

## MACUA & WAMUA - ADVICE OFFICE

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### **MACUA-WAMUA Welcomes the Announcement by Police that 14 Miners Have Surfaced in Shaft 10 at Stilfontein**

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The Mining Affected Communities United in Action and Mining Affected by Mining United in Action (MACUA-WAMUA) have noted the latest development that at least fourteen miners have surfaced in one of the abandoned shafts 10 in Stilfontein, North West province. This has affirmed our claims that miners are desperate to surface and any further delays in assisting the miners to surface places their lives at risk.

We call on the government to expedite the process of retrieving miners. We have also taken note that a 14-year-old is claimed to be among the miners that have surfaced. If this is true, then it reaffirms MACUA's ongoing call for the sector to be regulated.

The vast majority of the miners who are trapped underground, are mere workers who do not control the means of production within these mines and much less do they enjoy the true value of the fruits of their labour.

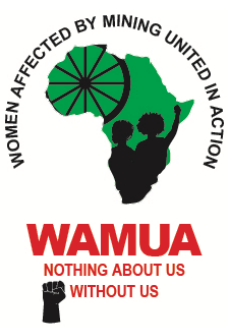
Exploited underground by unscrupulous syndicates on the one hand, and vilified, dehumanised and left to die by the state on the other, the trapped miners have become the dispensable cannon fodder of the men with guns.

In the frameworks which MACUA has put before the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources (DMPR) on numerous occasions, we have called on them to not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

We have warned that a strategy which simply seeks to jail and shoot the industry straight, is bound to be costly, both in terms of lives and economic impacts. Instead, we have urged the government to work with communities to identify those who wish to operate within a legitimately regulated sector so as to increasingly isolate the syndicates. But this cannot be done without the government committing genuine economic and human resources behind such a project.

The DMPR has recently reported on their ASM projects in which they have piloted 20 ASM projects with a budget of R68 million. These are small surface level projects and are limited in their scope and size. Furthermore, these ASM projects by DMPR appear to misunderstand the true nature of the sector and dismally fail to address the areas which are currently attracting thousands of artisanal miners.

Mines such as the one at Stilfontein, produce, by some accounts, millions of rands a day. Against the backdrop of such mindboggling wealth that is still being extracted from abandoned mines, the Department cannot hope to shift the economic drivers



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which makes mines like Stilfontein such an attractive and alluring target, by introducing small scale projects which are unattractive and which are structured to appease rather than to present workable solutions to the challenge of ASMs.

The scale and scope of the problem has become unwieldy as the state has continued to fail to deal with the inherent economic logic which drives the sector, which needs a plan that goes beyond closing holes. The sector needs to be opened up to come to grips with the reality on the ground.

We call for a Marshal Plan which includes committing the economic investments needed to develop the infrastructure (including policing/monitoring/health and safety) that can ensure that deposits that remain underground can be mined safely, and that those benefits accrue directly to the surrounding communities rather than to distant shareholders or Syndicate Kingpins.

South Africa is in desperate need of jobs and the only people who are benefitting from the mining industry are the fat cats while the vast majority of the people are excluded.

We once again call on the DMPR to meet with the organised formations of artisanal miners and other stakeholders to find a social consensus on what would constitute a Marshal Plan for the sector rather than simply going in guns blazing and without a plan to tackle the root causes.

We call on the South African Government to urgently allow the retrieval mission to continue so that those miners who wish to exit can do so. We have not yet experienced a situation where miners have not exited the shaft when ropes have been dropped to them. To us this is the surest indication that there are people who wish to exit and they should not be hindered from doing so.

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