



## MEDIA RELEASE

# AMCU TO CONVENE EIGHTH COMMEMORATION OF MARIKANA MASSACRE

13 August 2020

***The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) will be hosting a memorial lecture and commemorative event this week to pay homage to the 44 workers who perished during the Lonmin platinum strike of August 2012. However, the Union questions the motives behind parallel events organised by Sibanye-Stillwater, and slams the former Public Protector for participating in the parallel events.***

Every year since the Marikana Massacre, AMCU has commemorated, together with various dignitaries, guests, leaders, and members of the communities, the lives lost by the comrades who were massacred by the State. This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, AMCU will host the two main events during this week of commemoration with small physical gatherings coupled with remote participation via online methods.

The first event will be the customary Memorial Lecture which will take place on Friday, 14 August 2020, and the main event will be the commemoration on 16 August 2020. In line with the Disaster Management Act (DMA) regulations, both these events will consist of small physical gatherings of no more than fifty (50) persons lasting for not more than two (2) hours, with all the necessary precautions of hygiene, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and social distancing being observed.

While this is the eighth time that AMCU commemorates the Massacre, it has come to light that the current owner of the former Lonmin Marikana platinum mine in North-West, Sibanye-Stillwater, is organising parallel events to that of AMCU.

“As AMCU we are very disappointed in this move by Sibanye”, said AMCU President Joseph Mathunjwa. “One wonders how they can undermine the struggle of workers, in particular black mineworkers, in this fashion”, he said. “How can the capitalists hijack the pain and suffering of workers for their personal gain as a PR exercise”, Mathunjwa asked. “We view this as a total onslaught on AMCU and the spirits of those workers who were killed by the very same capitalists using their influence over the government”, he added.

In 2018, Sibanye-Stillwater announced that it would merge with Lonmin, but it soon became apparent that the so-called merger was in actual fact a take-over. AMCU spent millions to oppose the merger and eventually took the matter all the way to the Competitions Appeal Court. However, ultimately Sibanye was successful in swallowing Lonmin, of which the Marikana operations form part.

“We have said it before, and we will say it again. This takeover of Lonmin was no mere business decision. It was carefully planned that Sibanye will be handed Lonmin as a trophy, in recognition of its consistent undermining of AMCU and workers’ rights in general”, said Mathunjwa.

AMCU is not supportive of the parallel events run by Sibanye, putting forward that it is a well-orchestrated plan to cleanse the legacy of big business and the unholy alliance which sought to protect the structural economic inequality, whose collusion led to the death of 44 workers.

“It is clear what they are doing”, said Mathunjwa. “They want to create a platform for them to erase history and twist it to suit their agenda. We will not allow it. We will not allow this to be swept under the carpet. AMCU will continue to remind the world of what happened during August 2012, and specifically on 16 August 2012. Until such time as the State owns up to what they did and bring restitution to the communities and families affected by the Massacre, there will be no healing and no closure”, he said. “Their blood still cries from the ground”, Mathunjwa added.

AMCU has received news that the parallel memorial lecture organised by Sibanye will have the former Public Protector, Advocate Thuli Madonsela as keynote speaker.

“We are very disappointed in the former Public Protector for participating in this event. She is a respected leader and an influential person in South Africa, and one would expect her to be more sensitive to the issues at hand”, said Mathunjwa. “She [Madonsela] never even set a foot on the mountain [kopje]. It is an insult to the economic revolutionary martyrs who died there”, Mathunjwa concluded.

**\*ENDS\***

**For interviews: President Joseph Mathunjwa**