



Mail Guardian

Marikana

The fate of the families

Marikana: Introduction



What happens to the families?

Niren Tolsi and Paul Botes set out to document the effect the tragedy at Marikana has had on those left behind

What happened during the fatal miners' strike in Marikana in August 2012 did not end there.

Thirty-four people were killed in the massacre on August 16. Those miners who survived and were arrested say they were tortured and brutalised by the police. People also died, violently, before and after that date.

Families were left without husbands, brothers, sons and fathers. And a daughter and mother: Pauline Masuhlo was an ANC councillor in the Madibeng municipality and a campaigner for better social conditions in the squalid informal settlements around Lonmin's shafts. She died from injuries visited upon her during a government clampdown of Nkaneng informal settlement on September 15.

The nuclear and extended families in rural areas — and sometimes satellite "second" families at Marikana — were shattered by the violent manner in which their loved ones died, and are still struggling to deal with the trauma. But they are also struggling in a material sense, deprived of their breadwinner's wages and remittances, so important for survival.

Rural communities have lost people who put aside portions of their wages to buy football kits and balls for the local teams they grew up in and coached. They have lost mediators, drinking companions, and elders who advised on issues affecting them. Churches have lost pastors and choir members. Shebeens have lost scallywags.

Marikana has changed families and communities across South Africa. It has certainly changed how they see their relationship with their democratically elected government.

This supplement is the first step in a project that started in December last year and will continue for another year at the very least. It

August 16 2013 marks the one-year anniversary of the Marikana massacre when 34 miners, mostly employed by Lonmin platinum mines, were killed at Wonderkop.

This special 24-page supplement and the accompanying online HTML5 package and iPad App, all published today by the *Mail & Guardian*, examines the consequences of the killings through the eyes and voices of those most affected: the families of the dead miners.

The project was initially conceived when *Mail & Guardian* picture editor Paul Botes attended the funeral of Molefi Ntsoele in the remote village of Diputaneng in the Lesotho mountains in September last year. It took shape after Botes

discussed his idea of a wide-ranging focus on the families of the dead miners with senior *M&G* writer Niren Tolsi.

The resignation of those tasked with attending to the dead miners' families highlighted the vulnerability of the families and their communities. It became important to understand the consequences of the Marikana killings on families and communities that were already marginalised and impoverished.

This supplement is the first

step of that project. It will grow to include all those who died before and after August 16, including the policemen and security guards and other miners.

The project will culminate in a book of family portraits and testimonies, with all profits from sales going to the families, and a photographic and multimedia exhibition that will return to the areas where the miners originated.

We are grateful to the Open Society Initiative for Southern African for its support.



Not all the interviews with the families of the dead miners have been included in this supplement. The remaining interviews will appear in the online version

seeks to answer the question: What happens after Marikana?

These are complex answers that cannot be fully documented by two journalists, but the project does seek to move away from the mainstream media's snapshot pictures and easy headlines. It aims to investigate the real cost of Marikana to families, to communities and — through this microscope of the intimate — this strange new South Africa that Marikana has ushered in.

To do this requires being embedded in space and subject. It requires returning the journalistic form to its best traditions of immersion and social investigation. It requires time, or "slow journalism". It requires returning.

Santu Mofokeng's vital documentation of sharecropper Kas Maine was not an Insta(nt)gram exercise. The work of social documentary photographer Chris Ledochowski in the Cape Flats emerged from him "becoming" a part of those communities.

These are singular individuals with different training, drives, demons and curiosities. But their art of composition, light, drawing out texture, depth and attention to detail was honed in some way by the social documentary approach to go back, to return.

In doing so these characteristics of photography transmuted on to the national narrative and how South Africa understood itself. Their work

shed light, added depth to knowledge, texture to understanding and brought out the detail in this country through the little-big stories they told so artfully.

Neither Paul Botes nor I consider ourselves in the league of Mofokeng, Ledochowski or the many fine writers and photographers who have documented this contradictory and sometimes cruel country with such bravery and intelligence.

But, with this project, we do subscribe to a belief that journalism should be thoughtful, responsive, empathetic and relevant.

We believe this is important in an age when journalism can be reduced to superficial, instant news. We believe it is important because we, South Africans, need to understand what happens after Marikana: to the families, and what is happening to ourselves and to our democracy.

This is vitally important. In the eight months we have spent with them, we have seen take deep root in the Marikana families the overwhelming sense that they have been abandoned. By the government, by Lonmin and by their fellow South Africans.

There is scant political will to provide the financial and structural mechanisms required to ensure that a stuttering Farlam Commission of Inquiry delivers quickly on its mandate to uncover the truth of the fatal strike and give closure to the families.

reported any warning from the soldiers before the shooting started. Most did not know where the shots were coming from; many were convinced they were being shot at from the helicopters."

The miners congregating on the Marikana koppies is also reminiscent of the Pondo Revolt of 1960 and their gatherings and massacre on Ngquza Hill in the Eastern Cape, a province where the majority of the dead miners came from.

So too is the sight of the helicopters that hovered over the miners and the massacre last year.

Jonny Steinberg, in his paper, "A Bag of Soil, a Bullet from Up High" — included in the book *Rural Resistance in South Africa*, documents a source's retelling of the massacre at Ngquza as passed on by a previous generation: "The whites took Botha Sigcau, king of Eastern Mpondoland, up in a helicopter. They flew him to Ngquza, and there the helicopter stopped, hovering just over the rebels. Then the white commander put a rifle in Botha Sigcau's hands, and he said: 'Whether we end this rebellion is your decision to make. We can do nothing if you cannot fire the first shot. The choice is in your hands, not ours'. Botha Sigcau thought for a little while, took the rifle from the white man, aimed at the rebels below, and fired the first shot. It hit a man in the chest and killed him. That is how the massacre began."

South Africans have seen the footage of the Marikana massacre. The country knows who fired the shots. What we as a nation are still hoping to answer are the more political and philosophical questions of who took the gun from the metaphorical "white man" and why the first shot was fired.

These are questions this project hopes to answer with the voices of the families of those who died in Marikana.

It is a mammoth project. It involves driving long distances into the deep recesses of rural South Africa — and getting lost, often. It has meant navigating the roles of traditionalism and patriarchy involved in a community deciding who gets to tell what stories, and in how grief is confronted. It has meant encountering the indomitable spirit of South African women often. We hope to do their stories justice.

Marikana: The families

'How do we survive?'

THABISO THELEJANE
PABOLONG, EASTERN CAPE

The peach trees in Makopano Thelejane's yard are withering in the late autumn dryness.

The peaches in the front are for the neighbours and the ones at the back are for the family, Makopano tells us in a lighter moment. That's what her husband, Thabiso, used to say.

"He was someone who loved people," she says. "And even now my neighbours ask if the agreement about the peaches is still the same."

Even if it was, pickings would be slim. The four trees at the front are gaunt. The haggard shadows of the 20 or so at the back are lengthening on the parched land as the sun disappears behind the Maluti mountain range.

Nothing in this bleak place, which feels unforgiving, but also ignored, appears inclined to flower any time soon.

In the rondavel the couple shared in Pabolong, a village between Matatiele and Mount Fletcher in the Eastern Cape, there are baptism certificates, rosary beads and a crucifix. Thabiso, says Makopano, was a devout Roman Catholic. There is a Bible on the bed, family photographs and a transistor radio that Makopano says she can't listen to any more because bad news "stresses" her out. Joy, like the peach trees outside, appears to be withering in the bleakness that has followed Thabiso's death.

Makopano says Thabiso had planned to build a sturdy fence around the property so they could keep out the animals and start growing vegetables again. Nothing will be built, though, for Makopano does not even have the R5 she needs to release her cellphone from the neighbour, who charges for solar power. There is no electricity or running water in Pabolong.

Thabiso Thelejane was 56 when he died at Lonmin. He was an out-of-contract worker, so neither his son, Kopano (30), nor his daughter, Khetso (31), qualifies for the lifetime education benefits the company has promised the children of the miners who were killed in the Marikana massacre.

