

**Taking Decisive Action to Wage a Concerted Battles Against illegal Mining
and the Manifestation of Criminality and Violence in the Affected
Communities**

**Closing Remarks by the Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon S.J. Mohai
Thursday, 11 August 2022**

Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP, Amos Masondo;
The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, honourable Sylvia Lucas;
House Chairpersons of the NCOP;
Honourable Minister of Minerals and Energy, Gwede Mantashe;
Honourable Minister of Police, General Bheki Cele;
Honourable Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Nsuza;
Distinguished Special Delegates;
Honourable Members;
And Members of the Media Houses;

Surely, we will all agree that the issue of illegal mining in South Africa is one of the emotive issues in our public discourse given the atrocities meted out to communities by the illegal miners.

The events of the recent past in Krugersdorp is not an isolated issue but a culmination of criminality that the people in North West mining towns of Orkney and other towns have been exposed to.

This, the involvement of illegal foreign nationals, militarized operations of the “Zama Zamas” and the high unemployment levels make the anger of our people understandable.

There is no doubt that with the data from SAPS and Home Affairs, this situates the problem into three categories that continue to border our people. First; the high levels of crime and lawlessness, the challenge of immigration in South Africa and the capacity of our community to work with police to address lawlessness and crime.

We welcome the intervention by the department of Minerals and energy in the closing unused mines, rehabilitation of mines and other interventions, the ongoing efforts of the police to clamp down on illegal mining and the efforts by home affairs to address the challenges of illegal immigration in our country.

Honourable Ministers and members, there is no doubt that the policing approach to the illegal mining is not sustainable as this issue requires multi-disciplinary approach and fundamental policy review. The establishment, resourcing and capacitation of the Special Task Team on illegal mining will go a long way in addressing the illegal mining in South Africa.

Critical to this policy review is how to ensure that mining companies takes responsibility for post mining like; the closure of holes of unused mines, maintenance of security and rehabilitation of those mines.

Minister Mantashe would be aware that in Welkom in the Free State, we have started a process of community engagement together with the mining houses and the department to devise innovative ways of economic use of derelict mines. It is our view that the involvement of communities together with the state and private sector stake holders will go a long way in addressing this

challenge.

Honourable Ministers, going forward, from here the relevant Select Committees will meet your departments for detailed briefings on the immediate and medium term interventions. On the basis of this, the relevant Committees will design appropriate oversight action plans to monitor the impact of these interventions. Honourable Ministers, it will indeed be appreciated if your plans reflect an integrated sector plan that includes collaboration with mining houses and other key sectors of the civil society.

Whilst the assurance by the Minister of Police to unearth and expose the real forces behind the criminal syndicate of illegal mining, it will be appreciated that more work is done to rid the police and home affairs of rogue elements who are collaborating with these syndicates.

The ease with which these “Zama Zamas” operates clearly shows that they have their eyes and ears within the Police. To reassure the communities, it is indeed critical that communities are encouraged to come forward and report allegations of criminal collusions and activities of some police officers.

Ministers and honourable members, greater and enhanced collaboration with the affected SADC countries is not only a necessity, but indispensable for the success of climbing down illegal mining and illegal immigration.

According to General of the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho Defence Force, they have identified the involvement of both active and former members of the Lesotho Defence Force in South Africa's illegal mining. This poses national

security threat to our country.

On this note, allow me to thank the three Ministers, Special Delegates and honourable members for your thoughtful engagement on these critical issues facing our people. We dare not fail in our collective efforts.

Thank you.
