

Scuffle over Marikana placards

2013-03-26 16:56



Rustenburg - A scuffle broke out on Tuesday between police officers and a group of protesters outside the Rustenburg Civic Centre where the Farlam commission is holding public hearings.

Police officers seized a stack of placards from a group of protesters during the lunch break.

The protesters shouted at the police officers, accusing them of murdering the Marikana mineworkers.

"Shoot us all, that is what you are used to," a woman shouted at the large contingent of police officers.

"You have murdered our brothers. [Police commissioner Riah] Phiyega must say the truth," shouted another protester.

Most of the placards read: "Do not let police get away with murder".

A police officer took the stash of placards into a vehicle parked nearby.

A spokesperson for the Marikana Support Campaign, Rehad Desai, said the protesters had been angered by the "evasive" evidence being given to the Farlam commission by Phiyega.

"The people are very angry; these are community members demanding justice. We have every right to protest in this country," he said.

"The police seized our placards, we do not know the reason for that. The placards demand that the police should be brought to book and we also want Phiyega fired."

He said a number of activities would be held across South Africa on 16 August annually to commemorate the death of 34 mineworkers.

When the hearings resumed, **Ishmael Semenya**, SC, for the police, told the commission that the officers would be informed that the people had the right to protest outside.

Phiyega was still on the witness stand, giving evidence regarding the police's intervention on 16 August last year.

Under cross examination, Phiyega said the police intervention plan for the troubled Marikana mines was good, but got disrupted during implementation.

Because of this disruption the outcome included the shooting deaths of 34 striking mineworkers, which was unintended, she told the commission.

Evidence leader Mbuyiseli Madlanga, SC, asked the police commissioner whether the police intervention at Marikana could be described as a success.

"Taking into account all the factors you have referred to, would you say that the operation was a success?" he said.

"On 16 August, we do know that 34 people were killed and more than 70 were injured.

"I want you to make a judgment and tell this commission whether based on the SA Police Service's own tests, you can say the [Marikana] operation was a success?"

Phiyega said: "I think I need to be responsible when answering. I have said the plan was good, and it was disrupted.

"It is important for me to take all those issues into context.

"The outcome was intended. The plan was good, it was disrupted and we had an unintended outcome.

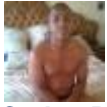
"We cannot have a simplified definition of success.

"It would be a broad definition of success."

Madlanga said the evidence-leading team would argue that the Marikana operation was chaotic and did not represent the best of responsible policing.

On 16 August last year, 34 striking mineworkers were shot dead and 78 were injured when the police opened fire near Lonmin's platinum mine in Marikana.

Ten people, including two police officers and two security guards, were killed near the mine in the preceding week.



Carlos Phaho - March 26, 2013 at 17:14

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Commissioner(Riah) don't know about that as always.

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Stephen Hamilton - March 26, 2013 at 17:21

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My placard will read do not let marikana miners get away with the murder of 10 innocent people

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Tim Norris - March 26, 2013 at 17:22

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So much for freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. The police should be instructed to immediately return the placards and apologise.

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Mxo Debe - March 26, 2013 at 17:41

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da fact remains ppl were killed so wat is gonna happen nxt this lady must tell da nation da truth

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Tello Moleko - March 26, 2013 at 17:49

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your so called brothers started the fire and got burnt.They also brought inyanga to make invisible and bullet not penetrate them,now they killed him not to testify against his actions,What did you say when your brother left home with deadly objects?

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