Both children are unemployed and are too old to qualify for a child support grant. There was no provident fund and Makopano, who is 53, is too young to qualify for a pension. There have been applications to the government to allow her a special dispensation to draw a pension, but these have so far proved fruitless.

Where her husband used to provide about R2000 a month for the household and the children while they were looking for jobs in Cape Town, there is now nothing.

It is May 28 — more than seven months after Thabiso was killed. Makopano fidgets constantly when she speaks to us: with a pair of spectacles, with a Bible. In the lines of her hands there are specks of the mud she says she mixes and packs and repacks because of the stress — "to keep busy".

Her voice cracks when she speaks of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry. "I don't know if the truth will come out of the commission ... It's still sitting, it hasn't disappeared, but they are still killing witnesses," she says.

"While the commission is sitting, they should discuss what happens to



MAKOPANO THELEJANE: The widow of Thabiso at their home in the Eastern Cape where gaunt peach trees cast shadows on the rondavel. Thabiso's framed baptismal certificate (bottom) hangs on the wall of their home



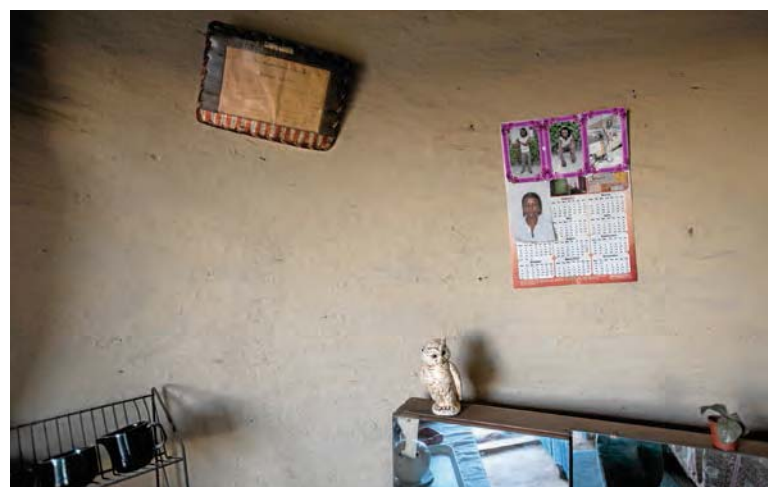
us," she adds, her anger rising. "How do we survive, because we don't have our husbands to send us money? How do we survive? There is no discussion about that!"

Every time she returns from the commission, "all the people I owe are waiting for me for payment".

She previously used some of Thabiso's monthly remittance to buy vegetables to sell either in the Eastern Cape or in Marikana, where she often stayed with her husband. But now she does not have enough seed capital to start generating that money and is just sinking further into debt.

The food hampers that arrive sporadically from the department of social development sometimes contain "expired food. I got rotten potatoes once and I called Khuselwa [Dyanty, a representative of the families' lawyers at the Socio-Economic Rights Institute] for help. She called the South African Social Security Agency, who said, 'no, we don't help the people of Marikana'."

"Lonmin could have just fired them and sent my husband home," says Makopano. "Then at least we



would have been suffering in poverty together."

They were together on August 16. The previous night, over supper, Thabiso had told Makopano the miners were preparing to meet Lonmin the next day at 10am when there was to be a report back on their demands: "Then we didn't talk about work politics, we talked about family politics. We talked about depositing money for my son in Cape Town and my husband said we would discuss

it further when he returned the next day with answers from Lonmin."

In the morning, Makopano and Thabiso ate breakfast together. He told her to buy meat for the evening meal and left for the koppie. She went shopping and returned to do the laundry as helicopters hovered overhead. "I did my washing, especially his uniform, because he expected to go back to work. I washed his overalls and ironed them, ready for him to go back to work."

Makopano cooked chicken and rice for supper and waited for her husband, who usually returned from the koppie after 3pm.

Later, she heard gunshots. News filtered through of the shooting.

"I uttered words that I shouldn't have uttered," she says. "Where was God? It was day, but it felt like night, like darkness all around me."

Makopano ran from her shack towards the koppie. "People were running towards me from the mountain, from everywhere, warning us that something terrible had happened."

Unable to get too close, or to find answers in the chaos, she called her landlord, who was also a miner. But he had been arrested and had not seen Thabiso.

"That night I went to the mortuary. My husband was one of the first bodies there. "They said I had to wait until Lonmin got there before I could do anything with the body. That I mustn't do anything until Lonmin organised things, but that they would only be able to get there on Monday," says Makopano. "Then they told me to choose a coffin."

Marikana: Abandoned



Final resting place: The grave of Andries Ntsebeza in Sasolburg

Death, disrespect and indignity

Instead of care and compassion, the relatives of those killed at Marikana have been treated like 'freeloaders' and 'the families of criminals'

On the first day of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry in October last year, advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza, senior counsel for the families of the deceased miners, stood up, acknowledged the rows of empty seats at the Rustenburg Civic Centre, and asked where those families were.

"These are not just figures," said Ntsebeza. "These are people. These are people who lost their loved ones."

"The commission is about dead people ... it should be about justice done to the families of those who died," he said, emphasising that the presence of the miners' families was integral to the humanity of the proceedings.

He then warned: "Let this commission never go down in history as a commission that never cared."

Judge Ian Farlam postponed the sitting until arrangements were made by the government to transport families from as far afield as the Eastern Cape, Lesotho and Swaziland to Rustenburg to bear witness.

But the initial absence from the commission of the people most affected by the massacre at Marikana spoke of how they were seen by those with power — in government, at Lonmin and at the commission — as a mere afterthought to the more political question of why 34 miners were killed by police on August 16 2012.

The families became unwanted baggage on the subsequent journey either to obfuscate or to clarify that answer.

It was the first in a litany of experiences for the families that further cast them — chillingly — as nothing more than anonymous poor blacks, relations of allegedly violent criminals — uneducated, lazy rural folk lacking in intelligence and sentience.

This contempt is displayed when the state makes unilateral decisions for the families and when government funds for miners' funerals appear to be siphoned off.

Local municipalities were tasked with the disbursement of the R25 000 the government provided for each family to bury its dead.

When Xolelwa Mpumza asked a

government official why the family had received only R5 000 of the R25 000 for her brother Thobile's funeral, she was told she "must understand how politics works".

"I was told that they didn't have a budget for this [funeral] because they didn't know people will die. I was told I must not put pressure on government because there is nothing to be done about it," said Mpumza, who has yet to receive any information about the outstanding money from the Alfred Nzo municipality in the Eastern Cape.

Rural funerals are expensive communal rituals where cows (costing between R8 000 and R12 000 each) are slaughtered, along with sheep (about R3 000 each) to feed mourners and the renting of tents, chairs and public address (PA) systems tests household budgets that are already stretched.

While in some cases the full payout was received, in others loved ones are sceptical about whether — not having been given cash in hand — they received the full value.

Families have raised questions about whether state-chosen funeral service providers and government officials may have skimmed the top off their grief. They have talked of inadequate numbers of chairs and portable toilets for mourners, of no PA systems and of whether the groceries bought by government officials and delivered to families really cost as much as they have been told.

Nandipha Yona says she was too grief-stricken to remember much about her husband Bonginkosi's funeral, but her relatives had given government officials a shopping list: "They didn't get everything from the list, they just bought what they thought was good for the family and I don't have any receipts so I don't know if they spent all the money or not," she said.

Mongezi Pato is still waiting for R8 000 owed by government for his son Mvuyisi's funeral and spoke of receiving packages of food for the ceremony that had evidently been opened and pilfered. Mniselwa Jijase, was asked by a government official to sign that he had received

R15 000 for his son, Akhona's funeral — which he hadn't. "I refused to sign and I have yet to see the R15 000," he said. Such disdain, say families, is replicated when they seek assistance from government departments or Lonmin for social assistance or to formalise documents.

Makopano Thelejane said she received hampers from the department of social development containing rotten food and when she inquired was told her husband was a "criminal" and the government would not help her.

