

The Marikana Massacre: locating violent industrial disputes in a global perspective

Abstract

The massacre by the South African police force of 34 platinum mine workers on 16 August 2012 at Marikana made news throughout the world and demonstrated that the collective bargaining and dispute resolution systems devised by the post-apartheid regime had failed dismally.

It is important to find out what has gone wrong in South Africa that the police force of a state governed by the African National Congress (ANC) that is in an Alliance with the largest trade union federation, COSATU, shoot and kill Black African mine workers who are out on strike. Where and how have things gone wrong in the political, economic, labour and employment relations spheres that an event like this could take place 18 years after South Africa's transition to a constitutional democracy?

The aim of this Workshop is to shed light on this fundamental question and to seek for an answer in a broader global perspective by exploring the trend towards increased violence in workplace disputes around the world.

The Workshop will commence with a 10 - 15 minute extract from the documentary film ***Workers Shot Down*** by Rehad Desai. This will set the scene for the debate very vividly. The film will be followed by four speakers and two discussants. The speakers have all researched Marikana, but from different perspectives.

The presenters are **Crispen Chinguno** and **Charles Nupen**. **Crispen Chinguno**, who did his PhD thesis on strike violence which entailed on-site research of underground workers on the Rustenburg platinum mines for a year and was on site when the strike started, will speak on "Insurgency and strike violence: the platinum belt 2009-2015 with special focus on the Marikana massacre". **Charles Nupen** will speak on "Employment relations on the platinum mines: what went wrong and why".

The discussants will be Emeritus Professor **Eddie Webster** who has been in charge of research and run workshops on the Marikana disaster, and Professor **Sakhela Buhlungu**. Professor Webster participated in a conference which showed that there is a new global dynamic in strikes in countries like Russia, South Africa, China and some countries in Europe. Professor **Sakhela Buhlungu**, dean of the Humanities Faculty at the University of Cape Town, undertook research on labour relations on the platinum mines in Rustenburg.

The discussants will be able to broaden the discussion and analysis of the Marikana dispute by placing the conflict within a wider global perspective.

Johann Maree will act as convenor and chair of the Workshop.