

**2844.    The Leader of the Opposition (DA) to ask the President of the Republic:**

Whether he intends to heed the call for 16 August to be declared a commemorative day to be observed annually, in honour of those workers who lost their lives on 16 August 2012 in Marikana; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?                      NW3151E

**REPLY:**

The death of more than 40 mineworkers in Marikana in August 2012 is a tragedy that should never be allowed to happen again in our country.

We should remember those who lost their lives by improving the living conditions of the people in Marikana.

On 26 August 2012, I appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate matters of public, national and international concern arising out of the tragic incidents at the Lonmin Mine in Marikana. In total 44 people lost their lives and many others were injured. Government is busy implementing the findings of the report.

I established an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which is convened by the Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. The IMC comprises of the Departments of Human Settlements, Mineral Resources, Social Development, Police, Justice and Correctional Services, and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in order to manage the efforts to address the short and medium term challenges in the relevant areas.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Revitalisation of Distressed Mining Communities, through its work, leadership and intervention, has achieved commendable results, which include:

* Approximately 522 housing units that have been completed to date;
* Planning for Phase 2 of the housing development in Marikana Extension 5 is already underway and measures 144 hectares in extent, owned by Lonmin. The site has capacity to cater for 5 000 housing units.  Lonmin has commenced with the pre-feasibility study for this development;
* Lonmin completed the conversion of all their hostels, namely 776 family units and 1 908 single apartments by December 2014, as per the Mining charter requirements
* Lonmin has also submitted a new second Social and Labour Plan for the period 2014 until 2018. It undertook to build 4 000 infill apartments which are not meant to replace homeownership but to provide decent accommodation for employees.
* Phase 1 at the Karee Housing Estate has been completed, comprising 100 family units and 225 bachelor units. The next phase is in progress and should be finalised by the end 2017 comprising another 120 single units and 48 family units.
* The Revitalisation of Distressed Mining Communities has been mainstreamed into the Government Programme of Action.

Government continues to engage business, labour and communities to seek sustainable solutions that resolve the concerns of mine workers and distressed mining communities and transform the mining sector to broaden the benefits of our country’s rich mineral wealth.

The Revised Mining Charter also seeks to address some of the medium to long-term challenges through the provision that mining license-holders should, as part of Broad-based Economic Empowerment, provide 8% free carry to the mining communities in their area of operations.

Government encourages all society to commemorate tragedies such as the one of Marikana in every manner possible.

Furthermore, government remains on track with regard to implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry which was led by retired Judge Ian Farlam.

We appeal to all social partners to use the lessons from the Marikana tragedy to honour the memory of the victims through practical measures to improve the living and working conditions of mining communities, which is the most effective way to honour them.