When Betty Gadlela questioned officials at Lonmin and the Masakhane Provident Fund about why she and her five children had to share her husband Stelega's provident fund with a woman she considered to have been his mistress, she was told "not to bring my Swazi ways to South Africa — the rules are different in this country".

At a meeting in June with the department of social development in Lusikisiki, all the families present said they were treated like freeloaders and a "nuisance" by government officials who are unable to comprehend what the death of their breadwinners actually means for their survival.

Families say they have not been consulted on what programmes the government plans to initiate to sustain their livelihood and are cynical about those proposed — mainly vegetable-growing and sewing schemes — because they include broader community involvement.

Andile Yawa, whose son Cebesile is one of the dead, echoed the view of the majority of the Eastern Cape families when he said he had seen "too many government projects fail because too many people get involved. It becomes about self-interest," he said. "If the government wants to start a project for the community, they must. But don't put my son's name to it because his family have no control over it, yet will take the blame when it fails."

When the Socio-Economic Rights Institute, which represents the families of the dead miners, wrote to President Jacob Zuma on their behalf in June, asking for assistance of R1 500 a month until the commission is concluded, all they received was a letter confirming receipt.

The general feeling among the fathers, mothers and widows of Marikana is that they are being treated this way because they are perceived as "the families of criminals".

It is a perception that appears to fit the state's version of Marikana, which constructs what happened there around the use of muti, of armed, violent miners with a bloodlust and, significantly, of its police having acted in self-defence.

But it robs families of their dignity and raises questions about whether the government has the political will to ensure the Farlam Commission is granted the wherewithal to do its job: find the truth.

A lawyer involved in the commission, who asked to remain anonymous, said the commission has been characterised by "cluelessness" since its inception: "The department of justice and the commission started this investigation with no idea whatsoever about what it would take to do the job properly."

The lawyer said this was evident from the "supine response of the commission to the police arresting and torturing witnesses".

Another lawyer, who worked on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is familiar with the current application to the Constitutional Court to rule on whether government should cover the legal costs of arrested miners, said there were more explicit provisions in the TRC's Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act to ensure that victims were treated with care and compassion and that witnesses were protected.

"In some instances, witnesses were held outside of the country to ensure their safety. There appears neither the money nor the will to ensure witnesses at the Farlam Commission receive adequate protection," said the lawyer, describing the commission as "politically charged".

A source at the commission said there were concerns that a key witness who had been present at one of the murders that preceded the massacre would not testify "because he is known to police and he is still working underground, where 'accidents' can happen".

This undermines the legitimacy of the commission — especially in the eyes of the Marikana families who

are feeling increasingly traumatised by what they saw at the hearings.

The Farlam Commission lawyer said the rules of procedure, especially around cross-examination — which has been criticised for being random, meandering and prolonging the process — should have been firmer. Instead, the commission has been allowed to drag on for months after its initial four-month period.

This would suit the lawyers for Lonmin and the police, where pockets are deep, but not the lawyers of victims and their families — as evidenced by the application for state funding by those representing the miners arrested by police at the kopie, which is being opposed by the government.

In papers filed with the Constitutional Court the estimated legal spend on advocates representing the different parties at the Farlam Commission recreates a David versus Goliath scenario.

The police, based on state attorney rates of R150 000 a day, retain seven advocates, costing the government R3-million a month. Lonmin employs five advocates at commercial rates that are estimated at R2-million a month, while the single advocate for the arrested miners is on an actual rate of R340 000 per month.

It is understood that other public-interest law firms involved at the Farlam Commission have slashed their legal rates because of constrained funding exacerbated by the commission's extension.

"What is it about Marikana that prevents the government from doing the right thing?" asked the lawyer who worked at the TRC.

The lawyer working at the commission would not commit himself to speculating about whether the government was acting nefariously or whether the "ineptitude" of the justice department in dealing with problems arising at the commission was "malice by negligence".

As the commission stutters on, children are left unsupervised at home while mothers attend its hearings, job hunts are stalled, lives are in flux, crops go untended and hunger pangs grow sharper.

Ntsebeza's question — "Where are the families?" — is ignored.

This shames the Farlam Commission, Lonmin, the government and the rest of the country.

Marikana: The families

'He dreamed of flying'

MOLEFI NTSOELE
DIPUTANENG, LESOTHO

The dead fly to Diputaneng. Or sometimes they ride, strapped across horses.

For the living, it's a three-hour drive out of Maseru and past Semonkong on increasingly steep and treacherous roads before parking at the scattered hamlet's local school and completing the last two and a half hours on foot or horseback.

The footpaths wind along the mountains' ravines as the oxygen thins to a breathtaking nothing with every step higher into the remoteness.

Molefi Ntsoele's coffin was flown to his homestead in the area in September 2012 – weeks after the miner had been shot and killed at Marikana.

Ntsoele's final journey is tragically ironic for, as his wife Matsepang says, "he'd worked hard and always dreamt of flying somewhere to go on a holiday... but that never happened.

"He used to break down to me and say that mining work is slavery, that his superiors never bothered to care about the miners, but he worked to make an example to his children... He worked to better their lives."

The Ntsoeles have four children, aged between five and 19 years old.

Matsepang says her husband would send home R3 000 every month to help the family survive, but had also invested some money in their future. The couple appeared determined to use the money Molefi earned in the mines to improve their lot. There is a house built in Maseru for the family but with extra rooms that are rented out for additional income, and a stall purchased in the Semonkong location intended to be developed for the same purpose.

Matsepang says that because of her husband's death, construction on the Semonkong plot has not started. A two-room extension planned for the Maseru house has also stalled.

"The dreams I had with Tata Molefi I hope to continue, though, with the money that Lonmin will pay me," she says, of the two-tranche provident fund payment from her husband's employers.

Widows will receive the second half after the anniversary of the Marikana massacre.

Matsepang says her husband was "experienced in financial matters", keen on business ventures and always searching out new ways to earn more money. This is evident when she riffles through his papers looking for a provident fund document: in the file is a catalogue from a cosmetic sales company's pyramid scheme. Molefi's provident fund payout was also among the largest of all the miners who died at Marikana.

Like many miners, Molefi Ntsoele had also been investing in livestock since he went away to the mines in 1996. Matsepang can count more than 60 sheep, three horses, seven donkeys, 20 goats and 22 cows milling around in the kraals outside her rondavel in the mountains.

Remarking on her livestock, she says: "There is a saying that your heart is otherwise if your animals don't multiply."

Her own heart was captured by Molefi while they were in high school, she says. "He lived in nearby Halabane and I just fell in love with him."



MATSEPANG NTSOELE: The widow of Molefi says her husband was 'experienced in financial matters' and he contributed well to the provident fund as well as investing in livestock. This should help Matsepang and their four children survive in the harsh environment of the rural Lesotho mountains. The family photos show Molefi and Matsepang when they first met



Matsepang's mother died in March and on the night of her cleansing ceremony on May 5, one of her shepherds, Tsidiso Metsing, and Molefi's aunt, Mmamokoena Mokitimi, gather in her rondavel warming themselves against the sort of cold that makes even ink in a pen harden.

In the light of a paraffin lamp, Matsepang produces family pictures, including one of her as a teenager in her high school uniform, and a picture of Molefi as an 18-year-old. There is another of Molefi in his min-



ing overalls, his helmet tipped rakishly to the left.

"We had a child out of wedlock when I was 17 years old, he was 19. We were already living together at the time, but this year we would have been married for 20 years," she says.

Mokitimi chips in, laughing: "They were hungry to get married. He was naughty, very naughty."

When photographer Paul Botes produces pictures taken at Molefi's funeral, including one of Matsepang with her sister and Molefi's sister, we can hear the lump in her throat. She doesn't remember the picture being taken, or even the presence of the photographer – who, as one of only two white men present, would have been hard to miss.

Matsepang apologises for not remembering the photographer. The next day, describing her response to the news that her husband had been killed in Marikana, Matsepang says: "I was in a twisted mind, asking:

'Who is this Molefi that you tell me is dead?' That is why I don't remember people who came to the funeral. I can't remember the funeral."

