the right to organise freely and safely? Who can say that they are really free when women are not safe? Who can say that they are really free when they are being forced out of the city and taken to human dumping grounds in the middle of nowhere?

We cannot fool ourselves and pretend as if we are free. We decided long ago that we are no longer going to escort those few rich individuals who are entrepreneurs, politicians and business people into the stadiums as if they are heroes so that they can sit on stages and tell us to celebrate our freedom. It just makes no sense for us to let these rich people tell us that we are free while we live, suffer, burn and die in the shacks without enough water, without electricity, without road access, without refuse collection, without land and housing and, of course, without dignity. We are very clear that as long as Nigel Gumedé and his party remain in power there will only be freedom for the rich. Gumedé and his cronies will only save their own comrades and their families.

The eThekweni Municipality claims to be building sixteen thousand houses per year and we discovered that they have only built less than four thousand houses in the last financial year. The city's backlog of almost half a million houses remains unshaken. And the houses that they do build are tiny, so badly made that they are falling apart before they are even occupied, given only to party members or sold off corruptly and usually built far outside the city. This Municipality evicts us illegally, tries to ban our protests, protects the gangster politicians, supports repression against our movement, ignores court orders, refuses to act against corruption, forces us into transit camps and leaves us to rot in the shacks.

We would be bluffing the nation if we agreed to go to the stadiums and say that we are free while we suffer police and politician brutality. Why are we told and even educated about our freedom? There are campaigns and expensive adverts on televisions and radios about how free we are. Real freedom would not come only once a year and we will not have to be told about it. Real freedom will be something we feel from inside our hearts each second, each minute, each hour and each day.

Our movement stands for the full restoration of the dignity of all people who live in South Africa. The poor have been left out of this new South Africa. We are a movement of the poor, by the poor and for the poor. The time has come for us to organize to take our place in this country. We are working, from below, towards the realization of a free society in a country where there is Peace, Justice and Equality. It is clear that in order to achieve Peace, Justice and Equality we will have to make sure that Land, Wealth and Power are shared fairly and equally and that no one is allowed to operate as if they are above the law of the land and no one is treated as if they are beneath the law of the land.

It is an urgent priority that all evictions must stop, that people must be allowed to occupy unused land and that the government must act to put the social value of land before its commercial value. We will not see progress in this country until we, as the poor are able to build our political power. We will not be able to build our political power if our struggles are constantly repressed. It is therefore an urgent priority that we must be allowed to organize freely and that repression of our struggles and organizations must stop.

No land, no house, no jobs, no dignity = no real freedom.

Mazwi Nzimande Abahlali Youth President
Mnikelo Ndabankulu Abahlali Spokesperson
Bandile Mdlalose Abahlali Secretary

27 APRIL 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Marikana: A New Land Occupation Founded on UnFreedom Day 2013

Members of Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape have occupied a piece of vacant land in Philippi, Cape Town. Shacks have been built and families have moved in to their new homes. The new land occupation has been called 'Marikana'. We called it Marikana because our sisters and brothers organised themselves there and some of our brothers died there and we too are organising ourselves peacefully and are willing to die for our struggle.

We are the community of Philippi East. Most of us are unemployed and don't have a place to stay. That is why we decided to reclaim this vacant and unused land and to make it a place for people to stay.

The DA has a record of violently imposing unlawful and unconstitutional evictions on the poor in Cape Town. The law of the land states clearly that no one can be evicted from their home without an order of the court. Sheldon Margardie, the Director of the Legal Resources Centre in Cape Town, has explained this clearly: <http://westcapenews.com/?p=2960>

If the DA tries to evict these families without a court order their action will be unconstitutional and criminal. We will use legal procedures and collective action to protect ourselves against any unlawful eviction.

The state is failing to resolve the housing crisis. Therefore it is necessary for the poor to take matters into our own hands. It is up to us to win our own freedom.

For comment and up to the minute information on events as they unfold

Sandile, Chairperson of the Marikana Land Occupation

Midas, Vice-Secretary of the Marikana Land Occupation

Cindy, AbM Western Cape

30 APRIL 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Police shooting at Marikana Land Occupation

Police are now shooting at the Marikana community while we have marched to Philippi East SAPS to secure the release of our arrested comrade. We are in front of Beautiful Gate on Stock Road. Friends and media are urged to rush to the scene.

Earlier today we sent out notice that the City's Anti-Land Invasions Unit, Law Enforcement and SAPS had arrived again at Marikana shack settlement to destroy our homes. This was the third time they destroyed our community.

This time they came with a few more police vehicles than on Sunday. People protested the police but were peaceful and restrained. Police proceeded to destroy all but a couple of our homes. Luckily, this time, no one was hurt or beaten by Law Enforcement. But, once again, they purposely broke people's belongings: beds, cupboards, stoves, etc. The City of Cape Town must be held liable for the illegal destruction of our property.

The station commissioner, Colonel Mdimbaza from Philippi East SAPS was there too. He sat in his police vehicle at watched.

Later on in the day on of our neighbours and supporters, Sivile Ngabada, was wrongly arrested while protesting. We have decided, just like on Sunday, to march to Philippi East police station to secure the release of our comrade.

The police are arresting us, not because we are hurting anyone, but because they want to punish us for daring to reclaim land which has been stolen from us.

Sphatise (deputy chairperson)
 Sandile (chairperson)
 Nomsa (on scene at shootings)

9 MAY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

“They destroyed homes, not structures”: Protest at Parliament Today

We, as the residents of Marikana, will picket outside Parliament today to show the government that the shacks they destroyed were not unfinished or empty structures, they were our homes that we lived in, that we ate in, that we slept in.

We come as Abahlali, as residents of Marikana, and as shackdwellers who are being oppressed by government. We do not come as supporters of any political party.

We come to demand full restitution for all the material, furniture, documents and clothes which were destroyed or stolen by the Anti Land Invasion Unit and Law Enforcement during the previous two weeks.

We also demand land where we can live and provide for our families. We have never seen a court order giving the City of Cape Town permission to evict us from the empty land we call Marikana. We know that the government is lying when they claim that the evictions were legal. These were our homes and the City had no right to destroy them.

We think that maybe the City did this because they have such little respect for the poor. To them, lived in shacks are not ‘real homes’ and therefore no ‘real homes’ were demolished. We as the poor don’t count in this City which only caters to the rich.

Finally, we demand safety. The police must protect us, not attack us. But, like so many other communities throughout South Africa and like the Marikana miners themselves, we are victims of police brutality and their hatred of the poor.

Time: 13h30

Date: 9 May 2013

Location: Parliament

Event: picket for land

For more information or to meet with us prior during our journey to parliament

Ziyanda (AbM Marikana)

Siphiwo (AbM Marikana)

Sphatise (AbM Marikana)

Nosibusiso (AbM Marikana)

Siya James (AbM Western Cape)

19 MAY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Eleven Abahlali Members Arrested in KwaNdengezi; Nqola Assaults Activist

The Abahlali baseMjondolo KwaNdengezi branch have vowed to challenge the authoritarian rule of the KwaNdengezi councillor Mduduzi Christian Ngcobo who is known as Ngola.

Nqola continues to plan housing development in the area and to construct, employ and allocate housing on his own without involving the community in any decision making. He continues to intimidate and assault activists in the community. He continues to give houses to the people that are not from the community. In all of these actions he claim that he has the full support of the eThekweni municipality.

Today, Sunday 19 May, the community protested against Nqola's corrupt and undemocratic allocation of houses. During the peaceful protest the police came, unprovoked, and arrested 11 comrades. Mandisi Shoji went to the police station to try and see his mother and to check that she was ok. Nqola and his izinkabi (hit men) assaulted him outside the police station. They have not been arrested for this assault. Even though Nqola is still attending the case of intimidation with a fire arm in the Pinetown Magistrate's Court he and his izinkabi continue to intimidate and assault activists in KwaNdengezi.

Two of the eleven comrades arrested today have been released on free bail. But nine comrades remain in custody. Their names are S'fiso Ngubane, S'bonelo Ngcobo, Gano Shoji a 60 year woman, Njabulo Dlamini, Dombo Jali, Bonginkosi Ntuni, S'fiso Dlamini, Sandile Ntinga and Dumisani. As usual they have been charged with Public Violence and Damage to Property.

It is just disgusting to bring false charges of this nature against a 60 year woman. It is a shame that this corrupt state is waging a war against the poorest of the poor.

The nine comrades are expected to appear in the Pinetown Magistrate's Court on Monday 20 May 2013. The case number is 167/05/2013.

Further queries can be directed to:

Thuli Ndlovu, Abahlali Chairperson in KwaNdengezi
Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali Spokesperson
Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali Secretary

10 JUNE 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

“We are all Turkish democrats”: A Statement of Solidarity with the Turkish Struggle

Abahlali baseMjondolo is a democratic, membership based movement of shack dwellers and other poor people in South Africa. In 2005 our experience of suffering and injustice led us to decided to organize ourselves and to represent ourselves. We are struggling for land and housing as a vital step towards the restoration of our dignity and the recognition of our equality. We have been severely punished by those who want to keep us in our place and we have faced serious repression.

When we have come under attack we have received solidarity from across the world – from Auckland to Istanbul, Moscow, Nairobi, London and New York. We have stood with comrades facing repression in places like Haiti and Palestine. Today we stand with our comrades in Turkey and with all Turkish democrats.

We keep over movement strong by making sure that it always remains in the hands of its members and that we take forward the struggles that affect people's everyday lives. We call this a living politics. But we take very seriously the fact that the system that has marginalized and oppressed us here in South Africa is the very system that marginalizes and oppresses the people of Turkey. And we have not forgotten that the first people to be in solidarity with our struggle outside of South Africa were the comrades at Sendika and People's House in Turkey.

Your dignity is our dignity. The politicians and their police who vandalize your dignity vandalize our dignity. In South Africa as in Turkey it is clear that we will not have dignity or peace until there is a fair and equal distribution of land, wealth and power. We stand with you. We struggle with people and not for people and so we will be guided by you as to how we can be most effective in finding ways to build a living solidarity with your struggle.

We have studied the statements from our Turkish colleagues carefully. We condemn Prime Minister Erdogan and his government's attack on people who are trying to voice out their democratic reactions and demands in the city squares. We condemn his attack on you with despotic measures including tear gas, water cannons, beatings, shootings and threats of civil war. Such attacks are not just undemocratic. They are criminal.

We call upon Prime Minister Erdoğan and his Turkish government to stop waging war on democrats and democratic formations.

We call on all progressive movements around the world to stand in solidarity with the Turkish struggle.

We also call upon the South African government to remember how the world stood in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid in its darkest days. We call upon our government to put justice before self-interest, to stop disgracing the memory of our struggle by supporting oppressors and to offer its full support to the struggling people of Turkey.

The undemocratic and brutal practices of the apartheid regime in South Africa gave rise to the popular mobilization that gave birth to our democracy. The growing brutality of the post-apartheid regime is giving birth to new struggles in the shacks, on the mines and on the farms. We wish to warn that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. We wish to remind all oppressed people, and their oppressors, that once the oppressed realise how much power is in their hands the world can be changed from below. We must never allow our oppressors to divide us. Our power comes from our own recognition of our humanity and the unity that we build on that foundation.

The Turkish Embassy is in Pretoria and we are in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. However we will send this letter to our Turkish comrades assuring them of our support for their struggle. We will send it to the Turkish Embassy in Pretoria too. And we will be holding a picket in front of the Durban City Hall in solidarity with Turkish people.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu: Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson
 Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary
 S'bu Zikode: Abahlali baseMjondolo Former President

14 JUNE 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

AbM Youth League: Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today

On June 16 South Africa will be commemorating the youth of 1976 who lost their lives in Soweto struggling for Justice, Freedom and Democracy. Today's youth will be told to obey today's leaders in order that we should show proper respect to those who lost their lives in 1976. But the reality is that what the youth of 1976 struggled for has not been implemented as they have wished.

The beauty of Freedom and Democracy was supposed to be everyone. Today it is for the rich. Rich people are getting the multi-racial education and the poor still have the third-rate education which back then was known as Bantu Education. Rich people get jobs. They have cars. They have nice houses. They can get married and move on with their lives. They are safe. This is Freedom to them. The poor have to survive as we can. We go in circles and not forward. We live in shacks. We live in shit and fire. We are evicted. We have no safe and easy transport. The police treat us as criminals. They beat us if we try to organise. If you are young and poor you are treated as a threat to society and not as the future of society. Hector Peterson, Chris Hani, Steve Biko and other comrades who died for our Freedom and Democracy did not die for this. We do not respect their sacrifice by accepting that this is Freedom.

For many of the youth it is too painful to face reality. Some people just enjoy the night clubs and watching movies. For some of the youth night clubs and moves are Freedom. Others are using drugs to cope with the pain of their lives. Some of us have given ourselves the courage to stand together by being together in struggle. With this strength we can see clearly.

The reality is that for us as the youth of the shack dwellers, the youth of South Africa, the youth who sees beyond the Night Clubs and movies, there is no Democracy and Freedom other than the Democracy and Freedom we create for ourselves in struggle. Freedom and Democracy is not just about voting. It is not about being in nice fancy places. It is about being able to think, and do

things for yourself. It is where there is nothing for you without you. It means being able to take responsibility for your own life and your own future. It means building a society in which everyone counts. It means sharing land, wealth and power.

We are the youth of today. We want to continue where Hector Peterson and others have left from. This is how we should respect their sacrifice. Tomorrow is ours so therefore we need to brighten it today. The struggle continues.

As the Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League we will be having our Annual General Meeting in our Movement Head Quarters on 16 June 1976. This will be the time for the youth to choose its own leaders for another year. On June 17 we will be having our Soccer Tournament.

We are Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today!!!

Bangeni Gumede: Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League

Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary

Mazwi Nzimande: Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League President

21 JUNE 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

New Abahlali baseMjondolo Branch Launched in the Kennedy Road Settlement Last Night

At 18:00 p.m. last night, 20 June 2013, the Abahlali leadership successfully launched the new Kennedy Abahlali baseMjondolo branch. The Kennedy Road Community Hall was fully packed with Abahlali baseMjondolo members and friends.

