

DEFEND OUR DEFENDERS

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Every year hundreds of activists, whistleblowers and other Human Rights Defenders in South Africa are threatened, hurt and killed. These are ordinary people – teachers, workers, nurses and farmers – who are putting their lives on the line to defend the rights of poor and vulnerable people.

They are doing the job that our government should be doing:

- To protect people from exploitative development, including the environmental, social and economic harms that often result from irresponsible mining.
- To realise the right that all people living in South Africa have to an environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing.
- To act against corruption in all its forms and to protect our democracy.
- To prevent discrimination against women, LGBTQIA people, people who are poor and those who do not have access to land.
- To mitigate the effects of climate change for present and future generations.



LIFE AFTER COAL
IMPILO NGAPHANDLE
KWAMALAHLE

WE REMEMBER THOSE KILLED FOR THEIR WORK AS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Name: Mam Fikile Ntshangase

Age: 63

Home: Somkhele, KwaZulu-Natal

Fikile Ntshangase was a leading voice in the fight against the expansion of a coal mine near Somkhele in KwaZulu-Natal. On 22 October 2020 at 18:30, four gunmen arrived at Ntshangase's house while she was cooking dinner for her family. The gunmen forcibly entered into her home and shot her six times. She died on the scene.

To date, no one has been held responsible for Fikile Ntshangase's murder.

Name: Sikosiphi Bazooka Radebe

Age: 51

Home: Xolobeni, KwaZulu-Natal

Bazooka Radebe was a dedicated environmental and indigenous rights activist who spent years opposing two major developments in the area of Xolobeni on the Wild Coast. On 22 March 2016, Radebe called a colleague to warn her to take the death threats they were receiving seriously. Later that day two men dressed as policemen and driving a stolen car, gunned Radebe down in front of his workshop. Last year, seven years since his death, new evidence came to light showing that the police investigation was deliberately stalled and mishandled.

To date, no one has been held responsible for Bazooka Radebe's murder.

Ayanda Ngila

Age: 29

Home: Cato Manor, KwaZulu-Natal

As one of the leaders of the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement in KwaZulu-Natal, Ayanda Ngila was a dedicated land activist, committed to fighting for dignity and freedom for vulnerable people in South Africa. On 8 March 2022, Ngila was working in the food garden of the commune where he lived when he was approached by four gunmen and shot in front of two of his comrades, both of whom were also later killed.

To date only one of Ngila's four killers has been arrested and prosecuted.



Nokuthula Mabaso

Age: 40

Home: Cato Manor, KwaZulu-Natal

Nokuthula Mabaso was a land activist and women's rights defender in the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement. She lived and worked in the eKhenana Commune in KwaZulu-Natal, where she also played a big part in the creation of a food sovereignty project. The night before she was due to testify against a bail hearing of the same man accused in Ngila's murder, she was shot seven times outside her house in eKhenana.

On 26 July 2022, two suspects were arrested for her murder. They were both family members of the accused in Ayanda Ngila's murder, the man who Mabaso had pledged to testify against in court. They were later freed after Mabaso's postmortem mysteriously disappeared.

Name: Babita Deokaran

Age: 53

Home: Johannesburg, Gauteng

Babita Deokaran refused to remain silent when she discovered a network of financial fraud and corruption in the Gauteng Department of Health. On the morning of 23 August 2021, Deokaran left her house in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg and drove her daughter to school. When she returned, she was confronted by six armed assassins who shot her while she was in her car in the driveway of her home.

Six suspects were arrested for Deokaran's murder. On the eve of the second anniversary of her death they were found guilty and sentenced to a combined total of 95 years imprisonment. The identity of the person who ordered Deokaran's murder remains unknown.





We demand that our government:

1. Lives up to the ideals of our Constitution and South Africa's reputation for protecting human rights by publicly condemning the killing of Human Rights Defenders.
2. Makes laws that recognise the important role that Human Rights Defenders play and ensure they are protected.
3. Takes urgent action to investigate and arrest the killers of Human Rights Defenders.
4. Honours the commitment that South Africa made in November 2022, when the state agreed to protect Human Rights Defenders as part of the **Universal Periodic Review** (UPR) of the United Nations' Human Rights Council.
5. Holds private companies responsible for unethical behaviour.
6. Implements the Southern Africa Model Law on the protection and promotion of Human Rights defenders, which is a framework of laws that can be used by government, social justice organisations and individual people to help protect Human Rights Defenders.
7. Honours the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders which says that anyone has the right to defend human rights in their country, including the right to protest peacefully, communicate freely, meet up and work with other activists, raise money for their work, have legal representation and ask for information from the government and private companies. Protect the human rights of citizens and protect Human Rights defenders if they are threatened.
8. Honours its commitment to the UNHR Declaration to protect the rights of citizens, this includes doing everything they can to make sure that the laws of the country protect Human Rights Defenders.

JOIN US:

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GET IN TOUCH:

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