

# Resolution on South Africa: massacre of striking miners

2012/2783(RSP) - 13/09/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on South Africa: massacre of striking miners.

The resolution was tabled by the S&D, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA, ECR, EPP and ALDE groups.

It strongly condemns the brutal killing of striking miners on 16 August 2012, when 34 people were shot dead and at least 78 were injured on 16 August 2012 in clashes between police and striking miners at the Marikana Lonmin platinum mine in North West Province. It also condemns the preceding violence which claimed the lives of 10 people. Members welcome President Zuma's decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry and call on the Commission to act thoroughly independently and impartially, and to **investigate the root cause of the excessive use of force by the police**, and express deep concern about the authorities' use of the **apartheid-era 'common purpose' law**, under which 270 mineworkers were arrested at the strikes and charged for the deaths of their own companions.

Parliament notes the tensions between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) and that the **lack of a reform of labour dispute mechanisms has led to considerable economic costs** for South Africa and has been a deterrent to foreign investment. It also notes that the striking miners were in a pay dispute with the mine's owner, Lonmin, a London-listed platinum mining company – the world's third largest. Members **regret Lonmin's failure to treat the labour dispute with the sensitivity it deserved**, and the latter's failure to assume any responsibility, but welcome the company's announcement not to dismiss strikers should they not go back to work, contrary to the company's previous demand.

They are further concerned that the confrontation at the Gold One Modder East mine is a sign that the **labour unrest may spread to the gold sector**, leading to a possible spread of violence.

Under these circumstances, Parliament asks the Commission to **establish a control mechanism aimed at preventing the import into the EU of mining products extracted without social, labour, safety and environmental guarantees**. It encourages the Commission to **establish a quality label for mining products extracted in accordance with minimum social, labour, safety and environmental standards**.

It insists that the issue of **appropriate salaries** for the workers in South African mines and inequity in the pay scale be addressed.

Parliament considers that the incident is to be seen in the wider perspective of the huge socioeconomic imbalances the country has been facing and it urges the South African Government to address the root causes of the violence that occurred, including the **worrying gap between rich and poor**, the rise of youth unemployment and the working and living conditions of workers, and thereby end the extreme economic inequality. It states its readiness to continue its support for South Africa, and emphasises the **need for a sustained and more focused partnership** to help the country address the socio-economic challenges it faces.