During the launching the Abahlali Executive Committee took the opportunity to officially hand over the famous Abahlali Cup that was won by the Kennedy Road Soccer Team on the 17 June during the Abahlali Soccer Tournament. This event was enjoyed by many young people who danced as DJ Khanyile was playing music.

This launch comes after a very long time of organizing under the shadow of threats and intimidation in the Kennedy Road settlement by a self-appointed committees known as the Committee of Vouchers. This committee only became active when there were disasters like shack fires so that they could receive food vouchers meant for the victims, for themselves. For too long the community has been without a legitimate elected committee. For too long they have been subjected to all kinds of threats without even having community meeting to discuss development and other urgent issues. For too long they have been without a crèche for kids, without an HIV/AIDS projects, without feeding schemes and community gardens etc. The ANC mob that forcibly drove the elected Abahlali leadership out of Kennedy Road in 2009 failed to maintain or bring new community projects. They failed to make any progress in accessing housing. In fact living conditions in Kennedy Road went from bad to worse.

We are now hoping that the community, individuals, and the state, including the police and municipality, can work with this elected committee to avoid misrepresentation and corruption. The community has vowed to support its newly elected leadership so that housing and any development in the area can have a fair community deal.

Abahlali are very proud of this progress after many years of struggle to rebuild a democratic politics in the settlement after the attack on the movement in 2009 and the intimidation that followed. At first Abahlali members had to organize underground but the movement was steadily able to rebuild its strength despite intimidation. There were calls and calls requesting the returns of the displacees. Last night democracy was restored to the Kennedy Road settlement.

The following comrades were elected to leadership position in Kennedy Road last night:

1. Chairperson: Mbusiswa Sibethwa
2. Deputy Chairperson: Bangeni Gumede
3. Secretary: Sash Xulu
4. Deputy Secretary: Thoko Zikode
5. Treasurer: Vusi Xulu
6. Organizer: Zwelemfundo Sbiya
7. Deputy Organizer: Nonhlanhla Maphumulo
8. Additional member: Dudu Mzolo

Bangeni Gumede, Abahlali baseMjondolo Kennedy branch Deputy Chairperson
 Thina Khanyile, Abahlali baseMjondolo Deputy Secretary
 Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo Deputy Secretary

27 JUNE 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Nkululeko Gwala Murdered in Cato Crest

Last night Nkululeko Gwala, an Abahlali baseMjondolo member, and a well known and respected housing activist, was murdered in Cato Crest. Twelve shots were fired. The style of this assassination is very similar to the assassination of Thembinkosi Qumbela, also a well known housing activist (but not an AbM member) who was killed in the same area on the 15th of March this year. There are also strong similarities to the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009.

There has been a long struggle in Cato Crest against evictions, transit camps and rampant corruption in the housing project. Nkululeko Gwala, along with a large number of comrades from Cato Crest, participated in the Abahlali baseMjondolo UnFreedom Day event in the Kennedy Road settlement in April. In May he joined the movement. We were planning to launch the Cato Crest branch next week.

On Monday there was a road blockade in Cato Crest starting at 2:00 a.m. It was a protest against Councillor Mzimuni Ngiba for only allocating housing to members of the ruling party. Later that morning the councillor called the people to his offices to talk but when they got there he refused to come out. He said that he would only meet with a delegation of four people. Four people, including Nkululeko, were delegated to speak to the councillor. Nkululeko spoke about corruption. He questioned why houses were only going to party members and why ward committee members were receiving two or three houses. The delegation told Cllr Ngiba that they wanted to meet with the ward committee and that they would not meet with the ANC or SACP. A meeting with the ward committee and the delegation of four was set up for Tuesday at 9:00 a.m.

When the four comrades, all Abahlali baseMjondolo members, arrived at the meeting the ANC and the SACP were there. The delegation made it clear that this was not what they had agreed too and that they did not want political parties present. The ANC replied that this was ANC land and that the housing project was an ANC project and that they would make all decisions in the area

and about the project. Nkululeko decided to walk out. The other three comrades remained. They were told to warn Nkululeko that the ANC would not accept what they called his 'disrespect'. There were a lot of threats.

The three comrades who remained in the meeting reported back to the community in Cato Crest and to Abahlali baseMjondolo. The protests in the neighbouring section of Dunbar, which is in a different ward, were discussed. There are no Abahlali baseMjondolo members there but it was decided that although Dunbar is in a different ward people were struggling on the same issues and facing the same threats and that they should try to unite.

At around 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday people in Dunbar started to protest. Nkululeko and others started to move towards Dunbar from the transit camps in Cato Crest (where people have been left to rot for six years). At 11:00 p.m. Abahlali baseMjondolo received a call from one of our members there to say that people in the Dunbar community had burnt down the offices of their councillor, Zanele Ndzoyiya. He said that the people were doing their own thing and were not under the discipline of Abahlali baseMjondolo or any other organisation. The same group of people then moved to Councillor Ngiba's office and at 2:30 a.m. that office was burnt down.

On Wednesday a Municipality car with 'Community Participation' written on the side drove around Cato Crest and the people were called to a meeting with a loudhailer. It was said that the agenda was to unite the community.

But when the people got to the meeting it was not about uniting the community. James Nxumalo, the mayor, and Sibongiseni Dhlomo, the ANC chairperson in Durban, chaired the meeting. The meeting was about Nkululeko. It was said by the ANC that he was vocal, that he was not disciplined, that he was disrespectful, that he was causing trouble to the party, that he was making it difficult for the ANC to operate in the area and it was claimed that he was introducing a new political party to the area (i.e. our movement which is not a political party). It was also said that anyone who interrupted the bulldozers would be 'sorted out'. Dhlomo told Nxumalo to tell Nkululeko that he must 'wash his feet' and that Nxumalo must give him a lift back home to Inchanga today. It was said that he must leave Durban and return there.

Dhlomo attacked the police for not controlling the protests in the area. He has called on residents to 'protect the area'. We all know what this means. He was calling for ANC members to drive out people organised outside of the party

as the ANC did in Kennedy Road in 2009. We remember very well how Willie Mchunu said that Kennedy Road had been 'liberated' after our movement was driven from that area by the ANC with violence while the police did nothing. We expect more violence in Cato Crest. But just as we have taken Kennedy Road back through the strength of democratic organisation we will also hold our place in Cato Crest and across this city.

After this meeting Nkululeko contacted Abahlali baseMjondolo and set up a meeting for 8:00 a.m. this morning. The agenda was to discuss the intimidation and political corruption in the area and to organise a press conference to expose all of this to the media. Nkululeko had been collecting evidence of intimidation and political corruption for a long time.

There was a Confederation Cup game on last night. Nkululeko watched the game at a friend's house. He was in sms and telephone contact with Abahlali baseMjondolo leaders throughout the evening. He made it clear that he expected an attack. His comrades in Cato Crest advised him to flee the area. He said that he would 'rather take a bullet' than run away. At 9:30 p.m. he was returning to his shack after the game. Four men accosted him and he was shot 12 times. People who saw the shooting are saying that he was killed by the same men who killed Thembinkosi Qumbela in the same area in March. This murder was never investigated and there have been no arrests.

Now that Nkululeko is dead his body is being taken home to Inchanga. People are asking if this is what Dhlomo meant when he said that the Mayor should take him home. Just as in the case of the Qumbela murder, and the attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo in Kennedy Road in 2009, the senior politicians arrived directly after the violence. This is exactly how the 2009 plot in Kennedy Road was organised. Just like in Kennedy Road they were singing songs against Nkululeko at this meeting. They said that they would not tolerate Nkululeko's 'nonsense' while he is 'still selling vetkoek'.

Nkululeko was always a confident man, full of smiles, jokes and songs. His favourite song was Babekuphi Lababantu Emzabalazweni?

But recently he was very quiet although he never stopped speaking out at meetings. He was saying that he knew that he was at the top of the list of people to be killed in Cato Crest and that there were many others on the list. He was asking the movement to make sure that we continued to support the struggle in Cato Crest after he was gone.

Nkululeko was 34 years old. He leaves a girlfriend, Thembi Mazibane. She is a strong comrade and highly respected. We will stand with her. We express our condolences to Thembi, Nkululeko's family and everyone who is in rebellion in Cato Crest.

We are not sharing information that we have that could put more comrades at risk. But if there is a credible and independent investigation into this murder we will be happy to share all the information that we have including the text messages that he sent just before he was murdered.

The murder of Nkululeko is the front page story on the final edition of today's Daily News. The front page story on the earlier edition was about massive corruption in housing tenders in Durban. It said that 45 companies are under investigation. There is a direct connection between the massive corruption in housing in Durban and the repression that we are facing. The Manase Report remains hidden from the public. We continue to demand its release.

In 1993 uTata uNelson Mandela said that "If the ANC does to you what the Apartheid government did to you, then you must do to the ANC what you did to the Apartheid government." We are being evicted by the ANC. We are being put into transit camps by the ANC. When we organise we are also being beaten, tortured, jailed and killed by the ANC. We will not give in to tyranny. We will continue to resist. Stand with us in the struggle for freedom and justice. Stand with us in the struggle for a country where everyone can organise freely and land, cities, wealth and power are shared.

Bandile Mdlalose
Mazwi Nzimande
S'bu Zikode

29 JUNE 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Memorial Service for Nkululeko Gwala

On Wednesday 26 June 2013 at around 21:30pm, Nkululeko Gwala, an Abahlali baseMjondolo member and a well-known and respected housing activist, was assassinated in Cato Crest. Twelve shots were fired at him and he died on the spot. He was the second housing activist to be killed in Cato Crest this year.

Abahlali baseMjondolo will be holding a Memorial Service for Nkululeko Gwala tomorrow, Sunday 30 June 2013. The service will take place at the Cato Crest Sports Ground in Mayville from 09:00am to 12:00pm. There is a strong feeling of fear in the area but we are still expecting at least 500 shack dwellers from around Mayville and surrounding areas to attend the memorial.

This government is waging war on the poor. We are being left without basic services and we are disconnected, evicted and forced into transit camps. When we resist we face lies, the banning of our protests, assault, the destruction of our homes, torture, prison and murder. Housing for the poor is being abused as a way for politically connected people to become millionaires. Politicians are behaving like gangsters. The big construction companies are also corrupt.

Struggle is our only hope. We have survived repression before and we will continue to stand our ground despite this murder. Our struggle has been forced to be a struggle for democracy as well as a struggle for land and housing in the cities.

Bandile Mdlalose: Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary

S'bu Zikode: Abahlali baseMjondolo Former President

Thina Khanyile: Abahlali baseMjondolo Deputy Secretary

9 JULY 2013

Press statement · Kennedy Road Branch

Statement on Last Night's Road Blockade by Kennedy Road Residents

Last night, and again this morning, hundreds of us blocked road around the Kennedy Road shack settlement with burning tyres. There is still a heavy police presence in the settlement.

The reason for these road blockades is that Mayor James Nxumalo failed to keep his promise to meet with us. On the 25 of May this year we organised a major road blockade. More than 500 people held the road. At that road blockade we handed over a memorandum of demands which included (1) that the upgrade of Kennedy Road and the provision of housing at Cornubia for everyone that cannot be accommodated in the Kennedy Road upgrade that was negotiated with Mayor Mlaba's administration be implemented; (2) that formal electricity be provided to the settlement and (3) that Nigel Gumede be immediately dismissed from his post.

We received a letter from the Mayor's office on the 4th of June. In that letter the Mayor promised to meet with us by the end of the month. Today we are more than a week into July and we have heard nothing further about this meeting. Therefore we blockaded the road again to demand that the Mayor keep his promise to meet with us to discuss our demands.

We will continue to educate the politicians in their duty to obey the people.

We would also like to inform the media that the local ANC are planning a new plot against our movement in Kennedy Road. We relaunched our movement there, and held an election, on the 20th of June. Ten days before the relaunch, on the 10th of June, the ANC area committee held a meeting at Kennedy Road at 2:00 p.m. Ordinary residents of Kennedy Road were not advised of the meeting and because it was held during working hours most people were away at work. At this meeting there was a presentation by the Municipality and Khula Construction to present a plan for housing in the area – in fact they presented a plan to build a transit camp in Dodoma Avenue near Kennedy Road. On the 13th

of June the area committee of the ANC called a meeting of 12 ANC members to discuss who would be appointed as the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) for the project and who would get what jobs on the project. At this meeting it was stated that S'bu Zikode would be a threat to the project and there was a discussion about a similar plot to the ANC attack on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009. The matter has been reported to the police.

We will continue to defend our right to organise, democratically, outside of party politics. We will continue to demand land and housing in the cities and to oppose all forms of corruption, comradeship and repression.

Mbusiswa Sibetha, Kennedy Road Abahlali baseMjondolo Chairperson
Bangeni Gumede, Abahlali baseMjondolo Youth League Spokesperson

11 JULY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Once again Abahlali baseSiyanda March to Demand Land and Housing in Durban

Tomorrow Abahlali baseMjondolo Siyanda Branch will be protesting about all the beating about bushes on their long promised housing in Siyanda.

The Khulula Housing Project was meant for them but due to corruption they were excluded from the project. It became very difficult when Linda Masinga and Associates were tasked to forcefully remove some residents to transit camps in Richmond Farm in 2009. Everybody knows that there was a blatant corruption in this housing project. The provincial government had acknowledged this and sent its delegation to investigate this in 2009. A Task Team comprised of Abahlali delegates, eThekweni Municipal Officials and KZN provincial officials was set up. A clear promise was made that those marginalized would be housed with the current financial here. But today we are told that eThekweni Road Authority is the only unity in the city that is opposed to our housing project. They say that the land is reserved for unknown future road expansion in case they need it. This is very disappointing because the Department of Human Settlements is willing to go ahead with the housing project as it was negotiated.

Thus we demand that the eThekweni Road Authority (ETA) release the land for housing development. The social value of land must come before its commercial value. We demand that Nigel Gumede must go as he has failed in his mandate. We are told that at least 45% of housing budget goes unspent every year yet we remain homeless. We are told that the City does not have even any housing list leading to misallocation and corruption. politicians encourage this behaviour and when poor people challenge then we live under constant intimidation and death threats. Today Nkululeko Gwala and Qumbela are gone. Who else should die until Zuma fires the likes of Nigel Gumede?

