



# Solidarity with Abahlali baseMjondolo

## Who is Abahlali baseMjondolo?

Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) is the movement of the *people living in shacks*<sup>1</sup>, that's the German translation. Abahlali was founded in 2005 in Durban, South Africa as an answer to the housing crisis. AbM is the self-organisation of the people living in *informal settlements* (slums). The movement is fighting forced evictions, evictions and police brutality and establishes infrastructure in the settlements wherever possible: meeting halls, crèches, support for persons infected with HIV ... up to the *University of Abahlali*. Today Abahlali has about 12.000 members in dozens of settlements around South Africa.

The movement is committed to base democracy, every decision is taken by the assembly of the people living in the community. For instance the assembly decides who should be sent abroad for representation at meetings and the delegates are obliged to report to the assembly after returning home. Leaders of AbM pledge to not take any advantage of their position – on the contrary they are targeted by the state.

In 2009 AbM succeeded in overthrowing the *Slums Act* of KwaZulu-Natal. Since then evictions are only allowed on the basis of court orders. But that's theory.

## The war against the poor

Since months the movement is being attacked in the settlement Cato Crest, Durban. The local ANC fearing to lose influence amongst the poor sends police and *Red Ants* (eviction teams of the municipality). They systematically are destroying the shacks of known members of AbM. And they use openly xenophobic propaganda: "The Xhosa shall go back to Eastern Cape where they came from, they don't have nothing to do in Durban."

Until now three persons have been brutally murdered by unknown or the police. Hundreds more have been injured, arrested, evicted. Repeatedly there have been threats with death against the leaders of AbM that have to be taken seriously. Some of them had to hide therefor. Five times the movement has obtained court orders that order to stop the evictions. But the municipality has ignored all of them.

Since weeks thousands of members and sympathizers of AbM have blocked crossroads in Durban to point at the situation in Cato Crest. Like AbM has already stated last summer after the massacre of 34 striking miners in Marikana the state is waging a war against the poor.

The alliance of ANC/COSATU/SACP which has been ruling the country since 1994 has left the principles of the *Freedom Charter* of the ANC long ago. Today they don't even care about the constitution they themselves enacted after the end of the *Apartheid*.

The ANC has turned from a liberation movement to an instrument of repression in the interest of the ongoing ruling capitalists. Parts of the elite of the ANC have become capitalists on a grand scale themselves. The new social movements in South Africa are fighting exactly this regime.

These movements are standing out for their own initiative, creativity, militancy, self-organisation and base democracy. They increasingly experience oppression and need international solidarity.

## Solidarity

Stop the attacks on AbM, the beatings, the rubber bullets, the live ammunition!

Stop the torture at the police stations!

Stop the destroying of shacks and the forced evictions!

Stop murdering activists!

*"We are stating here that we hold all political parties in the South African government accountable for these abominable actions. To those in government, and most importantly to those who fought against apartheid, we ask that you act today to put an immediate end to these abuses. And we demand that the rightful aspirations of the ABAHLALI movement and all South Africans to a home, a life with dignity, and an end to the*

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<sup>1</sup> *Menschen, die in Baracken leben*

*concentrated land ownership of the pre-apartheid era be fulfilled."* (From a statement of solidarity of some well-known academics of different countries)

## **Protest**

**Friday 18th october 2013, starting at 12 o'clock**

**In front of the**

**Embassy of the Republic of South Africa, Vienna 1190 Wien, Sandgasse 33**

**(Take bus no. 38 A, leave at station Bretschneidergasse)**

Further information about Abahlali baseMjondolo:

[abahlali.org](http://abahlali.org) (site of Abahlali baseMjondolo)

[akkrise.wordpress.com](http://akkrise.wordpress.com) (german translations)