

## Mzoxolo Magidwana: Speech at the BASF AGM, Mannheim/Germany 12 May 2017

I am Mzoxolo Magidwana. I am 29 years old.

I started working at Lonmin in 2011.

I am one of the workers who participated in the strike 2012, where 34 mine workers were massacred.

I was hit with 9 bullets. With 2 going through my body and 7 were removed in the hospital.

That's why they called me "dead man walking".

It's a miracle how I survived.

I spent 6 months in the Intensive Care Unit; thereafter I went to a rehabilitation to learn to walk again.

In 2012, we were on strike for living wages and better working- and living conditions at Lonmin. We expected Lonmin, our employer, to come to talk to us. Instead Lonmin called the police on us. Who then shot and killed our fellow comrades.

I believe that this matter could have been resolved by Lonmin coming to us to tell us that Lonmin was unable to meet our demands or even to retrench some of us, but not to cause that we be killed, as if we were just animals.

Even when Bishop Jo Seoka and Joseph Mathunjwa, the President of the AMCU, came to speak to us, our request to them was to ask the Lonmin-management to come and talk to us. Bishop Jo Seoka and Joseph Mathunjwa of AMCU tried to convince the management to talk to us, but Lonmin refused.

Instead heavily armed police came already with ambulances and hearses, implying they knew exactly what they are going to do. Government and Lonmin had planned to end the strike at all costs, including loss of life:

Shoot to kill, therefore the hearses were there to take the dead, ambulances for the injured and police vans for those who were detained and faced criminal charges.

I am one of those 200 people against whom criminal charges were laid.

I'm also one of 20 people against who further criminal charges were laid, and I am still facing those charges, as I am speaking today. Of the 20, three passed away, 17 of us remained and we are charged for shooting one person to death.

What I don't understand is that how 17 people can hold one gun to shoot a person.

What hurts me most is that I am a victim of the police brutality, and yet I face criminal charges for something I didn't do. I am a victim but I am treated like a perpetrator and nobody has been charged for shooting and killing us.

I am here to tell people what happened in 2012 and what we still wish for.

Having given you this background let me speak on the current conditions:

Since the massacre nothing much has changed. We still have not achieved the living wage that we were demanding. Our working and living conditions have not improved that much.

There has not been any compensation for us as victims: the deceased, the widows, the orphans and the injured and even those who were tortured by the police wanting statements regarding the massacre.

As things stand today: Nobody in government or Lonmin has been charged for the massacre. Even as we speak today, the majority of the people that works at Lonmin live in tin shacks that are infested with rats. There is no running water in the households, just one tap for a lot of families, not all the areas have electricity and toilets are shared ones and just dug in the ground with no chemical treatment of the waste.

Under these conditions a life in dignity is not possible.

It is my understanding that BASF is buying platinum from Lonmin for millions of Euros per month, I therefore believe that what we, the workers, are asking for is not unreasonable.

We know that the management of Lonmin and BASF is making huge profits; we know that we dig out one of the most precious metals on Earth – we just want to live in dignity – I cannot see that this wish is unreasonable.

I ask you, the CEO of BASF, Kurt Bock, to answer me: Is this too much to ask?

Also, the working conditions have not improved much.

People still die underground because of the pressure put on them by Lonmin to the benefit of its customers, which includes BASF, in a situation where workers have not even achieved the living wages they were striking for in 2012.

What I wish to happen is that BASF put some pressure on Lonmin to resolve its unfinished business with its workers.

If that were to happen, it would make us workers appreciate and therefore make us be at peace of what happened, even though we may not be able to bring back those who have died, it will also bring peace and reconciliation with those who were injured. It could make Lonmin create peace and for the workers to work in peace and with love. And bring some closure to what happened in 2012.

I do hope that BASF will play a major role in resolving our issues with Lonmin.

What I am expressing is the pain I feel.

Me as a worker living in those conditions, as a worker for Lonmin and therefore also you BASF.

Look at me, I struggle walking, I liked to play football, I cannot do this anymore, I am under heavy medication for chronic pain. All of this at age 29. I do not know what the future holds for me, considering the injuries that I have suffered.

Even though I am left like this, I am still better than the widows who have had to come and work in a place where the blood of their loved ones was shed, where their loved ones perished.

As I leave I would like to know what BASF commits to in making our lives better as workers in Lonmin?

I thank you for the opportunity to address you.