The march tomorrow will leave from Malandela Road Park next to V.N. Naicker School in Siyanda and continue to the KwaMashu Police Station where the memorandum will be handed over to James Nxumalo, eThekweni Mayor at

12:00 P.M. We trust that the Mayor will respect Siyanda residents this time and be honest unlike what he did in Kennedy where he made empty promises and unlike in Cato Crest where he failed to intervene helpfully in the crisis with the result that Gwala got killed.

MaMkhize Nxumalo Abahlali baseSiyanda Chairperson

TJ Ngongoma Abahlali baseSiyanda Deputy Chairperson

20 JULY 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Abahlali baseMjondolo Will Launch a New Branch in Cato Crest Tomorrow

We were planning to launch a new Abahlali baseMjondolo branch in Cato Crest on Sunday 30 June. But as everyone knows Nkululeko Gwala, an Abahlali baseMjondolo member, was assassinated on the 26th of June.

Since Gwala's assassination our members have been subject to serious intimidation, including open death threats and threats to wipe their jobs, from ANC leaders in the area. A number of our members have had to go underground.

Our members in Cato Crest have insisted that we cannot allow intimidation to destroy the politic of truth. Despite the threats we held a memorial for Gwala in Cato Crest and tomorrow we will go ahead and launch a new branch in Cato Crest. The launch will take place at the Cato Crest sports ground at 10:00. The red of Cato Crest have vowed to continue the work of Gwala in order to honour him and all others who have been murdered after apartheid in the struggle for truth, real freedom and justice.

Bandile Mdlalose
Thina Khanyile
Mzwake Mdlalose

29 JULY 2013

Press statement · KwaNdengezi Branch

All Charges against the KwaNdengezi Eight Dropped

The KwaNdengezi Eight were amongst the eleven comrades arrested on 19 May this year after a protest against their Councillor, the notorious Nqola (Mduduzi Ngcobo). Charges against some comrades were dropped some time ago and on Friday, 26 July 2013, all charges were withdrawn against the remaining eight comrades in the Pinetown Magistrate's Court on the grounds that the police had not been able to provide any evidence against the accused.

Since our movement was formed in 2005 there has been a constant pattern of people being arrested on trumped up charges, sometimes assaulted, and forced to pay bail and to keep returning to court until the charges are dropped because there is no evidence against the accused. It has now become clear beyond any reasonable doubt that the charges brought against the members of our movement are routinely fabricated as they cannot stand in court.

There were celebrations into the night in KwaNdengezi on Friday.

However while people were celebrating the recent withdrawal of charges they continued to worry about the situation in the area.

On the same day the we were marching in Siyanda an Induna in KwaNdengezi by the name of Mr. Dingisano Ndlovu was arrested by a team of police investigators who identified themselves as coming from the Provincial Task Team. He was detained for two days, presumably for questioning. When he was released, he alleged that he had been tortured by the police while in custody. The same Induna received medical attention. The movement is not against the police investigating real crimes in the area but we are against any use of torture by the police.

The Inkosi in the area, Mr. B. Shoji, denies having signed any documents authorising the Municipality to take over certain portions of land in the name of development. The people in the area have not given their consent to this

development. Yet the Municipality continues to do what it wants without regard to the people living in KwaNdengezi.

The residents of KwaNdengezi remain in limbo. Their concerns have not been addressed. The struggle will continue.

Thuli Ndlovu, Abahlali baseMjondolo KwaNdengezi branch
Thinabantu Khanyile, Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement Deputy Secretary

9 AUGUST 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Women are human beings even when they find themselves in shacks or transit camps

Today women of the shack settlements just like women of Sandton, Sea Point and Umhlanga Rocks will be commemorating Women's Day. We are human beings and we are women where ever we find ourselves. We are still women in the shacks and we are still women in the transit camps and in the streets. We believe it is shack women's responsibility to bring about change in their own lives, in our communities and in our society as a whole.

We know that there is a long history of women being at the forefront of the struggles of the poor in South Africa and around the world. Women's Day is held to celebrate the women's march on the Union Buildings in 1956 under the slogan 'Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo. We celebrate this march. But we also celebrate the forgotten struggles of poor women like the women who led the struggle in Cato Manor in 1959.

But we will not be going to listen to the politicians who will be telling the people to trust them and to obey them. These politicians have never been in solidarity with the poor. They just want to use us as ladders to get wealth and power for themselves and their families. But now they are even attacking women in parliament for being women instead of discussing politics with them. We've seen this in the trade union movement too. All ideas and strategies can be discussed freely but it is never right to attack a woman for being a woman.

Abahlali women have rather decided to empower ourselves with political education in leadership this Saturday 10 August 2013. The theme of the day will be "Women can make a difference" since we know that there are many challenges facing women in our society. As part of the University of Abahlali, we will join hands with the Abahlali Men's Forum in a political school. The Abahlali Men's Forum is a space that has been created for men to discuss the role of men in everyday life and in struggle. It is a space where men can talk to each other about how men can work towards respecting the equality and dignity of

women so that we can build an equal and just society where everyone's dignity is respected. Families and communities must be safe spaces where all people are respected and cared for.

Women are leaders in their own homes and in their own right. But we believe we need to be conscious about working to empower ourselves in our struggle, in our communities and in our society. We also know that the challenges faced by women are political. They are promoted by inequalities and gender insensitivity. We also know that drugs, communicable diseases, unwanted pregnancy and rape have terrorized our communities. These problems can only be solved when women in shacks unite and take their place in our cities and in our society. Taking our place in the cities and in society will mean women will have a louder voice especially on issues that affect them, their families and communities. Just as our movement demands equality between classes we are also demanding equality between genders. Just as the poor are saying to the rich 'talk to us, not about us', and 'nothing for us, without us', women are saying the same to the men.

The movement is linking the Women's League to the Men's Forum because we believe that women and men need to really discuss the problems that are facing our society. It is clear that some men in our society have lost respect for the dignity of women. We need women and men to stand together in respect of each other. We need to put a stop to rape and other forms of violence against women in our society. It is a disgrace in a society claiming to be free that women cannot walk freely in our own streets. It is a disgrace that some men can't accept that women have the same right as men to take leadership roles in society. We need women and men to struggle together for a society in which there is equality and dignity for everyone.

The movement has questioned both Abahlali men and women to look at their role in violence and discrimination against women. We are asking our members to look carefully at whether or not they are really acting against these things. We are asking our members to look carefully at the times when they have been silent.

We are organising women and building structures in order to strengthen our power and voice. We are aiming to resist all forms of injustices, corruption, inequalities and women exclusion. If we are successful we will be able to confront evictions, state repression, corruption, unemployment, exploitation and

domestic violence without fear and be listened to. If we are successful we will be able to confront the spread of HIV/AIDS and all other transmittable diseases in our families and communities.

The University of Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's Day political education workshop will take place at Surat Hindu Association Building, 137 Dr Goonham St (Prince Edward St), Durban.

It will start from 9:00 a.m. and continue to 15:00 p.m.

Zandile Nsibande Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

Busisiwe Mdlalose Abahlali baseMjondolo Women's League

12 AUGUST 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape

Abahlali baseMjondolo to March on Mayor de Lille on Wednesday

Abahlali baseMjondolo Western Cape is tired of the waiting system from the government. The Western Cape has turned to be a spaza shop, where the DA comes and shop for votes while we are left with empty promises.

The leading party in the Province does not have any humanity. Its only delivery is to demolish our homes, leaving us homeless in the rain. When they comes to shop for their votes they act like we are people who count, and they know that we are in ward areas. After the voting is finished we are called unknown people and we treated like people that don't count to this city.

Sweet Home Farm started to be a community since 1995. The residents of this community they tried to engage with the city officials since then but always they got empty promises.

In Marikana a community has been left homeless. Law enforcement illegally demolished their homes again and again. This must come to a stop.

We are demanding that government deliver on their promises and that they treat us as human beings with dignity.

That is why now we are saying that enough is enough. We are tired of begging the government to respect our humanity and so now we are demanding that we are provided with our basic needs like water, sanitation, electricity, tarred roads, drainage and houses. We are demanding an end to evictions. We are also demanding that the government stop talking about us and start talking to us.

We are marching from Keizersgracht to Civic Centre on Wednesday 14 August 2013. The protest will start from 09:00am and finish at 12:00pm. Our Memorandum will be handed over to the Mayor of Cape Town Patricia de Lille.

Siyamboleka James – Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape Chairperson

Siphiwo Ngushe – Abahlali baseMjondolo Sweet Home Farm Member

Tumi – Abahlali baseMjondolo Marikana Land Occupation Member

13 AUGUST 2013

Press statement · Cato Crest Branch

Housing corruption, eviction and demolition in Cato Crest right now

After Nkululeko Gwala was murdered for speaking against corruption and for calling for a fair and transparent allocation of housing in Cato Crest, activists in the area have continued to receive death threats.

Yesterday a local ANC member who is also in an ANC local committee was illegally allocated a house. Like so many others he was rewarded for being loyal to the party. Abahlali noted this and started questioning the rightfulness of this ANC member to get a house. As always our members were threatened and special party meeting was held to discuss how the ruling party should deal with out movement. Residents were in fear the whole night as the intimidation of those who speak out continues.

The eThekwin Municipality has failed to bring about fair allocation of houses in this area. The murderers of Nkululeko are enjoying their freedom and continue to celebrate their 'victory'. No one is arrested for these crimes as they implicate high political leadership. If those who govern kill the governed, who are they going to govern tomorrow? We do not receive answers yet.

Those Abahlali members who worked closely with Nkululeko had to occupy a piece of land as our shacks were demolished without a court order and without regard to all the safe guards that the national legislation provides. Right now the Land Invasion Unit are demolishing our shacks again. And as always they have no court order. They expect us to respect the law that they cannot even respect. We are dealing with a criminal state.

We ask the media to rush to the area just next to Cato Crest Sports Grounds to witness how eThekwin Municipality breaks the law in broad day light. Today, we have no RDP houses as they have been given to party cronies and party connected buddies. Today we do not even have shacks as the Municipality is illegally destroying them. Yet we are now told to vote for our oppressors.

Similar threats of eviction and demolition are currently taking place in the shack settlement situated at 90 Electron Road Springfield Park.

Malindy at Cato Crest
Abahlali office

23 AUGUST 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Durban High Court Grants Cato Crest Residents an Interim Order Interdicting the eThekweni Municipality against Evictions

On Tuesday 13 August 2013 the eThekweni Municipality demolished homes of shack dwellers in the Cato Crest land occupation. As usual these demolitions were not authorised by an order of the court. This is not just immoral. It is also illegal. The people who were left homeless after these evictions were isolated from the current housing development in the area because the majority of them come from the Eastern Cape and have been labelled as tenants. This was also confirmed at the beginning of the year when Cato Crest residents were protesting and demanding houses. Nigel Gumede said that these are unknown people. He said that most of them come from the Eastern Cape and also called them as tenants. This is a very dangerous politic that is trying to weaken the poor by dividing us.

When the demolitions first started residents who were given houses were instructed to support the eviction of tenants and people from the Eastern Cape. The residents who were evicted responded by organising a new land occupation called Marikana. After the recent evictions people rebuilt their homes and then took the municipality to court. The Cato Crest residents know their rights due to their participation in the University of Abahlali baseMjondolo. They will not accept this situation. They will continue to resist the attacks from the Municipality.

The eThekweni Municipality often violates people's rights and doesn't even bother to respect the Constitution. Section 26 clearly says that evictions without a court order are unconstitutional. This Municipality thinks it is bigger than the law. It thinks that poor people don't count to the law. It thinks that it can deny people from other provinces their rights as citizens. Our movement will continue to insist on the right to the cities and we will continue to insist that South African belongs to all who live in it.

Nkululeko Gwala was a vocal leader who challenged the act of the councillor and the mayor in the housing developments stating that there is corruption and that many people in the shacks in Cato Crest are not benefiting from the development. It will be remembered that three months ago Nkululeko was silenced by 12 bullets. Now people are being violated by the Municipality because it thinks that it can do whatever it likes now that Nkululeko is not in the picture and the people have been shown that resistance can result in death.

One of the greatest things that Nkululeko did when he was still alive is that he gave people in Cato Crest a home in struggle which is Abahlali. It is our duty to continue where he would have left off. It is our duty to refuse to be intimidated.

Yesterday, Thursday 23 August 2013, we took the Municipality to the Durban High Court to interdict the Municipality against demolishing the homes of Cato Crest residents or evicting them. The Municipality said that it will oppose our application. However we asked for an Interim Order which was granted.

Corruption, comradism, nepotism and the blatant denial of citizenship to some residents is the order of the day in this city.

Mkhaliseni Mzimela: Cato Crest Chairperson

Aaron Mthethwa: Cato Crest Secretary

Bandile Mdlalose – Abahlali baseMjondolo General Secretary

1 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Cato Crest Branch

Illegal Evictions Happening Right Now in Cato Crest!

The eThekweni Municipality is Currently Evicting People in Cato Crest in Violation of the Law and a Court Order

On 23 August 2013 we secured an interim interdict against the eThekweni Municipality from continuing with their illegal evictions in Cato Crest.

However the Municipality has returned to Cato Crest today and is currently demolishing our homes and leaving us homeless. These evictions are illegal, in violation of a court order and a violent attack on our humanity and our right to live in the this city.

The Mayor, James Nxumalo, is leading an ANC delegation that is one the scene along with Clr Mzimunye Ngiba. They are accompanied by heavy security. When we ask to talk they refuse to meet us. When we resist they tell us to go back to the Eastern Cape, threaten us with death, kill us and attack us like they are coming to fight a war.

We will continue to resist this criminal municipality and will defend our homes and our right to live in this city.

We urge all media to rush to the scene.

Ndabo Mzimela
Lindiwe

2 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Cato Crest Branch

Our Movement is Under Attack

The eThekweni Municipality's Land Invasion Unit has again demolished shacks and evicted residents in Cato Crest without a Court Order. This is despite the undertaking made before the Durban High Court that they will not demolish any shacks in Cato Crest pending the final court decision. They demolished on Sunday and again this today. This morning they demolished 15 shacks, 8 of them were the homes of people who where among those who secured an interim court order preventing the destruction of their homes. The few bullies running this municipality are rendering it a criminal municipality with no respect for the poor, for democracy or the rule the law.

