



## **EFF STATEMENT ON THE JAGGERSFONTEIN MINING TRAGEDY**

Monday, 12 September 2022

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes with frustration the collapse of a mine in Jagersfontein, a small town in the Free State, that took people's homes, cars and belongings with.

It is reported that in the early hours of Sunday morning, the community woke up to deafening sounds of screams, of a collapsing mine coupled with mud slides and heavy floods ravaging through the small town.

The EFF notes that while media reports claim that the evacuation of the town's residents was underway this morning and no fatalities have been reported, the affected people have been stranded for hours with no food or any way forward on where they will lay their heads tonight. Some people are still unaccounted for while others have been admitted in nearby hospitals.

The EFF calls on the management of the mine and the government to hastily relocate the people to places of safety and moreover provide psychosocial support for the people they have dumped at the hospitals without counselling. We pray those who are missing are found alive and well and further wish those in hospital a speedy recovery.

The EFF further wants to stress how this disaster speaks to the many mining incidents that have been reported to the department before that to date have not been attended to, and those that are swept under the carpet by profit raking foreign mining companies who have zero regard for black people's lives, particularly mine workers and mining communities.

This disaster ought to further remind us of the painful reality of mining communities; how they do not in anyway benefit from the minerals taken from their forefathers' land but are the direct recipients of the consequences of unmonitored mining. Various mining communities across the country have lamented over the years about how mines are not adhering to their social labour plans, how they are not undertaking any social responsibility initiatives and how they continue to kill our people by polluting the air and groundwater systems thus birthing respiratory illnesses such as TB, pneumoconiosis and silicosis, and waterborne diseases such as cholera. These communities are also at the receiving end of catastrophic disasters such as the one that occurred in Jagersfontein while those who profit from the mines are sitting in the comfort of their mansions and holiday resorts with no consequences.

This disaster also confirms our long standing stance that there are much deeper and more urgent issues in the mining industry that the government has refused to attend to. Instead they have opted to use our people's frustration by creating an impression that they are doing something by clamping down on illegal miners, an act that is insignificant in the bigger scheme of things. Especially when it was never cited as one of the reasons South Africa has over the years spiralled down to number ten on the world's worst mining areas to invest in.

The EFF further calls on the authorities to thoroughly investigate the cause of the disaster and hold the mining license holder fully accountable for all the damages incurred by the people of Jagersfontein. Those who have lost their houses must receive houses within a reasonable timeframe and not be subjected to community halls and strange accommodation as is the norm following a disaster of this magnitude.

The EFF wants to emphasise that it will closely monitor the situation and ensure our people get justice.

The EFF further wants to thank our Public Representatives and groundforces who reported to the disaster stricken area and have been with our people since the early hours of the morning. We would further want to extend our appreciation to community members who formed a united front against a disaster which could have had much more devastating effects had they not intervened, while waiting for emergency personnel and a government that has zero disaster management capabilities.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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