

## **FULENI MCEJO MEMORANDUM – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

The Honourable Minister of Mineral Resources: Mr Mosebenzi Zwane

Regional Mining Development Environmental Committee (RMDEC)

Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)

Ingonyama Trust Board (ITB)

cc The South African Human Rights Commission

The Office of the Public Protector

21 April 2016

Dear Honourable Minister Zwane

We, the members of Mfolozi Community Environmental Justice Organisation (MCEJO) and the Fuleni community wish to bring to your attention that we are fed up with the corruption of the majority of members of the Mhlana Traditional Council and the willingness of the government to sell the Fuleni people's land to Ibutho Coal and its foreign investors while sacrificing the lives, health and livelihoods of the residents of Fuleni, particularly the seven mining affected communities: Ocilwane, Novunula, Fuyeni, Ntuthunga 1 and 2, Emakhwezini, and Shayamoya.

Today's demonstration, on 21 April 2016, is also to show RMDEC and DMR that we are totally opposed to Ibutho Coal's proposed Fuleni coal mine on our land.

The march is an expression of our frustration at not being consulted and not having our voices heard no matter how loudly and clearly we say "No to

mining”.

We ask why the government is entertaining Ibutho Coal, a prospecting company, with no proven experience of mining. Also we call on the Ingonyama Trust Board to intervene as the trustees of our tribal land and ensure that the needs and rights of the affected communities are considered and protected.

The demonstration is to make it clear to the corrupt leadership and authorities that enough is enough. Ibutho Coal we do not want to see you back on our land.

Mining is not development. No matter how much the government tries to push the lie that mining creates jobs for the local communities or that the people living close to mines benefit, we know otherwise because already we are living close to Tendele's Somkhele coal mine. We know from regular contact with the Somkhele communities and other mining affected communities in Mpumalanga and Limpopo that mining brings death and suffering; steals our agricultural and grazing land; pollutes air and water; poisons the soil; splits communities apart; shatters the peace of rural living with explosions; cracks our houses; breaks our windows; brings suffering to our old people, children and our livestock; and only benefits already wealthy shareholders and directors but leaves local people impoverished. It also If living next to mining is so beneficial, we wonder why rich privileged people do not decide to relocate their homes and families to eMahlani?

We are feeling the effects of coal-related climate change and so strongly oppose the continued use and extraction of fossil fuels. The devastating drought here in Fuleni is expected to occur more frequently and become more extreme yet the government is agreeing to thirsty coal mines stealing our water, another constitutional right we are being robbed of.

We stand together with MACUA, GET, CCS – UKZN, groundWork, WoMin, EarthLore, the Amadiba Crisis Committee, the Mpukinyoni Community Property Association (MPCA), Yes to Life No to Mining, The Gaia Foundation, Grrrowd, and many other support organisations to demand:

- The dissolution of the existing Traditional Council because of the high level of corruption amongst the majority of traditional leaders and their lack of interest

in the needs of the people, and replaced with councillors who are concerned about the well-being of the Mthethwa communities and have our best interests at heart;

- Nothing about us and our land without us;

- No form of mining in Fuleni, specifically coal mining, fracking, marble mining. No government will convince us that we will benefit from mining or that it will improve our lives. We know that mining equals death. We do not want to experience the same bloodshed on our land as at Marikana and at Xolobeni because the Department of Mineral Resources is so willing to open doors to exploitative investors who not only destroy the environment but split communities apart;

- Free access to information and freedom of speech as enshrined in the Constitution. We do not accept that for almost a year the Traditional Council has blocked attempts by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) and Uthungulu District Municipality to hold a Public Participation Imbizo for the Fuleni communities as we requested in June 2015;

- No corruption of any kind and no intimidation, oppression, harrassment, and disregard for human rights and basic democratic processes, or threats to people's lives will be tolerated.

MCEJO, with this memorandum, wants to send a clear message and set our position to claim back what is rightfully ours and to put an end to corruption in Fuleni and any talk of Ibutho Coal and mining. Therefore, we call upon the Minister of Mineral Resources, RMDEC, the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to implement the will of MCEJO and the Fuleni people.

This Memorandum of Grievances was signed during the gathering at Ocilwane, Fuleni, on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016.