Yesterday they said they were not finished with us. Today they still say they are not finished with us. They say that they will rule us whether we like it or not. They say that they will use all their power to force us to accept their rule. This is black power used in the same way as the white power of Dr Verwoerd.

This morning ANC Councilor Mzimuni Ngiba called the ANC members in Cato Crest to a meeting at the local sport ground to plan and discuss this eviction. S'bu Zikode was the main subject in this meeting, just as Nkululeko Gwala was the main subject of the meeting called by the ANC in the area on the 26th of June. Gwala was assassinated on the same day.

Ngiba has declared war on Abahlali members. His comrades insist that they have fought and died for this country and that it is therefore their turn to rule even if that means that they must rule without regard for law.

In today's attack three people including women have been shot by municipal security with rubber bullets. Abahlali comrades have rushed them to hospital. "Engabe kanti sesiyabulawa ngempela uhulumeni wethu" "are we really being killed by our own government", cried one woman.

The evictions in Cato Crest started as ethnic evictions. They are now political evictions.

The war on our movement is a war on democracy.

We urge the media to rush to Cato Crest now.

Makwasa, Abahlali baseMjondolo member in Cato Crest

Scelo, Abahlali baseMjondolo member in Cato Crest

Ndabo Mzimela, Abahlali baseMjondolo Cato Crest Chairperson

2 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Have Secured Another Court Interdict in Defence of Cato Crest

Abahlali baseMjondolo has just secured another interdict in the Durban High Court against the eThekweni Municipality.

At around 13:00 p.m. today around 80 municipal police officers and members of the Land Invasions Unit arrived in Cato Crest, Ward 101, escorted by the local Councillor, Mzimuni Ngiba and his BEC (Branch Executive Committee of the ANC). They attacked our comrades and demolished their shacks leaving them homeless. They demolished the shacks even though there is a court order preventing them from demolishing the shacks.

According to some members of the community the Cato Crest BEC gathered at stop one in the morning around 11 just after the television show of iLungelo Lakho had finished where S'bu Zikode was talking about the corruption in public housing. He set an example of Mzimuni Ngiba who is one of the leading corrupt councillors and a councillor whose critics are assassinated by izinkabi (hit men).

When this committee gathered the agenda was Abahlali and Zikode. This conversation of the BEC was witnessed by some of the Abahlali baseMjondolo Exco leaders who was visiting our comrades in the area to be in solidarity. They heard them loudly talking about S'bu Zikode. One of the ladies who was at the meeting said: "We must teach these people a lesson". On our minds we had thought that it was the normal threats of intimidation not realising they will use the municipality who have been interdicted from demolishing houses to attack our members in the area.

Two hours after the AbM Exco members had left Cato Crest the councillor came with the Land Evasion Unit and the municipal police. They brutally beat the people, shot them with rubber bullets and sprayed them with tear gas. These police also had dogs. When people ran away the police even followed them even into their hiding and continued to beat them there.

Some comrades rushed to the area. Others rushed to the Durban High Court to state that the court order that we have secured last month was not being respected and the Municipality had breached the order. The Durban High Court granted another Court Order which interdicts the Municipality from evicting and demolishing houses. It also instruct the Municipality to rebuild the structures which they had demolished. The order also declared that the demolishing of houses on the 13 of August and yesterday and today was unlawful.

If the municipality continues to demolish houses it would mean that they are in contempt of the Court Order. As the movement we will ensure that no municipality becomes bigger than the law and that no rights should be violated. Everyone counts. Everyone have the right to housing and not just those who are friends with James Nxumalo or Mzimuni Ngiba.

We will stand together. We will stand strong in our politic. Justice is on our side.

We want to express our gratitude to SERI and Trudie Nichols Attorneys for representing us in court.

Ndabo Mzimela: Cato Crest Abahlali baseMjondolo Chairperson

Lindiwe Mazibuko: Cato Crest Abahlali baseMjondolo member

Scelo Ngidi: Cato Crest Abahlali baseMjondolo member

5 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

We Are Under Attack in Cato Crest!

eThekweni Municipality violates Court Order

Despite both an undertaking and an Order of Court issued by Durban High Court The eThekweni Municipality is demolishing Cato Crest shacks right now.

Comrades are under attack in their own homes.

They have told the residents that they are the ruling party and nobody and nothing will stop them from ruling the city in the manner they want to.

People are have taken to the streets in protest. The tyres are burning and Bel-lair Road has been closed. Comrades are also under attack on the road blockade but the blockade is holding so far.

We request the media to rush to Cato Crest now.

Ndabo Mzimela
Lindiwe

6 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

The three comrades arrested for public violence were bailed out last night

Yesterday three Abahlali baseMjondolo members were arrested after Bellair Road was blockaded in protest at more illegal and violent evictions in Cato Crest. These evictions violated the law, the Constitution and an order of the court. The three comrades who were arrested are Sibongile, Nokulunga and Mr Mzihle.

After the arrests the leadership of Cato Crest branch, together with the Abahlali baseMjondolo leadership, went to the Cato Manor Police Station to negotiate bail for our comrades. We were glad to have secured police bail for them without any objection from the police.

It is a shame that both Nokulunga and S'bongile were brutally assaulted in police custody. As they were being beaten they were asked who is behind their political act. This is incredible. The Municipality is destroying people's homes, stealing their property and beating them. Their leaders are being assassinated. At the same time it is said that the reason for the housing crisis in Durban is the presence of people from the Eastern Cape. Yet when people decided to protest it is thought that someone else must be thinking for them, telling them what to do. Politicians, police officers and some NGOs, academics and middle class activists are all failing to understand that as poor people we can think for ourselves and build our own politic. It is our decision to refuse injustice and the denial of our humanity that lies behind our politic.

Nokulunga and S'bongile were refused medical attention while in police custody. They have had to go to a District Sergeant for medical attention.

The three comrades had appeared today in Durban Magistrate Court, in F court. Their appearance was then moved to the Durban Regional Court in Court 10. We are told that the charge of Public Violence is now so serious that it has to be held in District Court. This has not surprised us because we know

that there are politicians behind the police. We fear that such politic may infiltrate the court. The matter was adjourned to the 03th of October 2013 for the state to bring before court the valid evidence that these victims have conducted themselves to violence act.

Concurrent to that Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A together with the community of Cato Crest are fling court papers to hold the Municipality in contempt of the High Court. It must be remembered that the City has just ignored its own undertaking to stop its illegal evictions in Cato Crest and the High Court Interdict forbidding them from carrying out these illegal evictions.

They are clearly saying that they are governing and that therefore that give them the rights to violate or humanity and the Constitution of the Republic.

Ndabo Mzimela Abahlali baseMjondolo Cato Crest Chairperson
Lindiwe Mazibuko Abahlali baseMjondolo Cato Crest Activist
Bandile Mdlalose Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General

6 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Court Order Compelling Senior Municipal and Police Officials to Explain Why They Must not Either Obey the Law or Go to Jail

We have won an order in the High Court that requires the head of the Land Invasions Unit, the Municipal Manager and the Station Commander of the Cato Manor Police Station to show on 12 September if there is any good reason why they should not either be committed to prison for 30 days or comply with the court order issued against them on 2 September. That order prohibits them from evicting people in Cato Crest and forces them to rebuild the shacks that they have demolished.

S'bu Zikode

10 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Press Conference in Cato Crest on the Crisis in Cato Crest

NKULULEKO GWALA PRESS CONFERENCE

We are all Nkululeko Gwala and we want to cough it all out.

It is high time that the truth be told. The world, the country, the Cato Crest community, friends and family of Nkululeko Gwala are all wondering what has led to Nkululeko's assassination. It is time the world should know the truth.

Corruption, violent and illegal evictions, contempt of court orders, police violence and death threats from local party structures have become the order of the day in Cato Crest yet no one talks about it. The truth is known and yet no one speaks out. It is time that Abahlali baseCato Crest spoke.

Two days before Nkululeko Gwala was shot he had visited the office of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement S.A where he was vocal about the situation in Cato Crest. There are important, serious and disgusting things that he shared with the comrades. He wanted an urgent press conference where he could tell these things to the world. Sadly enough that he did not get time to speak out for himself.

Since the death of Nkululeko no one has been arrested or investigated for this crime. The investigating officers actually confirmed that they are working for the politicians and to protect the politicians and not the people. We have lost confidence on them. We have no choice but to bring all the information that we have to a public domain for the public to make its own judgement. It is time to implement Nkululeko's wish and make sure that people know the truth.

Tomorrow Abahlali baseMjondolo together with AbM-Cato Crest leaders will be having a Press Conference at Cato Crest (Stop 1) at 12:00 p.m.

We call upon all media to join us while we talk through everything that Nkululeko told us before he was killed.

Ngiba and his ANC must forget their hope that the politic of fear will eradicate our movement. We will stand strong in our living politic and in our struggle for the right to this city which is a right to live into this city and a right to shape it from below.

Ndabo Mzimela: AbM-Cato Crest Chairperson

Lindiwe: AbM- Cato Crest Activist

Bandile Mdlalose: AbM- General Secretary

11 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Cato Crest Currently Under Illegal and Violent Attack by the eThekweni Municipality

The Municipality is Attacking Cato Crest Right Now. Homes are Being Demolished. Media are requested to rush to the scene to witness the criminality and inhumanity of this Municipality for themselves.

Ndabo Mzimela: AbM-Cato Crest Chairperson

Lindiwe: AbM- Cato Crest Activist

Bandile Mdlalose: AbM- General Secretary

12 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Another Victory in the Durban High Court for Abahlali baseCato Crest

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA have again won another Court Interdict prohibiting the eThekweni Municipal Land Invasion Unit and the Metro Police from demolishing the homes of Abahlali baseCato Crest. The court ordered Municipal officials and the Municipal Legal team to go to Cato Crest to identify residents with their shacks and mark them. This is to make sure that Abahlali are no longer touched by the Municipality pending the finalization of our application. The visit will take place on Tuesday, 17 September 2013 at 9 a.m. This is a relief arrangement while proceedings are under way. The City only filed their answering affidavit today and our legal team will need to respond to it before the court can hear it, together with the main application.

Abahlali has won several court victories in this matter of the ongoing, violent and unlawful evictions in Cato Crest. However these court victories have been ignored by the Municipality. Therefore today's battle was no longer 'Abahlali vs eThekweni Municipality' but rather a question of 'The rule of Law vs eThekweni Municipality'. But to our surprise the BEC of the ANC in the Cato Crest area, its Ward Committee members and general membership were in court. Noted in this group of people were also people identified by local Abahlali members as hitmen. They even entered the court room in black caps. ANC members were seen pointing out S'bu Zikode to these men. They did not try to hide this. They made an extra effort in making sure that everyone could see what they were doing. When we saw them exchanging guns in their white Hyundai vehicle that is known to us it is clear to us that the ANC is determined to ensure that the politic of blood remains the order of the day in Cato Crest. They are trying to make this a matter of 'Abahlali vs ANC'.

It is clear that the ruling party have decide to subvert the law. Their members were bused into court without any knowledge of the proceedings. They did not even know who was representing their interest. Our hope in the rule

of law is becoming hopeless as court orders are not protecting our homes. The orders of the court are being openly ignored by the Municipality and people are being beaten during evictions, in the police station when they stand up against injustice. At the same time activists are being assassinated.

We have no choice but to defend our only homes and our right to this city.

We wish to say very clearly to the ANC that we are all S'bu Zikode. S'bu Zikode is not making us to rebel. It is injustice that is making us to rebel. We all stand with our comrades in Cato Crest and we all stand with S'bu Zikode.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu: AbM – Spokesperson

Ndabo Mzimela: AbM – Cato Crest Chairperson

Lindiwe: AbM – Cato Crest Activist

Bandile Mdlalose: AbM – General Secretary

13 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March on the Durban City Hall to Demand Land, Housing and Dignity

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement SA together with Abahlali baseSipingo Transit Camp (eMathinini) will be marching to the Durban City Hall on Monday, 16 September 2013. We will be joined by Abahlali from around the province of KwaZulu-Natal including Howick and the South Coast. For a very long time there has been serious neglect of people in smaller towns.

This march comes at a very tough time for our movement. It comes at a time when we are not only beaten and repressed for raising our voices but also threatened with death and killed. Our crime has been to organize in shack settlements and to organize unorganized communities. Our crime has been to organize outside state control. Our crime has been to organize outside party control. Our crime has been to create a platform for people who are supposed to be spoken for and about to speak for ourselves. Our crime has been to speak truth to power. Our crime has been to speak out against the corruption that implicates top politicians in Cato Crest. Our crime has been to insist that everyone counts. Our crime has been to insist on our right to the cities. Our crime has been to take action to put the social value of land before its commercial value. And yes, our crime has been to insist that the state does not treat the poor as if we were beneath the rule of law and outside of our constitutional democracy.

The Isipingo Transit Camp communities have been living under life threatening conditions on flood plain and in a dump area. Many of the residents there are sick, really sick from asthma and other respiratory related sicknesses. This is not a place for human beings to live. In 1990 the ANC said 'Occupy the Cities'. We were promised housing in the Freedom Charter and election promises. Now we are being forced into transit camps where we are left to rot and this is called delivery. We cannot accept the conditions in this transit camp or in any transit camp. Transit camps are an attack on our humanity. They vandalize our dignity.

We have all been lied to from Kennedy Road to Cato Crest. One thing that Mayor James Nxumalo is known for and good for is lying. He says everything but does nothing. This is what he will be remembered for on his term. Lies and more lies. Lies and silence when his councilors threaten to kill us.

In Cato Crest our homes have been illegally demolished, we have been beaten by the police and threatened with death by the ANC. No one has been arrested for the assassinations of Thembinkosi Qumbela and Nkululeko Gwala. Court orders against evictions are just being ignored. Today the residents whose shacks have been illegally demolished were supposed to be able to rebuild. This is what the court order demanded. The Cato Manor SAPS have been served with interdicts so today they used the Mayville SAPS to prevent the rebuilding. They are using all means possible to subvert the rule of law.