It had been snowing in the mountains in August last year and Matsepang had been locked in at her village. She had spoken to Molefi the Sunday before the massacre, but further attempts to contact him during that week had been fruitless. She had put it down to bad reception because of the weather and only found out about his death when she received a telephone call the following Sunday.

In the early morning, when the sun is just nibbling at the Thaba Putsoa mountain across the valley from Matsepang's home, the Breipal river that separates the two outcrops flows as if it were cut glass.

The shepherds, returned from the drinking session that followed the cleansing ceremony at Matsepang's father's home last night, are nursing slight hangovers as they release

sheep from their kraal and gingerly feed the horses stalks of maize.

The only sign of the wider world are the vapour trails streaking the sky, left by planes that occasionally fly overhead. Marikana and the Farlam Commission of Inquiry, set up to find out what really happened, appear to have been frozen out of this world, so close to heaven. Those are part of another world.

A world Matsepang is not eager to return to.

She finds the commission useful "for information about my husband" but does not trust what is happening there. "I don't have faith in the truth being uncovered because of the testimony of the police and the National Union of Mineworkers – they are not respectful."

Matsepang says the commission is also dragging on too long, and every day she spends there is a day better spent ensuring her family's financial future.

Marikana: The families

'Don't go to the front'

SEMI JOKANISI

LUSIKISIKI, EASTERN CAPE

Every day at Lonmin's Karee Four belt shaft Goodman Jokanisi walks with the ghost of his son, Semi, who died in the days leading up to the massacre at Marikana on August 16 last year.

Father and son shared living quarters on the mine, but they worked different shifts. They would pass each other in the cages going up and down, or steal a few minutes together above ground if circumstances allowed. "Sometimes when I go to work I feel a spirit where I used to meet him," says Goodman (57).

He is still haunted by anger, hurt and unanswered questions about how Semi died — the initial official version was that he was killed during the massacre, but it was later found that he had died three days before. "I'm still struggling at work asking questions that nobody can answer," says Goodman. "But I feel, sometimes, that everybody must die."

Goodman is a calm, quietly spoken man, but his anger at Lonmin is plain. "At some point at work I will say something that I don't mean, like: 'This company doesn't like black people, all it does is drain our energy.' I think later that that was uncalled for. But I am still angry."

He adds: "After I buried Semi, I was not feeling well at all. I wanted to resign and go back home and suffer there. I didn't want to suffer here."



But the financial reality of having to support his five remaining children and Semi's five children made retiring to mourn in Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape impossible.

He is now the sole breadwinner for his large family, but is hoping that, when the Farlam Commission finally completes its work, Lonmin will keep its promise to allow families to replace the deceased miners, so that his son Anele may join him.

Goodman has taken over the responsibilities of his son, who was a winch operator, which includes completing a house he was building in Lusikisiki in anticipation of his marriage in December last year.

"I will not let him down," he says. "This house he was building was beautiful. Semi liked beautiful things ... He wanted expensive things, but I can't afford all of that. I will put a cheaper gate because I can't afford



GOODMAN JOKANISI: The father of Semi at the cleansing ceremony held at Marikana. Semi's room (left) at the family home in the Eastern Cape



the one that he wanted. But I will complete it."

In Lusikisiki, his wife Joyce mourns for both the loss of her son and what it has meant for the running of her household. "I cry sometimes because the children carry bread to school with just Rama [mar-

garine], not even with jam," she says.

Goodman has been a miner since 1980 and says the migrant nature of the work "is like living in a waiting area because your home and family are back there [in the Eastern Cape]" and that, while conditions have improved because of trade

unionism and there is less tribalism, "the employers still only care about production".

Goodman was on leave at home when the strike began and in their last telephone conversation He had warned Semi that strikes are dangerous. "I told him I know it's hard not to be involved in the strike, but when he is there he must not go to the front, and he should remain neutral".

Semi had gathered some friends to help his father to pack all the items he was taking back for the household in Lusikisiki as he prepared to go on leave, and Goodman bought them some beers in appreciation.

"We sang traditional songs on the way to the bus home," he says. "Semi was a good boy."

'Be my valentine'

JULIUS MANCOTYWA

LADY GREY, FREE STATE

The R392 between Lady Grey and Sterkspruit bears the apocalyptic scars of dissent: every few kilometres the tar is blackened by rows of burning tyres, and stones, rocks and other detritus of protest litter the way.

En route to the Mancotywa home near the border between South Africa and Lesotho, a policewoman says of the February protests to move the municipality from Lady Grey to Sterkspruit: "We have our own Marikana here ... Be careful of the stones on the road."

Nowellington Mancotywa misses her husband, Julius Tokoti Mancotywa, dearly.

She misses the twice-yearly visits he made home from the mines, especially around Christmas when he brought meat, presents and clothes for her and their eight children. Nowellington yearns for him to be pottering around the house again, or painting, or planting in the garden.

She feels the loss of the discipline he brought to his children to do chores and contribute meaningfully to the household: "A man has that road to his sons," she says.

"When my sons refused to bring home the cattle or sheep I would threaten them by saying I would report to their father. Now I have no threats left."

She feels her children have become



listless and aimless since their father's death — especially because of its violent manner.

"My husband didn't think he was in danger. He was a religious man, a very sweet man, and he never caused havoc. I think he was in the wrong place at the wrong time," says Nowellington of the massacre that claimed her husband.

She suspects his absence contributed to the death of her eldest son, Mandisi, who was buried in February. He had been murdered by a friend in a local shebeen in a dispute over a cellphone.

"I don't believe the murderer will stay long in jail, she says. "That is how it is in this country. I feel like I could kill him with my own hands if I see him."

Death stalks Marikana families. Nowellington wears that shell-shocked look that is murder's gift to surviving loved ones. Her family says she rarely eats and throws up



NOWELLINGTON MANCOTYWA: The widow of Julius rarely eats and throws up constantly

constantly, as if in disgust with the world.

In the kitchen of Nowellington's two-room house there is a "Be my Valentine" frame from her husband, and a Kaizer Chiefs poster.

Julius liked to watch the local teams play football at a nearby ground when he was at home. He was also "Amakhosi for Life" and some of the happiest memories Nowellington has were when Chiefs played Mamelodi Sundowns.

Her murdered son Mandisi was a Sundowns fan and the rivalry between father and son was intense.



Marikana: The families

'I don't speak ill of the dead'

STELEGA GADLELA
DVOKOLWAKO, SWAZILAND

Seventeen-year-old Mayenziwe Gadlela's favourite poem is Karen Zamberia's *My African Tears Sing a Song*.

She likes it "because it is about poverty in Africa, and nature". In rural Swaziland, at her family's collapsing home in Dvokolwako, the opening lines from the poem resonate: "I don't bother to laugh/when I see cattle and a hut,/a boiling pot,/broken hopes."

The poverty is abject. A boiling pot means more *lijoti*, the wild pumpkin that grows in the area, which Mayenziwe and her four younger siblings are tired of eating for their single daily meal. Cows mean that money vital for survival is being spent on traditional rituals such as cleansing ceremonies for the dead.

The family has almost no furniture aside from two beds, a cupboard, some tables and a few plastic chairs. There is nothing quaint about this starkness. Or anything romantic about the roof that has collapsed into one of the three rooms in the house.

"I've been married for 18 years," says Mayenziwe's mother, Betty. "I don't deserve to live in a house like this."

The suffering, she says, was there even before her husband, Stelega, was killed at Marikana. "I don't speak ill of the dead but I am in a desperate situation and I must say that my husband didn't take good care of this family."

Stelega was erratic in sending money home to his family. When he started working in the mines in 1995, he would send between R500 and R600 a month. This dried up in about 2000, compelling Betty to take a job cooking at a local school. She gave this up in 2007, after their relationship had improved and he asked her to move to a new home in a different area.

Stelega had started sending money home again — about R1200 a month — but this dwindled once more in 2009. So did his visits to his family. The little money deposited into the family account was also further depleted by garnishee orders on loans that Stelega had taken — for what purpose, Betty does not know.

