Press release from the Marikana Support Campaign

For immediate Release August 11 2014

Deputy President, Cyril Ramaphosa who appears before the commission today is responsible for the Massacre at Marikana

On the 16th August 2012, 34 mineworkers were massacred by the police at Lonmin mine in Marikana. To date, the state refuses to accept responsibility of these deaths, instead charged 270 mine workers, lucky to have survived the massacre, for the deaths of their own comrades.

The Marikana Support Campaign firmly places the responsibility of these murders on political interference and collusion between the state and Lonmin. The most central figure in this collusion is none other than the Deputy President of our country, and Lonmin shareholder and previous non-Executive board member, Cyril Ramaphosa. Today he takes the witness stand at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry.

Through the corruption of BEE which ensured that it benefitted only a few well connected individuals, Ramaphosa became an overnight millionaire owning shares in various sectors including mining, energy, property, banking, insurance and telecoms. He represents the most classic corruption of political figures in post-apartheid South Africa.

At Marikana, Ramaphosa was faced with a choice. An experienced trade unionist, with a leadership position at Lonmin, he could have chosen to understand workers struggle for a living wage – a struggle he once led! – and he could have negotiated, or called for negotiations with workers. Instead he chose to protect his business interests and the interests of white monopoly capital in the most vile and aggressive manner. He wrote in a string of emails:

“The terrible events that have unfolded cannot be described as a labour dispute. They are plainly dastardly criminal and must be characterized as such. In line with this characterization there needs to be concomitant action to address the situation”

His actions are more chilling. Political influence and power t is utilised to pressurise the ministers of Safety and Security Nathi Mthethwa and government to manage the situation as though they are dealing with a “criminal act”. Ramaphosa reprimanded the Minister of Mineral and Resources Susan Shabangu saying her characterisation of the strike as labour unrest is “bad for her and government”. Contact with Gwede Mantashe is made to ensure ANC’s intervention, he was also in contact with the NUM’s Senzeni Zokwana who had already issued a call for the police to send in the Special Task Force at Marikana, and finally, he was in discussion with the Chamber of Mines.

There was no attempt to negotiate with workers. There was no attempt to provide leadership that we expect from a man with his power and with his experience. Instead his blatant political collusion and interference on the part of the Deputy President leads us to the following demands:
1. We demand the immediate resignation of the Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.
2. We demand the truth about his involvement in Marikana, and communication with the President, the then Ministers of Police and Minerals and Resources.
3. We demand that Ramaphosa shows leadership, and accept responsibility.
4. We demand a full apology by the Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

We call on the public to support this call. We call on the Judge Farlam to not be intimidated by the power of Ramaphosa, but to seek the truth, and to ensure that there is justice for those slain in Marikana.

For Further comment

Rehad Desai  083 977 9204, Trevor Ngwane  079 030 7657