

## Security tight at 'Bazooka's' funeral

11:38 (GMT+2), Fri, 01 April 2016

Eastern Cape police said they would ensure that there is adequate security at Saturday's funeral of slain anti-mining activist, Sikhosiphi Rhabebe.

Rhadebe, known as Bazooka, was the chairperson of the Amadiba Crisis Committee which is spearheading community opposition to titanium mining on the Wild Coast by an Australian company, MRC.

He was gunned down by two hitmen allegedly posing as police outside his home in Lurholweni Township Mbizana a week ago. Community members said that the men arrived in a car with a rotating blue light.

Rhadebe will be buried at his family home in Mdatya.

Police spokesperson, Captain Mlungisi Matidane, said the Area Commander of Mbizana has prepared an operational plan to secure the safety of the community and visitors following community complaints of police inactivity.

"We'll join hands with the family of 'Bazooka' in order to secure the funeral. The SAPS will go there, not for certain individuals, but to safeguard everybody who is there," he said.

The Amadiba Crisis Committee, together with a local taxi association, has also arranged for dedicated marshals to direct traffic.

No arrests were made in connection with his murder.

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## From Xolobeni to Marikana we see consequences of impunity

**Compromised politicians and corrupt government departments are sacrificing human rights**

By [Glenn Ashton](#)

1 April 2016

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Sikhosiphi “Bazooka” Rhadebe led opposition to mining in the Xolobeni area on the Wild Coast.  
Photo: Fred Kockott

On the evening of 22 March 2016 Sikhosiphi “Bazooka” Rhadebe, the head of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, was murdered at a workshop he owned by persons who remain unknown. The Amadiba Crisis Committee was created to oppose attempts by the Australian owned and listed company Mineral Commodities Limited (MRC) to mine the titanium lying beneath their communal land.

What happened to Bazooka cannot be isolated from current events in South Africa: his murder is part of an unhealthy continuum that threatens the increasingly fragile fabric of our constitutional democracy. Both are the inevitable consequences of impunity, of subverting the law - if not only in letter, then in intent – with no tangible repercussions.

Let me share what is known.

A few hours after dark on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, a hijacked Volkswagen Golf drove up to Bazooka’s scrapyard and workshop with a blue police light flashing on its roof. After he refused to get into the car he was shot eight times in his head.

Bazooka earned his nickname for his fearsome soccer skills, firing balls through the opposition; he was equally capable of exposing the gaps of carelessly defended arguments. An ex-MK soldier, he was a community champion stolen from his family and peers before his time. He was not the first local opponent of the mine to be assassinated - Mandoda Ndovela was killed in 2003 after criticising the mine. His murder remains unsolved.

In 2014 MRC established a beach mine, Tormin on the same latitude as Xolobeni but on the opposite, arid West Coast of South Africa, some 350 kilometres north of Cape Town. While MRC was granted permission to extract the zircon and rutile which constitute around 5% of the beach sand, it unilaterally began to extract and sell both the garnet and ilmenite from the beach, in breach of the terms of operation under the licence permission.

In order to do so MRC radically changed Tormin’s mining methodology. The company had been granted permission to pump a concentrated zircon/rutile sand slurry to the processing plant from the beach. Instead a far higher impact method was used, trucking beach sand to the remote separation plant. So, instead of removing 5% of the volume of the beach as per the Mines and Works Programme, they were removing nearly 45%.

These substantial operational changes have been repeatedly brought to the attention of both provincial and national Departments of Mineral Resources, as well as to the provincial environmental authorities. No sanction has yet been taken against the mine. In fact permission has apparently been granted to expand the plant, despite rigorous objections.

The mine has also raised hackles throughout the region. For instance the transport of minerals for export has had significant impacts. The zircon was initially transported to Cape Town by rail. MRC terminated its contract with Transnet, instead using privately-owned 30

tonne trucks, running up to 50 loads per day. These have seriously degraded the unpaved regional roads that were neither designed, nor approved, to transport these materials.

