

President Cyril Ramaphosa
Private Bag X463
Pretoria, 0001

SÜDAFRIKA

Nomsa Sizani

Dear President Ramaphosa,

I wish to bring to your attention the case of Nomsa Sizani, a single mother of four surviving children from eKukhanyeni, Marianhill in South Africa's North-Eastern province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Nomsa Sizani is a human rights defender and leader within the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement (AbM), a grassroots movement founded in 2005. She is facing imminent threats to her life following her questioning officials who were in her community to speak about developments taking place there on 17 March. She received a threatening phone call on 18 March, saying "if you don't shut that mouth, we will shut it for you". Threats against her have escalated since. On 26 March, she received a text message which said: "We hope that Zikode [referring to AbM president Sibusiso Zikode] and Abahlali will be able to protect you from that big mouth of yours". On 31 March, three men arrived at her home looking for her. She has now been forced into hiding.

The threats against Nomsa Sizani must be seen against the backdrop of a greater pattern of harassment, intimidation, threats and killings of AbM members and leaders, which AbM count at 25 over their 18-year existence. One of these killings includes Nomsa Sizani's son, Samuel Hloele, who was allegedly shot by the eThekweni Anti-Land Invasion Unit according to AbM reports. Leaders of the movement have alleged that the targeted killings are a direct response to the movement challenging the status quo of the communities in which they reside and operate by speaking out against allegations of corruption at the local government level and organising themselves independently outside of party politics

I know you are aware of the situation AbM is facing, having recently created a task team in KZN to investigate the killings of AbM members. I therefore call on you and your government to take concrete and effective measures to promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigate the death threats against Nomsa Sizani and to ensure her safety and security. Anyone suspected to be responsible for the threats should be identified and brought to justice in a fair trial. I also urge you and your government to protect and ensure respect for the human rights of human rights defender and to initiate a process to develop legislation for the effective protection of the human rights of human rights defenders in South Africa.

Yours sincerely,