By this time Betty was aware that Stelega — who has six children by four other women whom Betty was caring for early in her marriage — had a "concubine" at the mines, a woman called Lulama Ndabeni.

Her husband had asked her to visit him at the mines in 2007, but she had to delay her travel and when she did arrive in Marikana "I discovered this other woman".

"I fought that woman," says Betty. "But in the middle of the fight something stopped me. My husband was there, but he said nothing — he was always shy and silent when he did something wrong."

She stayed with them for three weeks and "was very bitter". Especially, Betty says, because her husband "would say he didn't have any money for his family, but I saw him producing money and paying many people who came to claim debts there".

Betty claims that most of the debts Stelega had incurred were for money borrowed and clothes bought for Lulama and her four children.

This left a sour taste in her mouth, because she says Stelega "never



BETTY GADLELA: The widow of Stelega, who is battling to look after her family amid the abject poverty of rural Swaziland, has been told that she must share the money from her husband's provident fund with the woman he was having a relationship with at the mine



bought clothes for my children, but every time he came home, he was wearing new clothes ... I was living here, suffering with my children and the life that woman lived was very different. I have no furniture, nothing. She had everything."

"The situation was difficult and very emotional for me. I would cry very often," she says. "My children would ask me for small things, like socks, and I would cry because I didn't know where to get the money from. I would lock myself in the room

and just cry. I thought of committing suicide sometimes but then I would look at the children and ask myself what would happen to them if I go.

"In the beginning I didn't feel like I was in a polygamous relationship," says Betty. "I thought she was just his concubine and that the relationship wouldn't last ... But, eventually, I had to accept the polygamous relationship because I had to share the provident fund with her."

Betty says she was surprised when the Masakhane Provident Fund

sent her a letter in which they confirmed "that both spouses and their respective children were both legal and financial dependents of the deceased" and that there would be an even split of the money between them.

Betty says she would like to "save the money and earn interest". But she has already spent a lot on clothes for her children, who last had anything new to wear two years ago, and on cows for her husband's cleansing ceremony, which will mark the end

of her mourning period in August.

Despite the family difficulties, Betty says she was happiest when Stelega visited and played with their children, because of the joy they expressed at having their father home. She still keeps some of the letters they sent to each other — a practice they stopped in 2006 when he bought her a cellphone — filled with "all the things lovers say: 'I miss you. When are you coming home?'".

As she has no grown children, Betty is prepared to take her husband's place on the mines if Lonmin finally allows families to replace their deceased. She is "looking very hard for a job" and says she will move her offspring out of the crumbling house to wherever she finds one.

In the mornings, the shoes for Mayenziwe and her three younger schoolgoing siblings wait polished and shiny on the doorstep of their home. They emerge, neatly dressed, with their backpacks, for the hour-long walk to school.

It is difficult not to remember the words of Zamberia's poem, in a textbook in Mayenziwe's schoolbag: "My grandmother lives in a hut./Since one isn't enough,/she built herself three;/if bricks were free/she'd build herself one strong home,/but they are not, so I cry for her."

Marikana: The families



MABHENGU SOMPETA: The mother of Mzukisi says the death of her son led to the death of her husband who died two weeks after Mzukisi was buried 'like a dog'

'Mandela would have come to us'

MZUKISI SOMPETA LUSIKISIKI, EASTERN CAPE

The massacre at Marikana has sent ripples of death through the families of the men that died that day.

Mabhengu Sompeta says that when police killed her son, Mzukisi, on August 16 2012, they also killed her husband, Mxolisi.

"He died two weeks after we buried my son on September 2," she says, speaking through eyes glassy with tears. "The death of my son led to the death of my husband."

She remembers sitting with her husband and Mzukisi's son, Sinawo (12), watching television, when Mxolisi suggested switching channels "to see what is happening in Marikana".

Mabhengu says: "They were showing videos of the killing and I wasn't watching what my husband was doing. My grandson was watching my husband and said: 'Grandma! Grandma! Look at grandfather, he is rolling his eyes.'"

Mxolisi Sompeta had suffered a heart attack. He died that night.

Mabhengu says Sinawo, who was close to his grandfather, "always following him around and showing him how to use the technology in the house", is now living with relatives in Bizana so as "not to be reminded" of that night, and losing his father also. "Sinawo is doing better now, but even before his grandfather died, he used to just sit on his own and cry alone," says Mabheng.

There was also a "special bond" between Mzukisi and Mxolisi.

"When my son would visit from the



mines, he would always bring a bottle of brandy for his father and they used to sit together in the kraal and talk for hours," says Mabheng. "You would feel the difference when my son was here."

He was the sole breadwinner and would buy meat for the family meals. And he would bring gifts for his siblings and his nephews and nieces. Four grandchildren live with the Sompetas, and of their five remaining children, three are unemployed and still live at home.

Mxolisi was a miner at Bleskop and New Mine and when he retired, he used his savings to build up the

family compound. He then returned to work as a security guard at a local school to supplement the couple's pension.

Mabhengu's eyes fire up when she talks about the police killing her son, and the lack of support her family has received from government since the twin tragedies. "The nature of my son's death is unacceptable!" she rages, incandescent with anger.

"I don't know how the government functions, because [politicians'] children go to school, they can eat, but my grandchildren have nothing. Because we are poor, they treat us like dogs. Look at my son's grave;

he was buried like a dog without a proper tombstone because we have no money."

Mabhengu says the government "doesn't understand our plight and don't know how to respond to it".

At a June meeting between the Marikana families and the department of social development, Mabheng says the widows "had to cry and beg" to get food parcels.

She is also sceptical about the sustainability of the state's proposals for crop-growing schemes in the area, aimed at the Marikana families and their broader communities.

Her criticism extends to the



highest office in the land: "With [President Jacob] Zuma, he didn't respond to the families of Marikana and he didn't come to listen to us. He didn't apologise or show remorse for what his police did, just like his commissioner [Riah Phiyega]."

"Mandela would have come to us," mutters Mabheng in the interview, which was conducted while former president Nelson Mandela was critically ill in hospital.

"Marikana was a sign of how things have changed since Mandela," she says. "Now, we have a black government killing poor black people. Now we have black-on-black oppression."

Marikana: The families

'They cut his life short'

CEBISILE YAWA
CALA, EASTERN CAPE

Andile Yawa took his first train journey 36 years ago — to the mines. He was 20. "I didn't have a blanket, only a blazer, and my mother had bought me a pair of second-hand shoes that were too tight," he says. "That was the first time I wore shoes."

Andile worked at Vaal Reefs Mine as a rock driller until he "fell ill in 2008 with phthisis disease" and was medically boarded. As is customary, he asked management whether one of his seven sons could replace him.

Instead of his eldest, Luxolo, Andile chose Cebisile, the third-born, because he was "stronger" than the others, "patient" and a "perfectionist" — qualities ideal for a rock driller.

Cebisile worked at Vaal Reefs for a few years before moving to Lonmin, where he worked for just under 18 months. He was 25 years old when he was killed at Marikana.

Andile Yawa is a proud man, as hard as the hills he lives in, with a steely resolve and a clear notion of duty and tradition.

With his family gathered around him on the evening of Cebisile's cleansing ceremony, he closes his eyes and shakes his head slowly.

"I blame myself for my son's death because, if I didn't fall ill, Cebisile would be alive now. I'm still broken about it," he says. "They cut his life short and he was a young man who still had to make a family, who still had to build a life."

He speaks in a measured tone. Men do not cry in this part of the world. In the Mthingwevu mountain range near Cala in the Eastern Cape real men are bound to their families and by tradition. They go to the mines because the only other option is subsistence farming and survival can be capricious.

Andile and his older brother Zamla became miners because their family was "very poor" and they "had no options" as neither had gone far in school.

The brothers started on R60 a month at Vaal Reefs and with that money built the family home and put their two younger siblings, who are now teachers, through school.

Cebisile's remittance of R5 000 a month was used to buy goats and cattle and to fence off farming land and a plot where he planned to build a house. It was also used "so that his siblings could go to school".

Mandla, one of Cebisile's younger brothers, is studying for a BSc degree in agriculture at Fort Hare University. His fees, together with school fees for his four younger siblings, have now been taken over by Lonmin.

