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MACUA is Outraged by the DMPR Portfolio Committee's Silence in the Stilfontein Massacre and the Urgent Need for Accountability

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The Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA) has written to the Portfolio Committee of the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources to officially register our deep disappointment and outrage over the continued silence of the Portfolio Committee (PC) in the face of one of the worst mining-related human rights violations in post-apartheid South Africa—the Stilfontein Massacre.

It is now well-documented that at least 89 artisanal miners perished in Stilfontein due to state-enforced starvation and violent repression, as the South African Police Service (SAPS), under orders from the government, deliberately sealed off access to food, water, and medical aid while preventing any lawful exit from the mine shafts. This massacre occurred on the PC's watch, under the policies and legislative frameworks for which this Committee holds direct oversight responsibilities.

Despite the gravity of these events, this Committee has remained silent. The absence of parliamentary oversight, condemnation or intervention in response to this atrocity raises serious concerns about the Committee's commitment to its constitutional duty to protect mining-affected communities and hold the executive accountable.

The Portfolio Committee cannot continue to ignore its duty. As representatives tasked with overseeing mining regulation and industry governance, the PC is directly responsible for ensuring that mining laws, including the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA), serve the people rather than corporate and political interests.

We, therefore, demand that this Committee immediately exercise its legislative oversight functions and convene an urgent public hearing to:

1. Hold the Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources accountable for his department's failures in preventing the Stilfontein Massacre. The Committee must demand an official explanation for the Department's inaction in regulating mine closures, ensuring the safety of artisanal miners and preventing the humanitarian disaster at Stilfontein.
2. Summon the Director-General of the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources to account for the ongoing failures in regulating abandoned mines. The abandonment of mine shafts across the country has directly contributed to the rise of artisanal mining—a reality that the Department has refused to address with policy solutions, instead choosing to criminalise impoverished miners.
3. Demand clarity on the long-overdue amendments to the MPRDA. It has been over a decade since promises were made to amend the Act to include protections for artisanal miners and mining-affected communities, yet no meaningful legislative progress has been made. The Committee must demand answers from the Minister as to why the amendments have stalled and take decisive action to push for their immediate finalisation and implementation.



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4. Investigate the role of corporate mining interests in shaping government policy at the expense of human rights. The continued alignment between state security forces and corporate mining giants in suppressing artisanal miners raises serious concerns about corruption, undue influence, and the erosion of public trust in the government's ability to act independently from corporate mining interests.

The Portfolio Committee's failure to act in the face of these atrocities amounts to complicity. By remaining silent, the PC will be endorsing the criminalisation of poverty, the militarisation of mining policy, and the continued exclusion of artisanal miners and mining-affected communities from legal protections.

The lives lost in Stilfontein cannot be in vain. As representatives of the people, it is the PC's duty to demand answers, ensure accountability and take legislative action to prevent future mining massacres. The time for passive observation has long passed—we demand immediate parliamentary intervention.

Should the Portfolio Committee fail to act, we will mobilise affected communities, legal organisations, and civil society groups to demand accountability through direct action, litigation and international advocacy.

The people will not remain silent while those in power ignore their suffering.

For media inquiries, please contact the head of communication and media, Magnificent Mndebele at 064 785 9746 or Magnificent.Mndebele@macua.org.za