



AGNES MAKOPANO THELEJANE



SONGSTRESS NOTUKILE NKONYENI



NOKUTHULA EVELYN ZIBAMBELA

Lives shaped by **mines and migrancy**

We present here eight narratives told through visual art and in words, of women who are family members of men killed in the Marikana Massacre. These stories came from a workshop with the women held by Khulumani Support Group, over the weekend of 19 and 20 May 2013, while the women were in Rustenberg attending the Marikana Commission of Inquiry.

The lives of the women who speak in the stories have been intertwined with the men who were killed in this strike: they shared the men's needs and struggles, their children, their decisions, their dreams of the future.

Yet with all the attention that the world has given to events at Marikana and the aftermath, these women have been left silent. Even while the government has accepted that they attend the Commission of Inquiry, so that they can "see truth revealed", they have not been asked to speak of their own truths about what happened, about their knowledge and concerns.

One of the family members at the commission, in a discussion with Khulumani Support Group in February, commented that the commission treated them "like trees or stones", silent, bearing witness, but with nothing to say when confronted with horrific events that strike each of them, leaving "a hole in my life, and in my heart".

In these stories, the women speak lives still shaped by the mines and the migrant labour system. They look at how those killings hammered their lives, their families, their plans. And they look at what must be done, to continue their lives beyond the tragedy and loss of Marikana.

AGNES MAKOPANO THELEJANE
I don't know how I am going to talk about

the drawing here. I am Makopano Thelejane. I am a daughter of Mrs Jane and Mr Julius Xokwe, from the same Pabalong village in Matatiela of my husband, Mr Thabiso Johannes Thelejane, who was killed by police in the Marikana Massacre on the 16th of August 2012, in the killings that are known throughout the whole world.

SONGSTRESS NOTUKILE NKONYENI

I am an adult lady, called Songstress Nkonyeni, a child of Mdumazulu location AA, in Ngqeleni in the Eastern Cape.

On the 13th of August my brother and other workers were on their way to see the management, demanding an increment. That day they did not carry weapons – no implements, no pangas or spears. They were stopped by the police; the police shot at them, and they ran away. I need an answer, what was the reason to kill them, on the 13th?

NOKUTHULA EVELYN ZIBAMBELA

I am Mrs Zibambela. This is my picture, which resembles me: a woman and a mother whose husband was killed in that Marikana Massacre.

As you see in this picture, this woman is lying there, so many days after her husband went missing. It was five days after the incident happened that she received the news that her husband was among those people that were killed in the massacre.

XOLELWA MPUMZA

My name is Xolelwa Mpumza. I lost my parents in 2007 and 2008. We were left alone, five children, two girls and three boys. Although we were only children then, we now have our own children who also depend on us. We love each other, we also love our children. So it was hard and difficult to be left by our loved brother by the name of Thobile Mpumza, who was killed last year in 2012, August 16. That news that one of us had been killed by the police at Marikana brought us darkness.

NTOMBIZOLILE MOSEBETSANE

I'm Mrs Mosebetsane. I am Ntombizolile Mosebetsane from the Eastern Cape, Lusikisiki district, in Luqoqweni village. As you know I am here because of my husband who passed away during the Marikana Massacre.

As of now I do not feel well because he was the breadwinner, and he left me with a small child. The child asks me every day "mom, where is my father?" I don't have any answer to that question. All in all I can't express myself; I can't forget and forgive what happened, because I ask myself: "How am I going to raise this child and who is going to be a breadwinner now as I am unemployed?"

NOMBULELO NTONGA

My name is Nombulelo Ntonga, from Cofimvaba, at Guse village, where I was born. That is where I am living now with my children. My husband's area is at Elliotdale and Mqhele village, in Xhora. I lost my husband in that Marikana Massacre. This left me suffering, struggling, with a big hole in my life and a pain in my heart.

THEMBANI MTHINTI

In my picture I am lying down as I was lying down like that, holding my hands up, when I learned of my husband's death. I was thinking, praying, as I lost my husband, what would happen to those children – who is going to raise them? As many as they are, and as little as they are. That Marikana massacre left me without having a home for my children.

BETTY LOMASONTFO GADLELA

My name is Betty Lomasontfo Gadlela. I was born in 1969 in a poor family.

My culture: I am a Swazi lady, coming from Swaziland, in the Manzini district. Gadlela worked for the Lonmin company, in the Karee Mine at Marikana. He was working there in South Africa in order to provide for his home, for his own family, and for all of the relatives. Gadlela was working so that his children would be educated; that they would get food, be properly dressed, and have a home. This was not easy for him, working alone in South Africa.

On the 16th August 2012, which was a Thursday, he was killed by the police there in Marikana.



XOLELWA MPUMZA



NTOMBIZOLILE MOSEBETSANE



NOMBULELO NTONGA



THEMBANI MTHINTI

"I lost my husband in that Marikana Massacre. This left me suffering, struggling, with a big hole in my life and a pain in my heart." *Nombulelo Ntonga*

These pictures come from the Khulumani Support Group book of narratives by Marikana widows and older Katlehong women launched at Wordfest during the National Arts Festival 2013.
<http://www.khulumani.net>



BETTY LOMASONTFO GADLELA