But Andile says there is still a "huge gap" in the family's budget. They get by on his disability grant of R1 200 a month and the R290 each he gets for his son Siphelele and his two youngest children, the twins: Mkhuleli and Khuselwa. There is an additional R290 for Cebisile's three-year-old daughter, Sisipho.

Cebisile had much in common with his father. "He was a man among men," says Andile. "He never had bad intentions. He took a lot after me in that regard."

A neighbour who has come to bear witness to the cleansing ceremony remarks upon the similarities during the formal speeches: "He loved farming, like you. He was disciplined, like you ... He is a great loss to this community."



ANDILE YAWA: The father of Cebisile blames himself for his son's death. Cebisile also worked at the mine but when he fell ill he sent Andile to take over his job. Tradition dominates in this rugged area of the Eastern Cape and the men slaughtered a cow and a sheep for Andile's cleansing ceremony



Cebisile's siblings agree that he was the strong, silent type. Much like their father.

The kraal, the sacred place where the ancestors roam, and where much of the cleansing ceremony takes place, including the sacrifice of animals — so that the ancestors will accept Cebisile's soul — is also the site of happy memories.

It is where the family celebrated the "many things" Cebisile or his siblings achieved. A sheep would be slaughtered and "we would sit

around and I would tell the stories that my mother or father used to tell me," says Andile.

The most recent celebration the patriarch remembers was when Cebisile returned from the mines in December 2011 to weed and plough his father's fields. "He did it so well that I had to slaughter a sheep just for him and then slaughtered another one for his other brothers and sister."

Since his time on the mines some things have changed, Andile says,

but many others have not. It was "risky" being a rock driller in the 1980s, but "I had no options".

"I didn't go to school and I had to ensure that the children had a better future. Cebisile too, he wasn't good in school so I decided to send him there and he also supported his family."

The emergence of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in 1982 helped workers to realise that they had rights, he says. "Before, every time you went on leave you

had to resign and then start a new contract when you came back ... with NUM we had permanent contracts."

Unionism also helped with wage disputes because previously "the employers used to come between workers and make [wage disputes] a tribal thing and before long there would be killings between Zulu, Pondo and Xhosa," he says.

However, he resigned from NUM in 1996 when, during a strike, the union agreed that workers would return to work while wage negotiations continued: "I'm not sure if they presented our demands or they just told management that they were controlling the situation. I resigned because of this dishonesty. This is what happened at Marikana as well. [NUM and management] ignored the miners again."

Despite his son's death and his personal experiences of migrancy and the mining sector, Andile insists that mining is not a bad thing.

"It plays a big role in South Africa because uneducated poor families can light their candles and have bread. But [the mining companies] are still not in touch with their employees' needs. They need to improve the employees' lives," he says. "But I have all that I have because of the mines."

Marikana: The families



'I don't know about my future'

MAFOLISI MABIYA
MSIKITHI, EASTERN CAPE

Phumeza Mabiya was married at the age of 15 – and widowed at 18 when her husband Mafolisi was killed at Marikana.

She became a 19-year-old single mother in March this year when the couple's first child, Precious Siwakhe, was born.

Having left school in grade nine to marry, she has few career opportunities, especially in the remote village of Msikithi, near Collywobbles in the Eastern Cape, where the Mbashe River carves rounded outcrops into the hills.

"I don't know. I don't know about my future," she says. "My future is blurry because even the offer to let someone from the family replace my husband at Marikana is uncertain. My husband was the only provider and now I don't know."

Phumeza says when she left school she didn't dream of a career, "but I wanted to be somebody big".

Now, she would rather work on the mines than take up Lonmin's offer to pay for the education of the dead miners' dependents and study further.

She had not known her husband when their marriage was arranged between their families in 2009.

"He approached me in a field and I ran away from him," she says. "The next day I was brought here [to Mafolisi's family home] and it was explained to me that this man was to be my husband. He wanted to communicate with me first, but it happened in a more arranged way. The elders from my husband's family went to my family and they agreed that I would be married to him."

Her husband was 25 years old when they married.

Mafolisi had worked at Lonmin since 2007 and Phumeza first went to live there as a 16-year-old expecting "the advertised life of Egoli", but was dismayed by the squalid conditions of miners there.

"I had high expectations of the place," she says. "I expected to see showers, bathrooms and nice big houses. Instead I was surprised to

find people cooking on open fires on the ground and shacks close to each other. There was no running water, no electricity and I was doing the washing in a nearby river."

Every day of the strike was torture for Phumeza and the other miners' wives she had befriended at Marikana, as the violence escalated and people started dying in the days leading up to August 16.

"The other wives and I were very afraid during the day," says Phumeza. "We would stay outside and wait for our husbands and only switch on the lights when we saw them coming home from the mountain."

The police had increased their numbers at Marikana in the days before August 16 and Phumeza remembers them "going around door to door, breaking into homes and arresting miners who had not gone to the mountain".

She remembers three police hippos being a constant presence at a local supermarket in the town and having an abiding anxiety over "whether you were about to be arrested or not".

"I didn't understand these policemen wearing balaclavas and standing on the hippos all the time," says Phumeza. "But now it seems they were the police from the areas where the miners came from ... So that they could point out the miners from their different areas without being recognised themselves."

By Phumeza's account, Mafolisi appeared to be quite active in the strike, leaving for the mountain before sunrise and arriving home after sunset, when he would eat, and then go out to hold meetings with the other miners, or update those who had not been to the koppie that day.

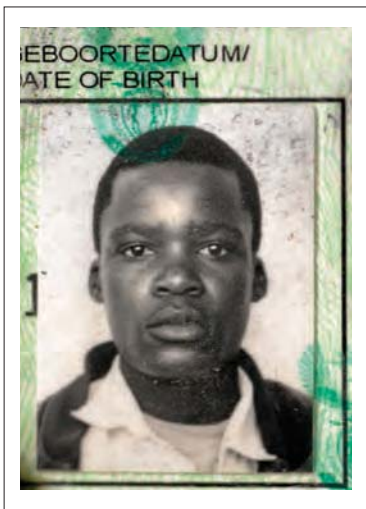
"He always had a big mouth and was always speaking," says Mafolisi's mother, Nosegaene. "That's why I used to call him 'Mgxe' when he was younger."

Buhle, Mafolisi's two-year-old child from another relationship, had been staying with the couple during the strike. Phumeza remembers pleading with her husband on August 15 to spend time with the child, who was running a fever and "crying all the time".

"He said he had to go to the moun-



PHUMEZA MABIYA: The widow of Mafolisi is only 19 and the single mother of a child who was born in March this year. Mafolisi's mother Nosegaene (top left) says her son, who 'was always speaking', was a keen Kaizer Chiefs fan who died in his favourite team's shirt



tain and left. I took her to Paul Kruger Hospital in Rustenburg on August 15 and then she was transferred to Moses Kotane Hospital," she says. "I insisted he come to the hospital but he refused. I stayed at the hospital with Buhle and I had my husband's phone so I had no contact with him."

When Phumeza returned from the hospital on the evening of August 17, it was to an empty home.

She was told by one of her friends about the shooting at the koppies. No one knew where her husband was.



Friends confirmed his name was not on the initial list of arrested and deceased miners at Lonmin's Number One shaft, and he was only confirmed dead on August 20, when his body had been identified at Phokeng mortuary.

"I didn't take the news well and I felt like I was dumped in a place where I knew nothing," says Phumeza. "I packed everything in Marikana and I came back home."

Mafolisi lies buried next to his father, Rhuntyulwana, a miner who worked at Anglo Platinum's Bleskop mine in Rustenburg. Nosegaene says

her husband's brother, Khunuse, also worked there and was active in a strike at Bleskop in the 1980s.

"The violent nature of the strike was the same," she says. "The way my son died was the same way as my brother-in-law: Shot with a bullet in the head."

Mafolisi was a huge Kaizer Chiefs fan and he died in his favourite Amakhosi top. His mother says he loved watching and playing football and that, at his funeral, his friends draped a football jersey, with his number 11 on the back, over his coffin.