There have also been ongoing labour disputes between the majority unionised workforce of Tormin, resulting in violence, extended court cases and unilateral pay cuts, creating bitter tensions between the mine and local residents. In response the CEO of Tormin, Mark Caruso, trotted out a bizarre biblical quote, "...and I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger, those who attempt to poison and destroy my brothers. And you will know my name is the Lord when I lay my vengeance upon thee."

Shots have been fired at aircraft overflying the mine, allegedly on the orders of the mine manager and probably in retaliation for the public release of aerial photographs which clearly show collapses of the sea cliffs below the separation plant and access roads. The mine has habitually refused entry to all-comers, including municipal and state officials. Farm lands in the area have been used to illegally stockpile garnet sand, without the requisite land change applications being submitted. The terms of the water use licence are disputed with alleged illegal dumping of sewage into the sea. Significant non-permitted construction activity has occurred in the sensitive and protected inter-tidal zone, involving the dumping of large boulders onto the beach. The list of alleged and actual transgressions goes on and on.

What is materially important is that no action has been taken against MRC by any of several responsible state departments. From an environmental and labour perspective alone, were this any other entity, serious consequences would certainly have followed.

How can a company with such a dubious operating record seek, yet again, to be granted rights to mine the Xolobeni mineral sands resource on the Wild Coast, particularly against the wishes of the community which lives there? Why, one wonders, is another attempt being made under this particular minister of Minerals and Energy, evidently linked to the Guptas and Zumas?

A culture of impunity inevitably breeds arrogance and contempt and erodes the rule of law. Why has Caruso and MRC, despite his denial of involvement, not actively and openly taken steps to curb the actions of people allegedly related to its subsidiaries Xolco and Blue Bantry? Perhaps they too, like Caruso, have crazy ideas of "great vengeance and furious anger"? Why otherwise was the Amadiba Crisis Committee attacked twice last year, forcing the community to seek a legal injunction against the perpetrators?

What has occurred amongst the Amadiba community, and at Tormin, are the inevitable result of the consequences of impunity. These events echo our current national malaise, exemplified by state capture. The corridors of power have been corrupted. The fish rots from the head, eventually contaminating the entire body politic.

The murder of Bazooka Rhadebe did not occur in isolation. It is part of a pattern. Marikana was the result of the state choosing to protect corporate rather than the communal

interests. In the case of both Tormin and Xolobeni the police appear to support the interests of the mine, not the community.

The resource curse leads corporations, front companies, compromised politicians and corrupt government departments to sacrifice community and individual rights at the altar of mammon. Unless we stop this rot we risk becoming as exposed as Bazooka Rhadebe, an MK hero, apparently cast aside for profit. Surely we cannot accept the consequences of impunity?

Ashton is a freelance and commissioned journalist, author, researcher and columnist.

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## Bazooka murder plot thickens

By ZWANGA MUKHUTHU on April 1, 2016 in [News](#) · [0 Comments](#)

A new twist has emerged in the murder of Sikhosiphi “Bazooka” Rhadebe, a fierce opponent of open-cast titanium mining in Xolobeni who was gunned down outside his home.

Hours before two gunmen killed Rhadebe in Mdatya, Xolobeni, last Tuesday, they had hijacked two brothers in Port Edward. The vehicle, a white VW Polo, matched the description of the car that had been used in the hit on Rhadebe.

Police spokeswoman Lieutenant Nqobile Gwala said the brothers were hijacked in Ellis Drive last Tuesday morning. However, Gwala said they were only investigating a case of car-jacking and kidnapping.

“The victims were stopped by two gunmen who pointed firearms at them. They put the driver in the boot of his car. We cannot divulge the merits of the case as the investigation is at a sensitive stage.”

Members of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, which Rhadebe chaired, said new information was coming in “bits and pieces”.

Committee members Mzamo Dlamini and Nonhle Mbuthuma said they were told Rhadebe had been shot in the presence of the men whose car was hijacked.