We are entering dangerous times. If we as the poor don't count to the rule of law and can be freely beaten, evicted, threatened and killed what hope can we really have in democracy? We have always warned and we continue to warn that the anger of the poor can go in many directions.

Each Abahlali branch in each community has prepared its own memorandum for this march after discussing it in their own community. We have asked the MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the MEC for Human Settlements in the KZN Province and Mayor James Nxumalo to come and receive our memoranda.

However we make the following collective demands:

We demand well located land and decent housing in the cities.

We demand an end to transit camps.

We demand an end to repression and full and open investigation of all repression against our movement including the Kennedy Road attack in 2009, repression in KwaNdengezi and the assassination of Nkululeko Gwala etc.

We demand that the eThekweni Municipality cease its open violation of the Constitution and the law when it comes to the treatment of poor people in Durban. We demand an immediate end to the illegal and violent harassment of our members in Cato Crest including the demolition of their homes in violation of court orders.

Nigel Gumede must go.

Our dignity is not negotiable. Our right to the cities is not negotiable. Our right to participate in this democracy is not negotiable.

Our march will begin at King Dinizulu Park (Botha) and proceed to the Durban City Hall. It will start at 9 a.m. and finished at 13:00 p.m.

Thinabantu Khanyile Abahlali National Administrator
Mnikelo Ndabankulu Abahlali baseMjondolo Media Officer
Bandile Mdlalose Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General

14 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Demolitions Happening Right Now in Cato Crest

The Municipality has returned to Cato Crest and, once again, are demolishing people's homes in brazen violation of the Constitution, the law and all the court orders that we have recently secured against them.

When they arrived in Cato Crest to demolish they were shown the court orders. They replied that 'such papers do not work on us'.

Ndabo Mzimela: AbM – Cato Crest Chairperson

Lindiwe: AbM – Cato Crest Activist

Bandile Mdlalose: AbM – General Secretary

17 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

ANC members are threatening AbM leaders in Cato Crest now

AbM leaders are at Cato Crest with lawyers from both AbM and the City, as per the last court order, to count and mark the shacks that are protected by the court orders.

But ANC members have gathered. Ngiba and the men believed to be his hit-men are with them. They are threatening the AbM leaders. The Land Invasions Unit are on the site in large numbers, as well as a senior politician in a BMW with dark windows and a blue light. But there are no police present.

uBandile speaks to the Cato Crest Abahlali while the ANC mobilise and threaten nearby. It seems that there is an argument between the Municipality's lawyers, the land invasions unit and the politicians and that the land invasions unit wants to mobilise ANC members to make the implementation of the court order impossible.

In September 2009, and for months afterwards, ANC members were able to attack AbM leaders in Kennedy Road with impunity and with clear support from senior politicians. This situation could become serious.

Bandile Mdlalose is on the scene

The local police station can be contacted

Media are urged to rush to the scene.

17 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

ANC Thuggery Undermines the Rule of Law Once Again

Yesterday we occupied the centre of Durban in our thousands. After our march some of us went to court, once again, for the Cato Crest matter. We have won a number of orders from the High Court interdicting the eThekweni Municipality from illegally evicting our members from the Marikana land occupation at Cato Crest. However the Municipality has just ignored these court orders. The court eventually decided to order various officials to appear before the court to explain why they should not be arrested. But even the agreement made to stop the evictions, which have been violent, while the Municipality prepared its case, was violated. While we were in court threats were made against us and guns were openly passed around outside the court. Two activists have already been assassinated in Cato Crests and death threats have to be taken seriously.

Yesterday the court ruled that both our legal team, and the Municipality's legal team, must go to Cato Crest today. All of the people who were part of our application to the court to force the Municipality to stop its illegal evictions were supposed to be at their shacks with their IDS so that it could be clearly shown to all parties which shacks were protected by the court order.

Today we went to Cato Crest as ordered by the court. However the process that the court has ordered could not take place. The land invasions unit were there. Ngiba, the local councillor, was there with people believed to be his hit men. There was a senior politician there in a black BMW with blue lights. The ANC had mobilised their supporters. Songs were sung threatening us. Death threats were made against S'bu Zikode and Bandile Mdlalose. Our lawyer was intimidated. S'bu Sithole, the ANC Community Liaison Officer in the area said that Bandile must be the next to be killed.

After a long discussion between municipal officials, their politicians, and their attorney they pretended that they were consenting with the court order and that we should start the process. But then they pointed out a group of ANC supporters, of which some did not come from the community, and said that they are prohibiting this process. They did this so that it will appear as if the officials and the lawyers are complying with the court order and now there was a new stumbling block, which is the so called "ANC constituency". Whilst this

was happening Mzi Ngiba was addressing this group and inciting violence. The Municipal lawyers used this as an excuse for not complying with the court order. When AbM asked why the SAPS is not protecting us to comply with the court order they asked our lawyer if they should shoot people? This is funny because they have been shooting at Abahlali for protecting their homes against illegal evictions. When the court order has to be enforced now suddenly the SAPS is unwilling to enforce the law.

Eventually we had to leave the area without completing the process requested by the court.

Our members have been illegally evicted from their homes based on their ethnicity (it is said that they are from the Eastern Cape and that they must return there). When they have tried to organise their leaders have been assassinated. When they have gone to court to force the Municipality to cease its illegal evictions the court orders have been ignored. When they have gone to the streets to protest against these evictions they have been arrested and beaten by the police in custody.

We have been openly threatened with death in ANC meetings in Cato Crest, we have been threatened by the ANC in court and we have now been threatened with death by ANC members while trying to implement the process mandated by the court.

We have survived very serious threats, intimidation, lies and repression over the years. We will survive this. Yesterday our red sea bought thousands into the centre of the city. We occupied it. We showed our power. We showed it peacefully.

It is clear to us that we are dealing with a City that has contempt for the poor and hated for the organised poor. It is clear that we are dealing with a City that has contempt for the rule of law. It is clear to us that we are dealing with a City that is very happy to deal with us with the violence of the police, ANC members and assassins (izinkabi) instead of engaging us politically or in the courts. It is clear to us that we are dealing with a City that is only interested in housing as a source of wealth and power for members of the ruling party.

We will stand firm for our dignity. We will stand firm for our right to this city which is a right to live in this city and to shape it from below. We will stand firm for our right to be part of this democracy. We will stand firm in our demand that wealth, land and power must be shared. We will stand firm in our instance that everyone counts.

21 SEPTEMBER 2013

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Three Abahlali baseMjondolo Members Shot in Cato Crest

eThekweni Municipality's Invasion Unit has shot three Abahlali baseCato Crest, one with live ammunition Abahlali has witnessed the leader of the Land Invasion Unit Mr Goven, shooting at our members in Cato Crest. We witnessed him shooting at Mngomezulu. Goven was in his white shirt while the rest of his crew was wearing blue. Three live bullets were fired at Mngomezulu.

Three Abahlali members including Mngomezulu have been rushed to hospital after their own government has shot them – the other two comrades were shot with rubber bullets. Mngomezulu is in a critical condition.

This government has declared war on its poor citizens. They believe that the gun must be the rule of the day and not the law.

The shooting took place 9:00 a.m. this morning. Now instead of the SAPS protecting residents they are arresting the victims of crime committed by eThekweni municipality. Ndabo Mzimela, Abahlali Chairperson in the area, has just been arrested for defending his house and is being severely assaulted by the SAPS.

The Land Invasions unit have continued to demolish homes this morning and to try and force residents out of Cato Crest. Today at least eighteen shacks were demolished despite number of court orders protecting the residents and the Municipality's own undertaking to the court not to evict.

Today eighteen shacks were demolished on the Spar side. Yesterday at about 9:00 a.m. eight shacks were demolished, also at gun point, on the other side. So, shacks are demolished on both sides including the side that is not even in the dispute.

It is clear that it is not the so called community that prohibits implementation of court orders but the municipality. Yesterday they mentioned that they were sent by the provincial government. It is clear that the ANC cannot differentiate between itself as party and itself as government. They take any challenge

to the government as a challenge to the party. They take any challenge to the party as an act of war.

Party members, assassins, the land invasions unit and the police are all being used to crush the people in Cato Crest who have stood up for their humanity and their rights as guaranteed in the law and the Constitution.

Bandile Mdlalose
S'bu Zikode
Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Lindiwe Mazibuko

26 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Road Blockades Around the City

On the 16th of September 2013 we marched on the Durban City Hall in our thousands with the hope that this is the Republic of South Africa and thus we shall be taken seriously. We delivered memoranda demanding well located land and decent housing and the restoration of our dignity to the Provincial Dept of Human Settlement, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and eThekweni Mayor James Nxumalo. We made it clear that we expected a response within seven days.

The seven days have now passed and there has been no response to our memorandum.

We have made it very clear that if we did not get a response we will take to streets. What is the point of having the so called legal march if it doesn't deliver fruitful result to our demands? What is the point of going to court when court orders are ignored?

Today different branches of Abahlali are staging road blockades around the city to demand answers to all our unanswered memoranda. In Isipingo Transit Camp, Kennedy Road and Cato Crest the flames are high.

The tyres that are burning around the city symbolize the failure of James Nxumalo and his council. Nxumalo has failed the poor people of Durban. He has failed democracy. He has failed the rule of law.

We are asking ourselves why it is that a man that has failed the people is kept in this mayoral position?

So far three people have been arrested and charged with so called public violence – our normal crime. They were arrested at 5 a.m. this morning and their only crime was to have Dunlop tires burnt. As always instead of James Nxumalo coming to scene to talk to us he sent his police force. The shoot to kill crew. Our comrades will appear in the Durban Magistrate this morning. We will be there to support them.

We wish to make it clear to Nxumalo and everyone else that we will not be beaten out of this city. We are going nowhere. We have shown that if they

demolish we will rebuild. If they beat us and kill we keep returning to the streets, to the courts and the debates in the media. If showing our power with a legal march of thousands gets no response then we will engage in disruption with road blockades. We will keep struggling until this City is willing to suspend its violent attacks on us and engage in genuine negotiations.

On the other side Mngomezulu is in a stable condition in hospital and has been transferred from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to the general ward. There have been threats from the ruling elite, the SAPS and municipal security that they will go to hospital to kill him. On Tuesday, 24 September 2013 Mzimuni Ngiba, an ANC councillor visited Mngomezulu in hospital. We do not know why but we fear that Ngiba wants Mngomezulu dead. We want him and all his associates restrained from visiting a man that they have called their enemy.

S'bu Zikode
Bandile Mdlalose

30 SEPTEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Nqobile Nzuza, a 17 Year Old School Girl, Shot Dead with Live Ammunition by the Cato Manor SAPS

Nqobile Nzuza a 17 year old girl, a grade 9 learner at Bonella High School and an Abahlali baseMjondolo supporter was gunned down at around 5:00 a.m. this morning. Nqobile was shot twice from behind with live ammunition. Luleka Makhwenkwana was also shot in her arm with live ammunition and she is in King Edward Hospital. Thulisile Zide fainted and went unconscious, she is also in hospital.

This is shoot to kill policing. This is the crackdown that the police and politicians promised on protests. This is policing that is willing to murder to suppress the struggle for real justice and real freedom. This is policing that is used to oppress the people in the interests of the ruling party and the tenderpreneurs and gangsters that have seized control of it in Durban.

On Saturday 21 September 2013 Mr. Goven from the Land Invasions Unit shot Nkosinathi Mngomezulu in the stomach during an illegal eviction in Cato Crest. Mr. Goven is not arrested yet Mngomezulu is under arrest in hospital. Our members have been assaulted in the Cato Crest police station after evictions and protests and yet no action is taken against the officers that beat our members. We have been subject to illegal evictions nine times in Cato Crest. Our court orders are just ignored and yet the Land Invasions Unit are never arrested. On the 26th of June 2013 Nkululeko Gwala was assassinated in Cato Crest. No one is arrested for this crime. We all know that it has not been properly investigated. Three months earlier Thembinkosi Qumbela was assassinated. Against there are no arrests and there has been no proper investigation. ANC members openly threaten us with death and the police never act against them.

This morning around 500 members of Abahlali baseCato Crest organized a road blockade. They also organized road blockades last week along with comrades in other areas like Clare Estate and Isipingo. The reason for the road blockades is that although we were thousands in our march on the City Hall on 16 September 2013 our memoranda were not answered. The road blockades were organized to force the City to answer our memoranda. The Cato Crest memorandum at the march demanded that the City stop its illegal evictions in the area, stop its corruption, stop trying to divide people by the provinces that they come from, stop lying and saying that Xhosa speaking people are new to Durban, stop saying that Xhosa speaking people must 'go back to the Transkei' and that the ANC, the City and the police must stop the illegal and violent repression of our members and our struggle.

Abahlali members say that they saw the Cato Manor Station Commander shooting Nqobile Nzuza at the road blockade this morning. They say that he was not in his uniform when he murdered her but that he came back later in his police full uniform. Our members witnessed what happened and are willing to tell anyone what they saw.

Nqobile's family arrived in Cato Crest in 1994. Yet her family is one of those that the ANC and the municipality claim are not known to this area. Loyal ANC new comers are rewarded with housing in a controversial and corrupt housing project that is underway while others who are not ANC are evicted, beaten and murdered.

Mzimuni Ngiba an ANC councillor and a gangster was also seen shortly before Nqobile was shot wearing a cooper hat. Ngiba asked protesters if there was a march this morning while trying to hide face. He spoke face to face with some comrades as he tried to hide his face.

Bandile Mdlalose was the first to arrive at Cato Crest to extend Abahlali's solidarity with the Nzuza family and with Abahlali baseCato Crest. As soon as the police were shown by local ANC that she is the Abahlali General Secretary she was just grabbed from the pavement and arrested. As soon as she entered the police station gate Mzimuni Ngiba local ANC councillor arrived with his izinkabi (hitmen). Then the car with tinted windows and registration NDM 8 arrived. We believe it was Mayor James Nxumalo that arrived at the station. Then MEC Willies Mchunu and MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo who is also an ANC Chairperson in eThekwinini Region arrived at the Cato Manor

police station. We do not know what the arrest of Bandile has to do with him and his ANC. But we do know that Willies Mchunu arrived very quickly on the scene to tell lies and try to justify the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009. He also announced then that a decision had been taken to 'disband' our movement.

