

Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC) 2016-11-24: DMR pushing for Xolobeni mining at Wild Coast Sun meeting: Where is the "18 month moratorium"?

Today the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) called "Xholobeni stakeholders" to a meeting at Wild Coast Sun Casino. An unclear invitation said the meeting was "a result of the imbizo at Xholobeni". This was the meeting 19 July that ended in chaos, when the Dep Police Minister Ms Soty and Dep Minister of Mining, Mr Oliphant promoted the mining application instead of engaging in how to stop violent attacks against the coastal Amadiba Community that says no to mining .

In September, the Minister of DMR, Mr Zwane, declared his "intention" to apply an "18 month moratorium" for the Xolobeni Mining Project. We now know that the moratorium is not in effect. Today, DMR officials refused to answer repeated questions on the matter. Instead they tried to establish a "Technical Committee" under the "Mining Health and Safety Inspectorate"!!!

15 community leaders left the meeting to itself before declaring why. DMR wants to have a committee to bulldoze a process that can end in mining of our land, no matter the bloodshed. DMR wants a house without foundation. As ACC we will not be a part of that.

We witnessed three hours of confused tactics from DMR. DMR tried to cook all dishes in one pot, in order to avoid the real issues. Just like before 19 July, it was the SAPS who contacted community leaders before this meeting, as if the issue of violence would be addressed. But DMR then led the meeting and wanted nothing of that.

We are worried what will happen in December. Chief and mining director Lunga Baleni declared for his part that he was "very happy" that the meeting was not in the community, which he thinks "is very sick". He "cannot see himself standing there", because there "is no respect for him". Half of the audience were high SAPS officers including two Brigadiers, but director Lunga was not shy. He said "people are prepared to go to war against those who are stumbling blocks to development". One of his supporters had to apologise for a traditional leader inciting violence.

Even before the murder of our chair Bazooka Radebe in March we insisted that all unsolved cases of violence in the community since May 2015 must be attended to. This was brushed aside today by Mr S. Rasimeni from DMR who chaired the meeting. He and other officials refused to engage with our complaints to the Human Rights Commission. DMR high jacked this meeting just like they did 19 July. Where was the Human Rights Commission today? They were not invited.

Why was DMR facilitating this meeting at all? Is the mining department a mediator of peace? What of the "Chapter 9" institutions? Instead, the representative of the Premiers' office in Bisho complained that SANRAL did not show up. But SANRAL, she should know, avoids to be seen in public with DMR. All connections between mining

and the N2 Toll Road through our community, 3 km from the coast in Mdatya and Sigidi villages, must be denied.

Before today, we had again requested in writing for a separate meeting with SAPS on four concrete cases of violence since May 2015, the murder of Bazooka Radebe in March not counted. There was no reply. Not one member of SAPS or the Department of Police spoke today, despite being half of the meeting. The process of ending violence is diverted by DMR. DMR wants to talk about "development".

DMR is in no position to facilitate a discussion on development, not in our community and not in South Africa as a whole. If "development" was to be discussed today, where was the EC Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDEAT)? Where was one single representative of the Mbizana municipality? Where was the Department of Economic Development? This community has many ideas. They don't include destruction of our livelihood and our land with opencast mining.

DMR is the department of mining and should for its part engage with thousands of pages before the upcoming court case. If DMR acted as a fair regulator, Transworld Energy and Minerals' (TEM) mining application would have been rejected before we came to this point in the community. DMR has no business as a "facilitator" here.

We expect to read a media release full of lies about what DMR tried to pull off today, when angry officials avoided the core issues and tried to exercise a mandate DMR does not have. Let it be clear: DMR's tactics precipitates violence directed against our community.

DMR has 1400 pages to read about why TEM's mining application should be rejected and mining never be allowed on the Wild Coast. The right for our community to stop mining on our land will soon be tested in court.

Amadiba Crisis Committee:

Nonhle Mbuthuma (073 4262955); Sbusiso Qadi (073 2671079)

The Umgungundlovu Traditional Authority and the ACC are represented by Legal Resource Centre and Richard Spoor Inc. For legal issues in the coastal Amadiba community struggle against mining and the correspondence with DMR:

Henk Smith 0832661770, and Richard Spoor 0836271722.