“Comrade Bazooka refused to be pushed into the car and was shot outside his house. The hitmen then went to Port Shepstone [KwaZulu-Natal] and were picked up by another car. The hijack victims were then freed and called for help,” Dlamini said.

Hawks spokesman Brigadier Hangwani Mulaudzi said the kidnap victims were unharmed.

He confirmed the vehicle had been used to commit murder. Rhadebe’s murder docket has now been classified “national priority”.

The murder of 53-year-old Rhadebe, who spent 10 years leading the resistance to mining in Xolobeni by the Australian mining company Mineral Commodity Limited (CMR), has shocked the nation and caught the attention of pressure groups around the globe.

The Legal Resource Centre (LRC) – South Africa’s largest public interest human rights law clinic – said the hijacked vehicle was released to its owner before the Hawks could inspect it, much to the shock of both entities.

The centre said it has arranged for an independent forensic pathologist and an independent ballistic expert to form part of the postmortem procedure with the state doctor at the St Patrick’s Hospital in Bizana, where the body lay.

“The centre would like to stress that a comprehensive, independent investigation that ensures justice for Rhadebe’s death is required,” read a statement from the LRC.

Police have been encouraged to draft an operational plan to cope with the masses expected at the funeral.

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## Entrepreneurs of the soil could not be more different

by Chris Thurman, April 01 2016, 05:00

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2016/04/01/half-art-entrepreneurs-of-the-soil-could-not-be-more-different>

ENTREPRENEUR: a word that covers all manner of suffering, sin, and even salvation.

We are told that small businesses hold the key to economic growth in SA, but the entrepreneurs I'm friendly with constantly have to fight red tape, the taxman, currency gyrations, corporate competitors, and crony capitalists. Perhaps their collective failing as entrepreneurs is their honesty — they aren't willing to soil their hands with kickbacks, bribes, or intimidation.

The Guptas started out as entrepreneurs. So did the Ruperts, the Oppenheims, and the Kebbles. Edward, Duduzane, and Khulubuse Zuma are entrepreneurs. Julius Malema is (we are led to believe) a reformed entrepreneur. And every time I read a news article about Mineral Commodities, known as MRC, and its subsidiaries or partners, I see executive chairman Mark Victor Caruso described as an "Australian mining entrepreneur".

Caruso is a highly unlikeable figure; one could label him callous, smug, creepy, brazen, but perhaps all you have to know about him is that he thinks it's cool to allude to Pulp Fiction when sending threatening e-mails.

Sadly, these characteristics don't necessarily distinguish him from other odious "entrepreneurs".

Nor does the fact that his company seems bent on destroying South African communities and ecologically sensitive landscapes. From the Tormin mine at Vredendal in the Western Cape (notorious for its bullying of workers and environmental damage), to the proposed Xolobeni mineral sands project on the Wild Coast, it's clear that Caruso and his henchmen — for that is what they are — will stop at nothing to, as the MRC website euphemistically puts it, "optimise shareholder value by securing and developing mineral resources".

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FORMER mining ministers Buyelwa Sonjica and Susan Shabangu were happy to support Caruso and Co at various points in the past decade (having a minister or two in your pocket is good entrepreneurial practice, of course).

But MRC has met stiff opposition: from the Vredendal miners, from the late Pondo King Mpondombini Sigcau, from activist John Clarke, from attorney Richard Spoor, from film maker Ryley Grunenwald, and most vociferously and bravely, from the Amadiba Crisis Committee.

The killing of Sikhosiphi "Bazooka" Rhadebe, the chairman of the crisis committee, is the brutal culmination of a series of attacks on those protesting against the Xolobeni project. Caruso's response is telling: his affirmation that MRC is "in no way implicated" in Rhadebe's murder may or may not be legalese disingenuousness, but it is patently untrue. Anyone undertaking the risks and reaping the rewards of mining is complicit in the fortunes of the people affected by its activities. Not implicated? Was Lonmin not implicated in the Marikana massacre?