We have made it very clear that Abahlali will not accept any politic of fear and politic of blood. We will continue fighting for what is right for our rights.

The police are claiming that they had to shoot with live ammunition to save their lives. This is a simple lie. We note that some media are reporting the police statement on this matter as if it is the truth. We would like to remind the media that the police in Durban have a long history of lying. Remember how they lied about Marikana! Remember how they lied about the attack on our movement in the Kennedy Road settlement in 2009! Remember how in 2006 they lied and said that they had shot Monica Ngcobo, a 19 year old woman, in the stomach with rubber bullet at a protest in Umlazi and yet the autopsy showed that she was shot in the chest with a shotgun.

We have exposed police lies in court on many occasions. We will expose today's lies in court too.

The police are not to be trusted. We urge all media to please make their own investigations and give everyone a chance to speak before reporting the lies of the police as if they are facts. Do not believe anything that they say unless they bring credible evidence to support what they are saying. Police spokespeople are paid liars. It is simple as that.

Lindiwe Mazibuko
Ndabo Mzimela
Mnikelo Ndabankulu

1 OCTOBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Bandile Mdlalose has been denied bail

We went to court today to bring Bandile home. We had to leave without her. She was denied bail.

Thembinkosi Qumbela is dead. Nkululeko Gwala is dead. Nqobile Nzuza is dead. Nkosinathi Mngomezulu is in hospital. Luleka Makhwenkwana is in hospital.

Our members have been beaten during evictions, during protests and in the police stations.

Our homes have been destroyed again and again even though this is against the law, the constitution and all the court orders that we won.

And yet they say that Bandile is suspected of ‘public violence’ and is too dangerous to society to be allowed out of jail.

Bandile has killed no-one. She has injured no-one. She has beaten no-one. She has destroyed no-one’s home. Bandile arrived in Cato Crest after the police had killed Nqobile Nzuza, with two shots in the back, and injured Luleka Makhwenkwana. She participated in peaceful march, in protest at the killings, on the police station.

Yet she must stay in jail while the killers, the shooters, the beaters and the demolishers walk free.

There is no justice for the poor. It is taken as criminal for us to ask that we be treated according to the law. It is taken for us as criminal for us to refuse to be intimidated. It is taken as criminal for us to oppose corruption. It is taken as criminal for us to live and to protest in the spaces reserved for the rich. It is taken as criminal for us to organise ourselves outside of the ruling party.

We note that much of the media continues to see people who are poor and black as a threat to society rather than as part of society. But we acknowledge those journalists that have not just repeated the lies of the police and have spoken to people who witnessed the murder of Nqobile Nzuza.

We acknowledge the solidarity of the church leaders that came to court today and then proceeded to visit the injured comrades in hospital.

We acknowledge the solidarity of comrades around South Africa and around the world that have sent us messages of support and indicated their willingness to take action against the repression we are facing

3 OCTOBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Marikana Continues: Statement on the murder of Nqobile Nzuza

Two young women were shot in the back in Cato Crest on Monday. They were both shot in the back while running away from the police. Nqobile Nzuza was shot in her back and in the back of her head and died on the scene. Luleka Makhwenkwana was shot in her arm, also from the back, and was taken to hospital but has now been discharged. Police spokespeople Jay Naicker and Solomon Makgale have been telling the media all kinds of lies about these shootings.

We wish to make it clear that the police are lying just as they lied after the massacre on the mountain in Marikana last year.

The police have said that the protest organised by the Cato Crest comrades was not a protest – that it was a criminal act. They have said that the protestors ambushed them, fired shots and tried to pull them out of their car. They have said that they were ‘terrified’ and had to fire shots to save their lives. According to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Mmamonye Ngobeni the police have “a constitutional mandate to maintain law and order”. He has also said that “The public is warned that we will use necessary force to execute this constitutional mandate.”

It is clear to use that our presence, as the autonomously organised poor, as the strong poor, on the streets of the rich is taken as automatically criminal by the police. It is also clear to us that many people in the media share this view. During the last two days our members have been described as a ‘violent mob’ and as ‘running amok’ in the media. We have been made to look like a dangerous threat to society when we have killed no-one, harmed no-one and destroyed no-one’s home. At the same time three activists from Cato Crest have been murdered since March and two others have been shot, and one remains are currently in hospital, yet the people responsible for this are allowed to show themselves as the custodians of ‘law and order’ and the Constitution.

It is clear to us that our rights under the Constitution do not count to the police. The police have a long history of trying to prevent us from marching, attacking our peaceful marches and refusing to intervene while we are under violent attack from the ANC or the Land Invasions Unit demolishing our homes in violation of the Constitution, the PIE Act and court orders. The police have a long history of lying about both their attacks on us and their refusal to protect us from the ANC. They don't even bother to say anything about their refusal to protect us from the illegal and unconstitutional attacks on our homes and communities by the Land Invasion Unit. They have been widely exposed as liars by church leaders, human rights organisations, journalists, academics and in court.

We have been operating in crisis mode since Monday morning. We have had to brief lawyers, go to court and visit the bereaved, the injured and the jailed. We have had to arrange solidarity actions, explain things to the media and meet with our members. But in the middle of all this we have taken time to meet with people who witnessed how Nqobile was shot in the back. Over three days we have listened very carefully to what they have said. We have drawn up this account of the events on the basis of what they have told us.

At around 11:00 p.m. on Sunday night people in Cato Crest started collecting material for the road blockade that they had planned for Monday morning. A black car drove past very slowly. It stopped, waited five minutes, left and then returned. A man got out. He asked the people if they knew him and said that he was Mzi Ngiba, the notorious gangster councillor in Cato Crest who has threatened a number of comrades with death and who usually moves around with his *izinkabi* (armed men, believed to be hit men). He warned them not to continue with their protest.

People began to gather at around 3:30 a.m. at Bellair Road, starting from where the former Jan Smuts Highway ends. They burnt some tyres. They then walked through Bellair Road towards the BP garage. Their intention at this stage was to go and collect other comrades from transit camps on the other side of the BP garage on Bellair Road. They were just walking down the road, singing. But they found that the police were waiting for them. The police had blocked Bellair Road next to the garage. The police also positioned themselves behind the protestors.

When comrades realised that the police were blocking their way they diverted their route to Harcombe Gardens. This road runs parallel to Bellair Road

cutting into the big middle class houses full of light, clean and clear. They continued down this road with the aim of meeting other comrades from the transit camps on the other side. The police left Bellair Road where they had been waiting for the protestors and had blocked the road and they drove straight to a group of about 400 comrades. There were two vehicles. We have the registration numbers. They stopped abruptly, got out the vehicles and immediately drew their guns out. This was in front of 23 Harcombe Gardens. It was around 4:20 a.m. The police were about five meters from the protestors. There was no provocation to the police. When the police drew their guns people turned to run. One police officer shot Ngobile as she was running away. That police officer was the Cato Manor Station commissioner. He is known in the community. He came without his police uniform and was seen drawing his gun and shooting at Ngobile. This was witnessed at close range and the witnesses have no doubt that this was the man who shot Ngobile. They also have no doubt that without any provocation the police just started shooting at comrades. Everyone turned and ran. No one tried to resist. No one was armed. This is when Ngobile and Luleka were shot, from behind, while running away from the police. Their wounds clearly show that they were shot from behind.

The police are telling the media that there was only one police vehicle, that it was ambushed by the protestors who tried to pull the officers through the windows while there was the sound of shots firing. This whole story is a lie. It is not an exaggeration or a misunderstanding. It is a lie. It is a lie that is being told to justify murder, cold blooded murder, political murder – the third political murder in Cato Crest this year.

Neither Ngobile nor Luleka or anyone else fired shots at the police. None of the protestors were armed. If they were the police would have arrested them or provided some evidence on this allegation. The protestors collected cartridges from the police guns as evidence. The police have no evidence at all to support their claim that they were shot at. It is a lie.

After the shooting the police vehicles moved to Wiggans Road, out of the view of the protestors.

Later on when the protestors started to regroup they were shocked to see that the windows of one of the police vehicles were now broken. They are sure that, after the shooting, the police broke the windows themselves while they were in Wiggans Road. There was no broken glass or stones on the Road at 23 Harcombe Gardens.

Around two hours after the shooting the Station Commissioner came back in a police uniform and escorted by police officers. He pretended to have just arrived on the scene and started asking people what had happened. Some of the women became very angry. They started pulling him and demanding that he stop lying. Some wanted to beat him. They were very angry. They had seen him shooting at their neighbours and their comrades. They had seen him murder Nqobile by shooting her in the back as she was running away. But he had a heavy escort of police officers and they rushed him into a police vehicle. He was not harmed.

Bandile Mdlalose arrived on the scene between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m. S'bu Zikode and other comrades from Abahlali baseMjondolo branches in other settlements arrived on the scene at around 8:00 a.m.

At around 9:00 a.m. Bandile participated in a march to KwaKito (the Cato Manor police station) to protest against the killing. At this time people also pulled branches and tyres into the road and set them alight. There was no violence from the protestors. The television footage shows Bandile pointing at the police and asking them why they had been shooting people. The police dispersed that march with water cannons and rubber bullets. People fled into the shacks with the police chasing them into the shacks and shooting them as they tried to hide. The television footage also shows the police violently breaking up this march. After they had broken up the march Bandile was arrested while standing on the pavement.

The story that the police have told about the murder of Nqobile is as much a lie as the story that they told after the Marikana Massacre. It is as much a lie as the story that they told after we were attacked by the ANC in Kennedy Road in 2009. It is much as lie as the lies that they told after our peaceful marches were attacked in 2005 and 2007.

One young woman is dead. Another has been shot and is injured and another is in jail, denied bail. The police say that they were 'terrified' – terrified of three young women none of whom was armed while the police had heavy weapons? The police say that they are upholding 'law and order' and the Constitution but no one is under arrest for the murder of three activists in Cato Crest since March, the injuring of two activists by shooting, the many death threats from the ANC and all the illegal evictions, which have often been accompanied by violence.

The police were waiting for our members on Monday morning. There had been big road blockades, with hundreds of people, around the city on Thursday and Friday last week. We had made it clear that our protest would continue because there had been no answer to the memoranda delivered on our march on the City Hall on 16 September, a march of thousands of comrades from around Durban and as far as Howick and Port Shepstone.

The police were waiting for us and they shot us without warning or provocation. They shot to kill. They shot to teach us a lesson. That lesson is that we must be good girls and boys, that we must know our place, that we must not question the ANC, that we must accept shack life, transit camps, evictions that leave us homeless and forced removal to the human dumping grounds. They shot us because we were gathering in the space of the middle classes, the space that used to be for the whites and is now for the rich. We are the ones that are supposed to 'go back to Lusikisiki', back to 'where you came from', the ones that are supposed to be moved to the human dumping grounds in the middle of nowhere. We are not supposed to be occupying land and protesting in the part of the city that was once reserved for the whites and is now reserved for the rich. We are not supposed to be able to go into the city centre in our thousands and to block roads around the city in our hundreds. We are not supposed to be able to think for ourselves, organise ourselves and speak for ourselves. We are supposed to remain under the NGOs and the ruling party.

Some of our members grew up with the story of the women's struggle in Cato Manor in 1959. We have members whose mothers were part of that struggle. Cato Crest is part of Cato Manor, of Umkhumbane. The ANC tells us that the women who lead the struggle in Cato Manor in 1959, Florence Mkhize and Dorothy Nyembe, are heroes. But when Abahlali women demand land and housing, safety and dignity then they are criminals. We are sure that the apartheid state called Florence Mkhize and Dorothy Nyembe criminals too. But they lived as heroes in the hearts of the people just as Nqobile, Luleka and Bandile live in our hearts as heroes. We see a clear connection between the heroes of 1959 and the heroes of today. We also see a clear connection between the white boers of 1959 and the black boers of 2013. The struggles continues. The struggle for Umkhumbane continues. The women's struggle in Umkhumbane continues. The struggle to make sure that land, cities, wealth and power are shared fairly continues.

4 OCTOBER 2013

Statement · Joint statement

Statement from this morning's road blockade in Siyanda

Yesterday there was a blockade in Clare Estate. This morning there are blockades in iSiyanda and uMlazi. Three comrades, including the chairperson are under arrest in uMlazi. She still has her phone with her and she is strong. A police car turned over in uMlazi. This was because the driver failed to control it. We did not attack it. However we were attacked with tear gas and rubber bullets – the same bullets that killed Andries Tatane – in both iSiyanda and uMlazi.

uTata Nelson Mandela said that if the ANC does to us what apartheid did to us then we must do to the ANC what we did to apartheid. We are living in apartheid under black management. Therefore we are back to the streets. In these actions we are honouring Madiba.

The demands that are being issued on these blockades are clear. The first one is the same demand as the one issued in Cato Crest on Monday, in Clare Estate yesterday and in Clare Estate, iSiphingo and Cato Crest last week. That demand is that we want a full and proper response to the memoranda that we handed over to the Municipality on our march on 16 September. We have a new demand too now: Free Bandile Mdlalose!

Statement from the Siyanda blockade

During the early hours of this morning, Abahlali baseMjondolo in Isiyanda, have taken their anger to the Dumisani Makhaye and Mandela road intersection and blockaded the two roads. This is as a result of a frustration when the majority of the poor people, the marginalised, the forgotten, only count when it comes to the voting time, and immediately thereafter nothing happens for them.

This comes after a series of telephone calls, e-mails, letter writing protest marches, promises to meet at meetings with eThekweni Municipality that have never sat to discuss the needs of the poor people and lies after lies by politicians and government officials. After all the peaceful attempts to meet the responsible officials, by the poor people, these are only met by the arrogance of government officials, police brutality, constant arrest of the protesters and even murdering the leadership of the movement of which these murders are not investigated although the culprits are known to the public and the police. This is only seen by us in the movement, as an attempt to silent and dampen the spirits of the South African "LAW ABIDING CITIZENS".

