

# Media Release for Immediate Distribution- MACUA

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Whose Side is the Government on?

## The MINE OWNERS or THE PEOPLE

Mining Affected Communities United In Action (MACUA) an organization of 50 community based organizations in communities affected by mining will hold pickets on **Wednesday 16 April 2014**, at the Provincial Offices of the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) in Gauteng, Northwest (Klerksdorp and the Provincial Legislature in Rustenburg), Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Kimberly(Northern Cape) and the Free State to call on the President to send the MPRDA Bill, which was passed in a period of 3 days though the National Council of Provinces(NCOP) in March this year, back to Parliament for proper community participation.

The government has allowed two laws on mining and land rights to be rushed through the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). **This is completely unacceptable** for a number of reasons.

- When the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Amendment Bill (MPRDA) and the Restitution of Land Rights (RLR) was first introduced to parliament we expected that when we told Parliament to include communities that they would listen to the communities.
- Instead they treated communities who went to parliament very badly, questioning the mandates and ridiculing their language use.
- The Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) then met separately with the Mining companies and included the things that business wanted, into the (MPRDA) law.
- Only two hearings were held in the provinces with no time for communities to have their say.
- Even though 5 provinces said there must be more community participation in the mining laws, this was not included in the Bill
- The Bill was rushed through The NCOP in 3 Days
- No recommendations made by communities were included in the Bill

People's participation in law making and decisions that have huge impacts on our lives is a central part of democracy and yet despite our constitution, companies are treated as more important than people.

**MACUA will embark on a Campaign for Community Participation** and We call on all communities and supporting organisations to join us in our campaign to demand **Nothing About Us Without Us**. We have written to the Minister of Mineral Resources urgently requesting a meeting. We have written to the Presidency formally requesting they withdraw this Bill as the NCOP failed to comply with their duties to ensure participation under sections 72 and 118 of the Constitution.

**MACUA SAYS Nothing About Us Without Us**

**Statement Ends.**

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Please find attached a letter from the LRC sent to the President on our behalf as well as a letter to the Minister of Mineral Resources, calling for an urgent Meeting.

**About MACUA:**

Following a dialogue among mining affected communities, representing communities in 8 provinces across South Africa, during 2-5 December 2012, a coordinating committee was elected to begin the process of uniting communities in a broad movement aimed at presenting the voice of communities who have not been consulted in the process of allocating mining licenses, development of communities and the distribution of mining income and who bear the brunt of the health and environmental degradation and impact of mining.

A new expanded Coordinating Committee was elected in March 2014.

To this end the Coordinating Committee has embarked upon a process of consultation and collaboration with a range of mining stakeholders including workers, civil society organisations and communities, with a view to building a network of mining affected communities with a broad consensus on a campaign to gather a comprehensive mandate from mining affected communities, which will be formulated in a Peoples Mining Charter.

For many years now communities have been struggling to present a formidable opposition to the mining houses and the super exploitation of our natural resources, our land and our communities.

Our struggles have had questionable success in producing real change for communities but have been particularly effective in raising the awareness and consciousness of the communities affected by mining and last year saw arguably the biggest and most representative gathering of communities. This was by any standards a huge step forward and needs to not only be celebrated, but must be turned into a vehicle for real change.

The financial strength of the mining houses provides the owners and managers of capital in the industry with an almost untouchable financial might, imbuing it with the ability and freedom to operate and, invest when and how it deems fit without consulting communities.

All stakeholders in mining with the exception of shareholders and management are taking a smaller piece of the pie especially the communities affected by mining. The figures for communities are grim. Poverty levels have increased and unemployment has risen to epidemic levels.

Mining companies are determined to hold onto and increase their exorbitant profits and have proceeded to assert their dominance, through threats of retrenchments and its use of state apparatus to shoot and kill those who present a challenge to its strategy of accumulating profits at the expense of workers and communities.

The mobilization of communities and other organized forces such as labour has always been our most potent weapon, and one which has a long history within the South African context. It is this weapon that must form the backbone of our struggle to free our people from poverty and exploitation.