If this is what it means to be a successful "entrepreneur", there is a special place in hell reserved for Caruso and his ilk.

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## **ANC, Bazooka family asks for calm around his death**

Friday 1 April 2016 08:00

SABC

The ANC and the family of slain anti-mining activist Sikhosiphi 'Bazooka' Radebe have asked people to refrain from speculating about the motive for his death.

Radebe was gunned down at his house in Plagweni in the Eastern Cape.

He was also vehemently opposed to proposed titanium mining at the Wild Coast and was a taxi boss.

Local ANC secretary Vukile Mhlembana has called for calm.

Mhlembana says, "What we are saying as the organisation is that let people calm down and let the police do their work, otherwise these speculations are going to confuse police when doing their work."

<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/99253c804c3d7231b8bffc0c0d1c749/ANC,Bazooka-family-asks-for-calm-around-his-death>

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## **How the assassination of Bazooka Radebe will affect future mining in Xolobeni**

The week that was in Mining with Warren Dick, editor of Mineweb.

Siki Mgabadelo | 30 March 2016 03:28

**SIKI MGABADELI:** I know it's Tuesday and not Monday, which is normally our day for Mining Mondays, but since it's the start of the week we thought we would take a look back at some of the stories of the past week and then of course, what to expect in the week ahead in the mining sector. On the line we have Mineweb editor, Warren Dick.

Warren, thanks for your time this evening.

One story that really made some big headlines over the past week has been the assassination of Bazooka Radebe in the Eastern Cape. He was an anti-mining activist from what I understand. I think just give us a little bit of background on this particular story.

**WARREN DICK:** Yes, obviously something I've been learning about over the course of the last week as well, but essentially Bazooka Radebe was the Chairperson of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, a civil activist and there's been a long running battle to mine the coast near Xolobeni, I hope I've pronounced that correctly, in the Wild Coast in the Eastern Cape, and as we understand it Bazooka was – Radebe was approached by two men, that by one account appeared to be or were appearing as policemen and they asked him to step outside his house and he got into the back of a car with blue headlights at some stage and was shot eight times and found by his son and that was last week, Tuesday evening, and he actually had wind that there was a hit list with his name on it. So he got wind of that a few hours before that and made calls to other members of the Crisis Committee as I understand it and then shortly thereafter was essentially assassinated.

**SIKI MGABADELI:** What does this relate to? Which mining companies are actually looking at possibly mining that area?

**WARREN DICK:** Yes, so as it's been reported, there's an Australian company called Transworld Energy and Mineral Resources and as I understand it they applied for a licence to mine in that area, as far back as 2011 and then were given the licence. And then due to the role of Bazooka Radebe and some of the villagers and the people, the residents of the area that opposed it, that licence was rescinded by the DMR and they've since applied, I think, last year for a new mining licence to mine titanium. So any of you that remember that St Lucia affair where Richard's Bay Minerals wanted to mine the St Lucia wetlands, something they've done quite successfully in Richard's Bay, in the areas around Richard's Bay. It's a similar type of operation as I understand it.

**SIKI MGABADELI:** And in the licencing process itself, as you say, initially a licence rescinded and then they subsequently applied for another one. What are the things that are considered, in the environment is a big factor, right, when they are going to issue a licence?

**WARREN DICK:** Absolutely, yes. So there has to be a comprehensive social environmental plan. There has to be a plan. Obviously the company that receives the mining licence has to undertake to fund any rehabilitation costs associated with mining, and that includes a social plan as well as various applications through other agencies for things like water use licences

and those types of things which all look at the pollution and the effect that the operation will have on the environment. But this has been staunchly opposed by the residents of Xolobeni and they've been successful up to this point, obviously we wait to hear what DMR does with that application for the mining licence.

**SIKI MGABADELI:** All right, we'll watch that closely. Thanks Warren. Warren Dick is the editor of Mineweb.