Isiyanda shack dwellers are also part of the victims, who are now in the streets at this very moment to show to the world their anger and frustration. The eThekweni Municipality, Provincial and National Governments are to blame for this, since their silence while the voters suffer, is actually now making too much of noise. The police have now tried to disperse the people using teargas and rubber bullets. We do not know as the time progresses whether or not they will opt to using live ammunition as if they are shooting at the game as usual. One becomes very sad if the Government officials and the Police are the first in a row to violate the Constitution, when they are supposed to be the custodians of the it (Constitution).

Our humanity does not count to them.

TJ Ngongoma
MaMkhize Nxumalo

7 OCTOBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Today Even More of us are S'bu Zikode

Our movement has faced serious repression since it was formed in 2005. Our protests have been banned, they have been attacked by the police, we have been arrested on trumped up charges, beaten in the police stations, driven from our homes, tortured and murdered.

We have always made it clear that we want to negotiate with the government, that we want to bring the people to the government and the government to the people. But it is clear that the politicians prefer a politics of violence to a politics of negotiation.

This year three people have been murdered in Cato Crest, two others have been shot, a number have been beaten by the police and others have been evicted over and over again. Politicians, from the local councillor to the chairperson of the party in eThekweni have made death threats. One of the people who has been threatened is Bandile Mdlalose. She has harmed no-one and has not destroyed anyone's home yet she is in Westville Prison denied bail. Another person who has been threatened is S'bu Zikode. Strange men are coming to his home at all hours looking for him. The same men are searching the taxi ranks for him. Journalists are phoning him to report that they have been told all kinds of lies about him by powerful people.

S'bu Zikode has been subject to serious repression before. He has been beaten by party thugs. He has been beaten by the police. He has had his home destroyed by party thugs. In 2009 he had to go underground for some months due to all the threats of assassination that were being made. The statements made by Willie Mchunu, MEC for Safety and Security in the province, and Nigel Gumede, head of housing in the eThekweni Municipality after the attack on our movement in Kennedy Road in 2009 made it clear that they supported the politics of violence. In 2011 Nigel Gumede publicly threatened S'bu Zikode.

S'bu Zikode is not making us to rebel. It is the condition of our lives that is making us rebel. It is evictions, transit camps, shack life with its rats, mud and fires, the brutality of the land invasions unit and the police, politicians that only talk to us before elections and then ignore us and the repression of our

movement that is making us rebel. It is our eviction from this democracy that is making us to rebel.

We also want to express our concern about the article on our movement published by the Sunday Tribune. In this article it is said that we are funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Broadway Cares Foundation, the Equity Fight Foundation, the Calamus Foundation, the Charles Stuart Mott Foundation, the Cobble Creek Foundation and the European Climate Foundation. We have never been funded by any of these organisations or even met with them. It may be that the newspaper is confusing us with Shack Dwellers' International – an international NGO that is also funded by the South African state and is an official partnership with the South African government. We expect the newspaper to acknowledge its error and to publish a retraction.

But we are deeply concerned by the fact that his newspaper has decided to publish a photograph of S'bu Zikode's home and thereby to make his address known. Everyone in Durban knows that S'bu Zikode's shack in Kennedy Road was destroyed by ANC supporters in 2009 and that he has been subject to public death threats on a number of occasions. Everyone in Durban knows that two housing activists have already been assassinated in Durban this year.

Any newspaper has a right to enquire into our funding and we will always be happy to answer such questions honestly. We have always been open about money and we will continue to be so. However when a newspaper decides to show the home of a person that has been threatened with murder, and who has already had their home destroyed and looted once, at a time when political assassinations are taking place this is a deeply irresponsible decision. S'bu Zikode and his family will now have to flee this home with immediate effect and the movement will, one again, have to find a safe place for him to stay.

It was the movement that took a decision that S'bu Zikode should move out of a shack because we needed him to be in a safer place. When his home was attacked in 2009 and he was threatened with death the police refused to intervene. The least that we could so was to make sure that he could be moved to a safer place. In this we were supported by human rights organisations and churches. It is no crime for a person to move from a shack and into rented accommodation in a place where they will be safer. In fact we always try and secure safe houses for any member that is under threat of assassination and we will continue to do so. It would be grossly irresponsible for any newspaper to publish the details of any safe house.

Despite the repression our movement is stronger than ever before. Thousands of us can march on the City Hall. We can organise road blockades 500 strong around the city. The police can beat us, shoot us, arrest us and we are back on the streets the next day. The Land Invasions Unit can demolish our homes and we rebuild them the next day. We have thousands of members and supporters. We have shown our determination. We have shown that we will not give into intimidation. This morning eight of branches organised road blockades around the city including Clare Estate, Isipingo, Mayville, Shallcross Siyanda and Umlazi. There were five arrests. Our protests will continue until our comrades are released and the City responds to the memoranda that we delivered to them on our march of thousands on 16 September.

We call on all our comrades around South Africa and around the world to take urgent action in solidarity with us and against the repression we are facing. We call on all comrades to support our call for the authorities in Durban to cease their violent repression of our movement; to clearly condemn the violence of the police, the Land Invasions Unit, the party thugs and the assassins and negotiate rather than repressed the organised poor; to act against those that have perpetrated this violence and embrace a democratic politic, a politic of negotiation.

This morning we will be going to the Durban Magistrate's court to support Bandile Mdlalose and we will be going to the court in Umlazi to support Themba Msomi, Thembeke Sondaba & Fikiswa Mgoduka.

We wish to make it clear to the ANC, to the country and to the world that we all stand with S'bu Zikode. We are all S'bu Zikode.

Our struggle is just and it will continue.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Bheki Simelane

Note: This statement was slightly edited after it was issued to make it clear that the Sunday Tribune published a picture of the house where S'bu Zikode is renting accommodation. Those who know the area will easily be able to recognise the house, and therefore to know the address, from the picture. The paper did not publish the actual address of the house. Arrangements have had to be made for the Zikodes to move to a new safe house. Our concern at the decision to publish a picture of the Zikodes' home at a time when activists are being assassinated and so many threats have been made to Zikode is unchanged.

11 OCTOBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

uMlazi Update

Our movement is growing in uMlazi. We are very strong in the eMhlabeni land occupation and the Silva City transit camp. On Friday last week three comrades were arrested on an uMlazi road blockade organised to demand (1) the release of Bandile Mdlalose and (2) that the City stops its repression and start negotiations with us on our demands given to them at the march on 16 September 2013. We are demanding democracy, not just voting but real democracy, everyday democracy, and an end to repression.

These three comrades were kept in the holding cells till Monday. On Monday morning some comrades went to the Durban Magistrates' Court and others went to the court in uMlazi to support comrades in detention. Before the court was in session our members were singing outside as is their right. The police came, threatened them, and said that if they were not be quiet they would know who to start with when the shooting started. They said that they would shoot two people. After this the people stopped singing. We have signed statements on the threat from the police to shoot two people.

When the case was called people began to enter the court building. They had to go through security which means that it is certain that no-one was armed. At the door of the court two security guards (Fidelity) started pushing people out and refusing to let them in. They were then attacked from behind by a group of police officers (between 7 and 10) who peppered sprayed them and shocked them. Amanda Nokobeni and Nyati Gcinithemba were pushed into a room. Amanda has made a signed statement to the police about what she saw. A security guard took out a small black gun. He fired two shots. The first shot hit his own hand. The second shot hit Nyathi in the chest, on the left side near his heart. The police officers then pushed him to the floor, beat him, tied his hands and continued to beat him. This was also witnessed by one of our members, Emmanuel Mangcoba. He has made a signed statement to the police that he looked through a window and saw Nyathi being beaten while his hands were

tied. We also have a short video and some photographs that show some of what happened.

Nyathi said he needed to go to hospital. This was refused. An off-duty paramedic wanted to help but was not allowed too. At first Nyathi was trying to sing while the beating continued. But he lost a lot of blood and stopped talking and his eyes closed. We then rushed to report this attempted murder to our lawyer, Shabnam Palesa Mohamed and to Pastor Ngubane. The police forced everyone to leave the court and wouldn't allow anyone to see Nyathi. More police came with helmets, tear gas, rubber bullets etc and forced the comrades to leave the area outside of the court.

Nyathi was taken to hospital where he was kept under police guards as if was a dangerous criminal. He was charged with assault. As far as we know none of the police officers who assaulted Nyathi have been arrested and the security guard who shot him has not been arrested either.

As usual the media reported the very violent and near fatal police attack on us as 'a violent protest'. It is becoming clear that some of the media will always consider any protest during which poor people are violently attacked by the police (or the Land Invasions Unit or private security guards) to be 'a violent protest' even when the only violence comes from the police. They take our suffering as normal and they take state violence as normal. At the same time they take our demand that our dignity must be recognised as violent and criminal. We are supposed to remain in silence in our dark corners. It is unacceptable that peaceful protests in which no person is harmed are continually described as 'violent' protests in the media when they include road blockades or when they are attacked by the police. It is unacceptable that violence by the police, private security and the Land Invasions Unit is often not described as violent but presented as normal and necessary.

The prosecution failed to bring a docket to the court for the case against Themba Msomi, Thembeke Sondaba & Fikiswa Mgoduka and so they were sent back to the holding cells without the bail application being heard.

Nyathi was released on Tuesday. He still has the bullet in his chest.

Themba, Thembeke and Fikiswa were only released on Wednesday. They were released on free bail. They have sign in to the police station each week.

As repression gets worse and we are treated like animals in a slaughter house more and more people who are supposed to be part of the system of repression

are breaking ranks. Some ANC members are supporting our protests. Anyone with eyes to see can see that the politicians have lied to the people and will continue to lie to the people and that our cause is just.

We note that some middle class resident's associations are calling for the Tactical Response Team of the SAPS and the army to replace the Public Order Policing Unit. Their local newspapers are saying that 'the city is under siege'. We are asking the middle classes to please note that three housing activists have been killed this year and that three others have been shot. We are asking the middle classes to note that no one has been arrested for these murders and shootings even when witnesses have publicly stated the names of the murders and shooters. We have killed no-one and we have shot no-one. We are asking the middle classes to please note that large numbers of people have been illegally evicted from their homes and arrested on trumped up charges. Many of those who have been arrested have been assaulted in custody. We have driven no-one from their home and we have detained no-one against their will. We are not the threat to this society. The threat is coming from a corrupt and violent political class that is using public housing for its own enrichment rather than for the public good.

Everyone knows how corrupt the City is. This affects the middle classes too. The time to stop corruption is now. The time is coming when the violence against the poor will start to affect the middle classes too. On Wednesday a middle class man was shot at while driving by a blue light cavalcade. The politicians are becoming a threat to everyone. The time to stop state violence is now.

Poor people across this city have given notice that we will no longer accept to live in shacks with no refuse removal, no toilets, no paths, no drains and regular fires. We have given notice that we will not accept transit camps. We have given notice that we will not accept reruralisation via forced removals to human dumping grounds. We have given notice that we will no longer accept corruption, lies and repression.

We stand for an inclusive city, a democratic city, a city for all. The Municipality stands for corruption and violence. They want to intimidate us into accepting oppression instead of negotiating a better way forward. If the middle classes join the Municipality in supporting the campaign of violent intimidation, and even murder, against us the democracy that is left will be destroyed for everyone. If they join with us and stand for an end to corruption, for an end to lies and for a city that respects the dignity of all who live in it, a shared city,

a just city, then democracy can be deepened. That is the choice that the middle classes must make.

We have made our choice. Across the city the message from our branches is the same. There is no turning back.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (Abahlali baseMjondolo Spokesperson)

Khayelihle Magcaba (Abahlali baseMjondolo uMlazi)

29 OCTOBER 2013

Statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Today We Return to Court in Solidarity with Four of Our Comrades Arrested in Cato Crest

Today we return to the Durban Magistrate's Court in solidarity with four of our comrades arrested in Cato Crest during the current wave of repression. The four comrades appearing in court today are Bandile Mdlalose and, in a separate case, Nokulunga Magobongo, Sibongile and Mr. Mzihle.

Bandile Mdlalose was arrested on the 30th of September 2013 during a spontaneous demonstration against the murder of Nqobile Nzuza, 17, who was shot in the back of the head by the police. Bandile's only real 'crime' was to refuse to be intimidated and to be in silence in the face of police murder and intimidation. She was detained in Westville Prison for a week and then released on a very high bail (R 5000) and with onerous conditions including a ban on her entering Cato Crest. This is an outrageous violation of her basic political rights.

We note that although there are witnesses to the murder of Nzuza the police officer who committed the murder continues to operate freely in Cato Crest. We also note that although there are witnesses to the shooting of Nkosinathi Mngomezulu in the stomach (with four shots) by the Land Invasions Unit in Cato Crest on 21 September there has also been no arrest in that case and the official who shot Mngomezulu also continues to operate freely. There have also been no arrests of the ANC leaders that have made open death threats against our members in the area or of the Land Invasions Unit who have repeatedly demolished homes in Cato Crest in violation of the Constitution, the law and a number of court orders. It is clear that the criminal justice system, like the Land Invasions Unit, and like the Housing Department, is being openly misused for party political purposes and to repress our movement.

Nokulunga Magobongo, Sibongile and Mr. Mzihle were arrested in Cato Crest on the 5th of September after Bellair Road was blockaded in protest at the ongoing illegal and violent evictions in the area as well as the violent repression, including two assassinations, of the struggle against these evictions.

Nokulunga and Sibongile were brutally beaten in the holding cells of the Cato Manor police station and were denied medical attention while in custody.

Of course no police officer has been arrested for the beating that they suffered in the police station. As we noted in our statement after they received bail:

“As they were being beaten they were asked who is behind their political act. This is incredible. The Municipality is destroying people’s homes, stealing their property and beating them. Their leaders are being assassinated. At the same time it is said that the reason for the housing crisis in Durban is the presence of people from the Eastern Cape. Yet when people decided to protest it is thought that someone else must be thinking for them, telling them what to do.”

The politicians, and others, continue to believe that we cannot think for ourselves. They also continue to think that if they intimidate us enough, and bribe us enough, we will accept our oppression. When we started our struggle in 2005 we made it clear that we would not accept ‘breyani politics’ – the politics where politicians bring people breyani instead of engaging us with respect and discussing our real problems with seriousness. On Saturday James Nxumalo, the Mayor, came to the Kennedy Road settlement with a four ton truck full of meat. It seems that they thought that if they changed ‘breyani politics’ to ‘inyama politics’ they would be able to persuade us to accept our oppression. They were wrong. We like breyani and we like meat but we reject ‘inyama politics’ as much as we reject ‘breyani politics’.

