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JOINT STATEMENT: We strongly condemn attacks on civil society organisations and activists!

Posted in: [Amadiba](#), [Campaign Updates](#), [Eastern Cape](#), [KZN](#), [Local Struggles](#), [Whistleblowers](#) | [July 19, 2018](#)

The undersigned organisations condemn the recent vicious attacks on environmental justice activists in South Africa.

In one case, we are outraged at the reported murder on 11 July 2018 of Mr D Mpanza, an activist who had opposed a relocation of the community in KwaDube in KwaZulu Natal. KZN violence monitor Mary de Haas has reported that people living on this land have been informed by various authorities that they must be relocated to accommodate onshore mining operations between Mthunzini and Richards Bay. According to De Haas, Mr Mpanza was shot dead, execution-style, on 11 July when travelling home from Esikhawini. Of the companions he was travelling with he alone was targeted.

In another case, we note an escalating campaign of social media attacks by those associated with a Mpumalanga mining project, on a number of South African environmental rights organisations. The campaign is led by the senior vice president of Indian-owned mining company Atha-Africa Ventures Pty Ltd, which is facing multiple legal challenges from these organisations to its applications to mine coal in a strategic water source area and protected environment in [Mpumalanga](#).

This campaign is made up of various accusations and threats on social media which are designed to intimidate, silence and discourage activists who are lawfully opposing a coal mine in a strategic water source area and protected environment. He has publicly accused these organisations of "treason" and an "anti-national agenda". These unfounded attacks are intolerable in our Constitutional democracy.

The South African Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, freedom of the press, the right to access to justice, and the right to just administrative action. South Africa also has a long tradition of activism and civil society mobilisation to uphold our Constitution and defend Constitutional values.

More than two years have passed since cde Bazooka Rhadebe, an anti-mining activist in Xolobeni, was assassinated on the Wild Coast in 2016. To date nobody has been brought to book for his murder. Across the world, corporations have employed intimidation and violence when their commercial interests are challenged by activists, especially activists defending natural resources and environmental rights. The murder and assault of environmental activists are already common occurrences in many parts of the [world](#).

We strongly condemn both physical and verbal attacks on civil society organisations and activists.

In the case of Mr Mpanza, we call for the speedy arrest and successful prosecution of his killers, and immediate protection for other residents who oppose the relocation in KwaDube. Furthermore we call for the authorities to give full information and participation to the community on this proposed relocation, and respect the voices of those who oppose it.

In the case of Atha-Africa, we call on the Minerals Council of South Africa (formerly the Chamber of Mines) to state publicly that it will revoke the membership of any company whose employees engage in this type of conduct. The mining authorities cannot remain silent when companies operating in South Africa unlawfully intimidate and threaten activists exercising their Constitutional rights.

#Ends

Endorsed by:

1. Abahlali Basemjondolo
2. African Centre for Biodiversity
3. AIDS Foundation of South Africa
4. Amnesty International SA (Durban Chapter)
5. Asonet
6. Association for Progressive Communications (International)
7. Bench Marks Foundation
8. Biowatch SA
9. BirdLife South Africa
10. Body Corporate of King Shaka Estate
11. Centre for Applied Legal Studies
12. Centre for Constitutional Rights
13. Centre for Environmental Rights
14. Children's Radio Foundation (International)
15. Corruption Watch
16. Door To Door foundation
17. Earthjustice (International)
18. Earthlife Africa Durban
19. Earthlife Africa Joburg
20. EarthLore Foundation
21. EDO NSW (International)
22. Ekogaia Foundation
23. Ekurhuleni Environmental Organisation
24. Endangered Wildlife Trust
25. Environmental Justice Australia (International)
26. Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (International)
27. Environmental Monitoring Group
28. Federation for a Sustainable Environment
29. Fireflies Memorial (International)
30. GenderCC Southern Africa – Women for Climate Justice
31. Global Environmental Trust
32. Greenpeace Durban Local Group
33. groundWork
34. Heinrich Boell Stiftung Southern Africa (International)
35. Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (International)
36. International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG)
37. Izingwenya Youth Development
38. Just Share
39. KRC
40. KZN Monitor
41. Land and Accountability Research Centre, University of Cape Town
42. Lawyers for Human Rights
43. Lihlithemba Community Organisation
44. Market Users Committee
45. Mayine Community Movement
46. MCEJO
47. Media Monitoring Africa
48. Mfolozi Community Environmental Justice Organisation
49. Mining and Environmental Justice Communities Network of South Africa (MEJCON-SA)
50. MSF (KZN)
51. MUC
52. My Vote Counts
53. No Nukes Asia Forum Japan (International)
54. Noordhoek Environmental Action Group
55. Open Democracy Advice Centre
56. Parliamentary Monitoring Group
57. PHA Food & Farming Campaign

58. Popular Education Programme
59. Reid Incorporated Attorneys
60. Right2Know Campaign
61. SAVE UNIZULU
62. Schoeman and Associates
63. Schubart Park community
64. SCLC
65. Sekhukhune Environmental Justice Network
66. SHINE
67. Simunye Workers Forum
68. Sisonke Environmental Justice Network
69. Social and Environmental Justice in Action
70. Social Justice Coalition
71. South African Youth Climate Change Coalition
72. South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
73. Sustaining the Wild Coast
74. TAC (KZN)
75. Teens And Youth Health C.N
76. The Gaia Foundation (International)
77. ToadNUTs
78. Ubukhosi bezandla NPC
79. Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance
80. Vaalower Ratepayers Association
81. Voices of the Poor Concerned Residents (VPCR)
82. Vukani Environmental Movement (VEM)
83. Waterberg Environmental Justice Forum (WEJF)
84. Waterberg Women Advocacy Organization
85. Well Worn Theatre Company
86. Western Cape Water Caucus
87. Wilderness Foundation Africa
88. Women and Democracy Initiative, Dullah Omar Institute
89. Women Revolution
90. WoMin African Alliance (International)
91. WPCN
92. Youens Attorneys

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