Marikana: The families

'All I do is think, think and think'

MAKOSANDILE MKHONJWA
BIZANA, EASTERN CAPE

It is the women who bear the burden of Marikana's aftermath — the grinding poverty that crushes like stone on mealies.

There are two widows in the Mkhonjwa family: Nokwanele, the wife of Makosandile, who died at Marikana; and her mother-in-law, Mabhayingana, whose husband Mziselwa died of an illness six months before that.

"After my husband died, my son was the only hope I had," says Mabhayingana. "He would deposit money for Nokwanele and me. Now I have nothing."

Makosandile would send home about R3000 a month for his wife and two children, Onke (8) and Asinalo (3), and another R1000 whenever his mother asked him. Mabhayingana has seven children remaining, three of whom are still in school and live with her. The two women's dependents each receive child support grants of R290 a month.

"My son was a parent to me," Mabhayingana says. Following her husband's death he told her "not to worry, he would take care of me ... Now life is a big worry. All I do is think, think and think. I just feel stuck without a hope about the future."

As rural women living near Bizana in the Eastern Cape, they say their prospects are limited: Nokwanele has no qualifications and there are no jobs in the area. With their husbands dead, leaving home to find jobs as domestic workers means their children would "have no one to cry to".

There are concerns about putting food on the table and paying medical bills for Nokwanele's children, who fall ill all too often — with an ongoing skin disease and, since the massacre, head and stomach aches.

"Before, my husband would give me money," says Nokwanele. "Now I have to use the clinic where the services are not good, and then they just refer me to the hospital."

A trip to Bizana — including taxi fare, a meal for her and her child, plus doctor's fees and medicine — works out to about R500 a time, she says. Sometimes she just gets traditional medicine from a nearby healer. At R100, it is far cheaper.

Nokwanele breaks down and cries when she talks about the effect the death of her husband has had on her two children: "Onke's teacher told me that it looks like he is thinking about his father's death a lot; he didn't pass last year. His teachers say they are worried because he is thinking too deeply."

"My child used to be bright in school, but now he has lapsed. At the funeral, he asked 'I heard people are here from Johannesburg, but where is my father?' He kept asking and asking this question."

Onke's father, says Nokwanele, was a dependable man. He was a member of the Ethiopian Church of Zion, and he advised the community elders. He was also a traditional man — they first met at a cultural dance.

Makosandile signed on as a contract worker at Lonmin in 2002. He was made permanent only about eight months before he died, so his provident fund was meagre. And he had been dismissed before the strike began.



NOKWANELE MKHONJWA: The widow of Makosandile is worried about the effect the death of her husband has had on her children, whose schoolwork is suffering. Makosandile's mother Mabhayingana, whose husband died six months before Marikana, also relied on her son to send money home



He was a teetotaler and didn't smoke. But Makosandile was partial to a few sips of *umqombothi* (traditional beer) when he was a young child, his mother says, which earned him the nickname "Mthai": "When the old people drank *umqombothi*, they used to give him a little in a cup. When you make a lot of *umqombothi*, the extra is called *mthai*," says Mabhayingana.

With their son and husband gone, the two women are increasingly desperate because of their situation, and more disillusioned with the Farlam Commission set up to find answers

to Makosandile's death.

Nokwanele says the testimony of representatives of the South African police and the National Union of Mineworkers was evasive and "has just put salt into our wounds".

"I want to go to the commission because I want to know what happened to my husband," says Nokwanele. The reality, however, is that, if she does, it means her life is on hold.

"I didn't harvest recently because I didn't grow anything after Marikana. I need to return to my fields and to my livestock for my children,"

she says. "They also feel better and calmer if I am here when they fall sick. When I am at the commission there is nothing I can do for them."

At the time of the interview in May a letter from the widows of Marikana to President Jacob Zuma asking that the government provides each family with R1500 a month until the Farlam Commission has concluded its findings had still gone unanswered.

Nokwanele says it's "difficult to forgive and forget our loss because when the social workers came in August to give us food hampers, and then for the funeral again, they promised us that we will never starve, but we are starving".

She says the last food parcel the family received from the government was in August, just after the massacre.

"I feel sorry for my children, because they look like orphans. There was only one breadwinner in this family and even though I am alive I am finding it difficult to provide for them," says Nokwanele.

"When my children are crying for food I am also crying inside because there is nothing that I can do. Sometimes I feel like killing myself."

Both women are hoping to get the child support grants changed to foster care grants. At R800 a month,

these might help to relieve the joyless poverty in which they find themselves.

Matters have been compounded by poor administration. Mabhayingana says the department of home affairs incorrectly captured her birth date, pegging her official age this year at 51. A boost for one's vanity, but a bureaucratic roadblock when you're suddenly faced with financial uncertainty and denied a pension that could provide some succour.

The family is attempting to resolve this with the department, with no luck so far, says Mabhayingana. Sitting stooped on a pile of bricks, she certainly does not look 51 as she mines a pouch for snuff with a plastic spoon that she carries on a string around her neck.

Working the snuff into her nostrils, she looks down disconsolately: "When my grandchildren tell me there is no food here when my son's wife is at the commission it makes me feel like the police have devastated my heart and my mind. I start speaking to myself. I couldn't cope with my son's death," she says, taking another sniff.

"You see me, sniffing this snuff? The elders said I should take some because I needed to destress. I never used to before, but I do now."

Marikana: The families



AGNES NTSENYEHO: 'Food is first,' says the widow of Andries who is growing vegetables outside the family's tin shack in Amelia township near Sasolburg

'Now we cut clothing out'

ANDRIES NTSENYEHO
SASOLBURG, FREE STATE

Every month Agnes Ntsenyeho makes a weekend-long round trip from Amelia township outside Vereeniging to Ficksburg, where she steps over into Lesotho to get her passport stamped.

Despite being married to a South African for 23 years and having five South African children she has raised in this country, she has neither a permanent residence permit nor citizenship — previous applications have been rejected.

To stay legal she must pay R340 taxi fare for the trip every month. It is money she can ill afford, especially since her husband, Andries, was killed at Marikana and the family no longer receives the R3 500 he sent home each month.

"If I could get that permanent residency I can save that money and also spend that extra time with my children," says Agnes.

Thabang, Agnes's oldest son, has just started working, so there is relief in sight for the household that otherwise survives on child support grants for the two youngest children, Moeketsi (11) and Refiloe (8).

"When my husband was alive we would buy what we liked. Food and clothing. Now we cut clothing out," says Agnes. "Food is first. The most important thing is mealie meal because I am growing vegetables outside that I can sell to people or eat."

Outside Agnes's tin shack, in the lengthening afternoon shadow of



Sasolburg's heavy industry, the yard is neat and spotless. The vegetables appear to be flourishing.

Nthabiseng (20), Agnes's oldest daughter, is a serious-minded but effervescent young woman. She says it is "safe" in Amelia, but "boring because there is no electricity". There are other basic amenities lacking. "We dig our own toilets here," she says.

Because she has no identity document Nthabiseng cannot take up Lonmin's offer to pay for her education and that of her siblings. She wanted to study science but a local university has rejected her application despite a letter from the department of home affairs stating that it is processing her identity book. Bright and ambitious, Nthabiseng is determined to study next year.

Documentation is proving a stumbling block for the Ntsenyehos. Agnes says that since her husband's death Post Bank has threatened to close the



family account.

"They saw that I am not a permanent resident and they have given me three months' notice that they will close my account," she says. "I'm worried about what will happen to the second [provident fund] payment

from Lonmin, which is due in August, if this happens."

Agnes breaks down several times during the course of the conversation. It is clear that her husband's death and its consequences weigh heavily on the 41-year-old, despite her huge,

easy smile and bullish attitude.

Andries, she says, was a "strict man who liked disciplined children", which is immediately apparent to anyone who meets their well-mannered, slightly shy brood.

He had a sweet tooth for "tinned peaches and home-made cookies". He loved *Rambo* films and listened to Ringo Madlongozi and Sotho music.