When Nxumalo arrived with his truck full of meat residents blockaded the road and burnt the rubbish that has not been collected in the settlement. Nxumalo had to leave the area in humiliation.

Nxumalo must have been hoping to be on the front page of the Sunday newspapers handing out meat to grateful shack dwellers. Instead there was an article on the front page of the Sunday Tribune quoting Thulisile Mpanza saying that “I think the mayor is trying to get our vote with meat. The ANC must not disrespect people who are living in shacks.”

Our struggle will continue until the ANC, the DA, the NGOs, the media and all other elites learn to respect people who are living in shacks and we can begin to move towards democratic cities where land, wealth and power are shared fairly and there is decent housing for all.

Tomorrow we go the uMlazi court to support our three comrades who are appearing there.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
S’bu Zikode

30 OCTOBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Road Blockade in Isipingo Yesterday

The Isipingo transit camp was badly flooded during the recent rains. It is built in a dangerous area and there is no drainage. It is not fit for human habitation.

Yesterday a road blockade was organised in protest at:

- The flood and the inhuman conditions in the transit camp
- The failure to honour to the promise, made more than a week ago, to start moving people out of the transit camp within a week
- The attempt to silence us with lies on one hand and repression on the other hand

One person was arrested on the blockade but she was later released without being charged.

MaNtombela
Thina Khanyile

3 NOVEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Kennedy Road Burns Once Again

On Tuesday the Isipingo Transit Camp was flooded once again. It is built on a flood plain and there is no drainage and so there are regular floods. The residents took to the streets and organised a road blockade in protest at the living conditions that have been forced on them against their will.

Our movement has rejected transit camps from the first moment that they appeared and we have constantly called for them to be abolished and for all people that have been forced into these inhuman places to be provided with decent housing as a matter of urgency. The municipality has now announced that they will not build any more transit camps and they have promised to house people in transit camps. Their decision to stop building transit camps is a victory that comes directly from our struggle. We welcome this victory but we do not see clear plans to provide decent housing to the 10 000 people who have been sentenced to the transit camps. Therefore our struggle against the transit camps continues and it will continue until every person forced into a transit camp has access to decent housing.

Today the Kennedy Road settlement burnt again. More than 90 shacks were destroyed. Our movement has been campaigning against the conditions that lead to relentless shack fires since 2005. We have recently won an important victory. The Municipality's 2001 decision to stop providing electricity to shack settlements has been overturned. Again this victory comes directly from our struggle. However electricity needs to be provided at a much quicker rate, and there are many other things to be done, before the plague of fires becomes a thing of the past. Therefore our struggle against the conditions that lead to shack fires continues.

Last weekend the Mayor, James Nxumalo, left Kennedy Road in humiliation as people rejected his attempts to try and keep us quiet by throwing us meat as if we are dogs. He said that he would return to the settlement today. He did not come. Maybe he realised that you can't ask people to vote for you while their homes are burning as a direct result of years and years of government contempt.

In today's Sunday Tribune Nxumalo is saying that his outreach programme is mobilising civil society and charitable organisations to donate to underprivileged communities. He says nothing about how the politicians only come with breyani or inyama at election time. We are not underprivileged. We are oppressed. We want justice and not charity. Nxumalo says that by politicising his outreach programme we are stooping to the lowest. We say that by not politicising poverty Nxumalo is trying to make our poverty look normal. We say that by not saying anything about how the Municipality and the ruling party use violence, including murder, to keep us poor by excluding us from the city, excluding us from decision making about our own future and the future of the city and preventing us from making our own arrangements to get land, housing and services when the government fails us Nxumalo is trying to make oppression look normal. He says nothing about the recent murders in Cato Crest and in the New Germany settlement in Reservoir Hills. It seems that for him murder is fine but refusing to be treated like a dog is a big problem.

Nxumalo also proudly says that the Municipality is planning to build 750 houses in Kennedy Road as part of an in situ upgrade. He says nothing about the fact that when we started our movement in 2005 the ANC's plan for Kennedy Road was to destroy the settlement and force some of the residents into the human dumping grounds outside of the city while leaving others homeless. He says nothing about the fact that the plan to destroy this settlement, and others in Clare Estate and Reservoir Hills, was stopped by the struggle of our movement. He says nothing about the fact that the new plan to upgrade the settlement is a demand that was won by our movement. We won this concession in the negotiations that began in 2007 and were concluded in 2009. This is all recorded in writing in the Memorandum of Understanding that we signed with the Municipality in 2009. Nxumalo says nothing about the fact that after the City announced the Kennedy Road upgrade our movement was attacked in the Kennedy Road settlement by the ANC with the open support of senior politicians to make sure that only ANC members would enjoy the fruits of our struggle. He is trying to make our victory look like an idea that came from the ANC.

Leaving people to live in floods and fire year after year is stooping low. Murdering people that stand up for justice is stooping very low. Politicising poverty and the politics that keeps poor people poor is standing up for justice. If the

Mayor thinks that standing up for justice is stooping low then it is clear to us that he likes injustice and wants it to continue.

We will not stop politicising poverty or the oppression that we are experiencing at the hands of Nxumalo and the eThekweni Municipality.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu (AbM Spokesperson)

Nu (Kennedy Road)

Philani (Kennedy Road)

Mbusiswa (Kennedy Road)

17 NOVEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

March in Clare Estate

Abahlali baseMjondolo to March in Clare Estate on Monday 18 November 2013

We will be marching on Councillor Bhekisani Ngcobo on Monday 18 November 2013. The march will leave the Foreman Road shack settlement at 9:00 a.m. and will finish at Ngcobo's office in Asherville at 13:00.

The message of the day is that: FOREMAN RD DEMANDS LAND, HOUSING & DIGNITY IN OUR LIFE TIME.

This is the first time that the ratepayers' associations are supporting an Abahlali baseMjondolo march. We have had a number of meetings with the Clare Estate Ratepayer's Association. The politicians are always using the ratepayers as an excuse to force the poor out of the city. They blame their programme of reruralisation on the ratepayers. However we and the ratepayers have agreed on a common programme. We have agreed that we want to build a Clare Estate for all, a Clare Estate where everyone has a decent house, decent services, good schools, where development is democratically decided and everyone feels at home and can enjoy living in the area in safety. The march is organised by Abahlali baseMjondolo and supported by ratepayers and civic organisations of ward 25; viz. Clare Estate; Asherville; Springtown & Puntans Hill. It is also supported by the local taxi association and other local businesses.

The demands for this march are as follows:

- The municipality must build a community hall in the Foreman Road settlement.
- The city must buy all the vacant land in Clare Estate and Reservoir Hills and set it aside for housing development.
- There must be an immediate end to job reservation for ANC volunteers. All jobs must be open to everyone without regard to political affiliation.
- There must be an immediate end to giving priority to ANC volunteers for houses and services. The government must be for everyone that lives in South Africa.

- All shack settlements must be fully electrified and, until this is done, the armed disconnections by the municipality must stop.

- We need demarcated taxi ranks in the Foreman Road, Kennedy Road and Palmiet settlements.

- We need more toilets in the new sections that have been opened up (from below) in the Foreman Road settlement (i.e. Zone 14, Marikana and eZinkawini).

- We need a proper access road to the Foreman Road settlement. It is ok if it is gravel but it must be usable on rainy days.

- The Development Committee in Foreman Road must be abolished. It is unelected and is only ANC. The Municipality must only work with freely elected structures open to all and not unelected ANC committees. All organisations in our settlement with elected leaders and proven support must be allowed to participate in decision making.

- We need concrete pathways and steps, as well as drainage, in the Foreman Road settlement.

- DSW jobs must be freely available to all residents and not just ANC volunteers

- Government policies must be there to serve all our people and not just those in the ruling party.

- More than a hundred million rand is generated in tax in Clare Estate each year and yet people are living like pigs while the politicians and their families and friends get fatter and fatter. We want our area to be turned into a home for all, a home that we can all be proud of. There is enough land and money to achieve this. The ratepayers are clear that this money should be used to integrate all shack dwellers into the area with decent housing.

- We need Section 21 Schools in Sydenham & Reservoir Hills. The government thinks that we are all rich here because we are living in the suburb but in fact many of us are poor. We Therefore we need these schools here.

- The bus shelters in Clare Estate, Sydenham and Reservoir Hills must be repaired.

- We need traffic lights at Foreman Road and Clare Road intersection.

- The vacant land next to the Loon Road cemetery must be set aside for housing for Foreman Road residents.

– We demand to know how many houses have been reserved for Foreman Road in the Cornubia Development.

– There is massive corruption in Durban. The Manase Report is out but no one is arrested. For the last two years the Municipality have rolled over the housing budget to treasury due to corruption and incompetency. Therefore Nigel Gumede must go.

– The illegal evictions and repression by the state and the ruling party at the Marikana Land Occupation in Cato Crest must be brought to an immediate end. There must be a full and public inquiry into the corruption, illegal evictions and state and ruling party violence in the area. And due to the serious repression of anyone who stands up against corruption in this city Nigel Gumede must go.

We stand for a Clare Estate for all. We stand for land, housing and dignity for all.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu, Abahlali baseMjondolo
Bandile Mdlalose, Abahlali baseMjondolo Secretary General
S'bu Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo Chairperson
Dennis Pillay, Clare Estate Ratepayers
Rajen Rajpal, Clare Estate Local Businessperson

9 DECEMBER 2013

Press statement · Abahlali baseMjondolo

Today We Protest in Cato Crest in Honour of Nelson Mandela

Protest Today in Cato Crest in Honour of the Father of the Nation uTata uNelson Mandela

“If the ANC does to you what the Apartheid government did to you, then you must do to the ANC what you did to the Apartheid government.”

– Nelson Mandela, Cosatu Conference, 1993

Today Abahlali will hold a protest in Cato Crest in honour of the late Tata Nelson Mandela.

On Saturday Abahlali baseMjondolo had a meeting to discuss the meaning of Nelson Mandela for our country and our struggle and to discuss how we can honour him.

In Johannesburg Nelson Mandela gave legal support to the Sofasonke movement, a shack dwellers’ movement. He supported them to defend their land occupations. In Durban the movement that he helped to radicalise supported the struggle against evictions in Umkhumbane, which is also known as Cato Manor. Cato Crest is part of Cato Manor. Today we are evicted in Cato Crest. Today we are beaten, arrested, shot and murdered in Cato Crest. Today we do not count to the law in Cato Crest.

It is not just our movement that is placed beneath the law today. The violation of the Constitutional Court in the case of the street traders in Johannesburg, and the arrest of the Socio-Economic Rights Institute lawyer Nomzamo Zondo, shows how everywhere the poor, and those that stand with us, are coming under attack.

Mandela stood for one nation. Today the political leaders in Durban say that the reason why they can’t house the people is because people from the Eastern Cape are coming to Durban. They say that some of our neighbours and comrades must ‘got back to Lusikisiki’.

Mandela announced that there would be homes for all. Today there is only housing for ANC members.

The struggle we are facing today we were facing it even when Mandela was still alive. The evictions, beatings, arrests, torture, assassinations, corruption and violation of our rights were taking place when Mandela was still alive even though in the absence of his Presidency.

Nelson Mandela fought for justice, democracy and freedom for all. He did not say that the poor were excluded. He did not say that people from some provinces were excluded. We remain committed to the vision of justice, democracy and freedom for all. We will continue to take Mandela's struggle forward. Mandela went to jail saying that he stood for a "revolutionary democracy in which poverty, want and insecurity shall be no more". The struggle for a revolutionary democracy, a democracy in which every person counts, continues.

Today we are experiencing different leaders. Today we are experiencing leaders who are black boers. They are leaders that evict us, beat us, torture us, arrest us and kill us. The ruling party is fighting for membership and the sustainability of the party rather than addressing the peoples' concerns and challenges. Today people do not volunteer for the party because they want to join the struggle for justice, equality and democracy. Today people join the party to invest in the party so that tomorrow it will be their turn to eat our future.

We recognise the party of Mandela as the Khongolose. Many of our members remain loyal to the Khongolose. But today we are led by the ANC and not by the Khongolose.

Today as Mandela has passed on the ANC is an organisation that has harmed us and that will continue to harm us. But Mandela lived for us and not for the ANC. He clearly said that if the ANC does to us what the apartheid government did to us then we must not fear to do the ANC what we did to the apartheid government. Nobody can deny that in Cato Crest the ANC is doing to us what the apartheid government did to us.

Madiba always made it clear that there is still a long walk to freedom. He said this again and again including on the day that he stepped down as the president. It is true there is still a long journey ahead of us to freedom. It is the responsibility of our generation to continue this journey.

We will not waste our time with unprogressive round table discussions that are only designed to take out us out of communities and off the streets. We will

not waste our time with national speeches which only offer us words. Hope comes through action. When there is no progressive action from the government we will take our own action. Mandela said “our march to freedom is irreversible”. We shall march until we reach our freedom.

Mandela sacrificed his children, his life and his family for the struggle and for us to be free. We shall continue with his sacrifice for justice.

We will honour Mandela and have our own memorial service in honouring Mandela. Today we honour Nelson Mandela by marching on the ANC because the ANC of 2013 is not Khongolose. It is very different from Mandela’s ANC. In fact the ANC of 2013 are our oppressors.

Today we protest to demand land and housing and an end to corruption and repression, including assassination. This is how we will show our respect for Mandela’s struggle. We are continuing where Mandela left off. This new phase of the struggle is just beginning.

Today’s protest will begin at 09:00am at the Cato Crest sport ground and will proceed to the Cato Manor Police Station where our memorandum will be handed over to MEC Ravi Pillay, MEC Nomusa Dube and Minister Nathi Mthethwa.

Bandile Mdlalose will not be at today’s protest as her bail conditions have banned her from Cato Crest while those that have evicted us, beaten us, shot us and murdered Nqobile Nzuza are free to continue their oppression in Cato Crest.

Mnikelo Ndabankulu
Ndabo Mzimela
S’bu Zikode