

Reform and Resistance in the Shadow of a Disaster

Greetings everyone who attended today's second Day of our 2nd Annual Tailings Conference

My name is Thabo Ishmael Chaledi from Jagersfontein Lerumo Justice Forum. I stand in front of you as a Chairperson of the forum and also as an activist and a victim and survivor. So, I stand before you as a participant and an eyewitness of the 11th September 2022 at Jagersfontein Diamond Mine. This mine was heard around the Zondo Commission and it appears was surrounded by rumours of state capture and political interference.

We have organised ourselves into the Jagersfontein Lerumo Justice Forum and as we organise to commemorate 11 September we make the following demands which we ask that the responsible parties must sincerely heed and not treat as a checklist, This is a moral imperative that they act in favour of justice. We demand:

- The immediate release of the findings of the investigation that was undertaken by the Department of Water and Sanitation and is believed to be before the NPA. We demand full public disclosure of findings.
- Urgent reparations and adequate compensation to all victims and survivors of the disaster in particular of those who are homeless, displaced, injured and bereaved.
- The provision of permanent, safe housing and infrastructure for all affected residents.
- Comprehensive Environmental remediation of contaminated land and water, with regular, transparent updates to the community. Accountability and transparency is paramount
- The immediate prosecution of any individuals or entities found negligent or complicit in the disaster (as is now before the NPA). Three years is too long
- Immediate mental health and Social Support services for affected families and individuals.
- People are living in extreme poverty and hunger which the disaster has worsened. This must be addressed
- An urgent review and overhaul of tailings management regulations of National and Provincial levels with meaningful community participation at all levels

Conclusion

Justice of Jagersfontein victims and survivors cannot be postponed, diluted or denied for much longer. The suffering of our community stands as an indictment of a system that too often prioritizes profit over the people and expedience over ethics and justice.

We have waited for far too long for decisive action, honest accountability to address our needs, We urge all signatories government officials, mining executives, council members and concerned citizens too honour the memory of those who lost their lives, They must also honour the resilience of those who remain and the implicit promise that no community should ever again suffer such betrayal.

Let this statement be the clarion call for a new era of mining accountability, justice and respect for human dignity.

Justice delayed is Justice denied.

Let us begin now

In solidarity

I thank you all