But his big passion was Kaizer Chiefs. "He was one of those crazy ones, always shouting at the television, saying 'I would have scored that' and calling the referee a moegoe."

They had spoken to each other on August 16. Agnes had heard that police were rolling out barbed wire at Marikana's koppies and called to check on her husband.

"He was in a taxi on his way to the koppie," she says. "I pleaded with him not to go, but he said: 'I must go because we are fighting for our rights.' He said he would call back later because he had to switch his phone off at the koppie. I am still waiting for the call."

Marikana: The families

'The pain still feels new'

JACKSON LEHUPA
MATATIELE, EASTERN CAPE

Culture and poverty con-
nive in the aftermath of
the Marikana massacre.
For Malukisang Lehupa it
means marking the end of
the mourning period for her husband,
Jackson with a "semi-umembulo" — a
cleansing ceremony.

"We can't afford to slaughter a cow
now," says Malukisang, "So we are
doing half the ceremony now and
slaughtering a sheep. Maybe in a few
months when I can afford a cow we
will do the ceremony properly."

Malukisang burns the mourning
clothes she has worn since her hus-
band's death after going through the
shave-and-slaughter routine of the
umembulo — her head is shaved clean
while the sheep's throat is slit and it is
skinned.

But there are marked differences
from a full ceremony. There is no bath-
ing with the bile from the gall blad-
der of the sheep: that will be reserved
for when the family can afford a cow.
The gathering is also much smaller
than the usual large communal com-
memoration: sheep feed fewer peo-
ple than cows. A full ceremony, says
Malukisang, can cost between R20 000
and R30 000.

Malukisang says she was deter-
mined to do the partial ceremony in an
attempt to move on from the death of
her husband. "[But] I still feel the pain,
even though I took off the mourning
clothes. In my heart, the pain still feels
new".

Sitting in the mild May sunlight,
outside her rural home between
Matatiele and Mount Fletcher in the
Eastern Cape, a few nicks appear on
Malukisang's increasingly bald head.

Her neighbour, Malebohang
Motsokotsi, who is shaving, mutters
in her defence that "if the razor was
sharp, this would be done a long time
ago — [the problem is] these Chinese
fong kongs [cheap goods]".

The yard bears testimony to
Jackson's death. A new three-room
house is close to completion.

"It was only three lines of bricks
from the foundation when he died,"
says Malukisang. She has used the
money from Jackson's provident fund
to complete it.

Malukisang's son, Sthembiso (18),
still feels the loss of Jackson in an
acutely masculine way. "I miss my
father a lot," he says. "When I think of
the things he promised to do for me,
it's painful.

"Last year he promised he would
take me to the mountains [for circum-
cision] in December, but he died. My
mother said I would go this year in
December. It is important that I go to
become a man, but it is expensive."

A traditional Xhosa blanket, he says,
costs about R500 and one needs to go
to initiation school with a suitcase of
new clothes.

Malukisang bemoans the fact that
she cannot even afford winter clothes
for her children.

The lack of money since Jackson's
death has aggravated Malukisang's
emotional distress. Without the
R2000 he sent home every month, she
must rely on the child support grants
received for four of her six children.

The burden has been slightly allevi-
ated by three of her children attend-
ing boarding school in Johannesburg,
which Lonmin pays for. But she did
not have the proper school and iden-
tity documents available at the begin-
ning of this year so both Sthembiso,
who is in grade eight, and Sizwe (14)



MALUKISANG LEHUPA: The widow of Jackson could only afford to pay half of the cleansing ceremony for her husband. There was no money to slaughter a cow, but her head was shaved clean and the hair burnt. Malukisang has used the money from her husband's provident fund to finish the three-room house he had started building, but there is no money for winter clothes or to send her son to initiation school



have remained with her and will only
register at a boarding school next
year.

Sending children to boarding
school has helped Marikana families
to cope with the financial vacuum
created by their husbands' deaths —
and ensured their children get a

solid education while being properly
fed and clothed. But Malukisang still
breaks down and cries uncontrollably
when talking about the struggle
to safeguard her children's future.

"What is really painful is that the
police who killed my husband, they
are still working and their children

are eating every day," she says. "But
my children are going hungry and
the government does nothing and the
mine does nothing."

"The thing that is stressing me
more and more is that the people
who are standing by the widows
are being killed. Steve [Khululekile,

an organiser from the Association
of Mineworkers and Construction
Union, or Amcu] was killed in May
and now I am worried about [Amcu
president Joseph] Mathunjwa," says
Malukisang. "He supports us, he is a
father to us, and I am worried that he
will be next."

Marikana: The families

'I want nothing to do with Marikana'

MPHANGELI THUKUZA
NGQELENI, EASTERN CAPE

Nokwandisa Thukuza broke down and sobbed as she recalled being summoned to the gathering of elders that her father-in-law, Tshoshotsho Thukuza, had convened to inform her and the rest of the family that his son, Mphangeli, had been one of the 34 miners killed by police on August 16 2012.

Tshoshotsho intervened. "I can't allow this to continue because you are taking us back and we are trying to move forward," he said. "I've moved forward, and I don't want to move backwards. I told you I want nothing to do with Marikana."

Tshoshotsho is a sternly traditional Xhosa man, a self-styled "Abraham from the Bible", whose virility he attributes to "having God in me". His family once numbered 13 children, 29 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Since Mphangeli's death, he has only three sons remaining.

Like any patriarch, Tshoshotsho's word is the law in his house. The interview ended.

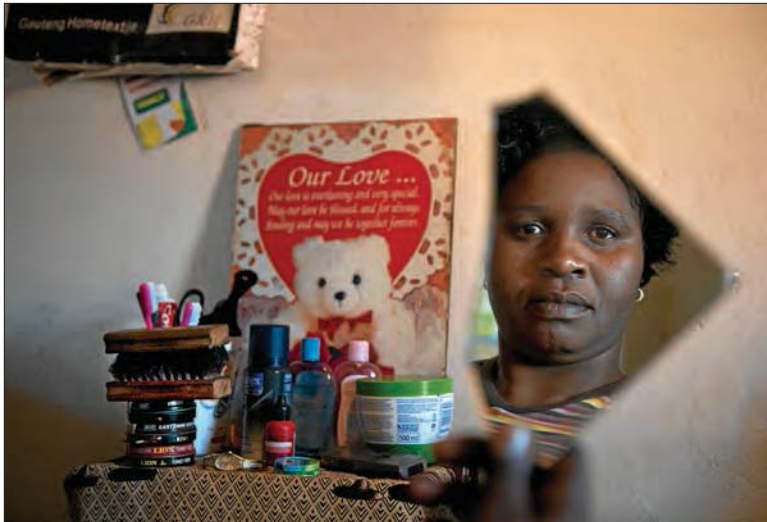
Mphangeli's second wife, Nolundi (35), moved silently to complete household chores and to prepare bread and juice for the visitors.

Nokwandisa (39), who had returned home from work in Northam that morning, went to play with her junior wife's children, especially the four-month-old baby born in January this year, about five months after Mphangeli's death.

That the family rarely spoke about Marikana or their loss — as per decree — was clear.

Earlier that day on May 9, Nolundi had told representatives from the National Development Agency (NDA) and the department of social development that she had been refused a birth certificate for the baby by nurses at the nearby Old Bunting government clinic.

"They said they were punishing me



for giving birth at home," she said.

The three women from the NDA and the government were visiting to assess whether the Thukuzas' land and resources could sustain a food garden programme.

The project would "provide training to plant and grow spinach and cabbage", which, according to the department's Nokonwaba Mxego, the South African Social Security Agency would then purchase from the family.

Tractor rental, seeds and water would be provided by the development agency.

It was a project that Tshoshotsho said he would consider, together

with his eldest son, Mketheni, but he remained noncommittal.

Months later, in "New Stands" location in Northam, where Nokwandisa rents a room extended out of an RDP house, she is eager to have a picture taken with her hatchback car.

Away from the rural Eastern Cape, it is a sign of her financial independence — which she revels in, as earning money means more freedoms, she says.

Nokwandisa has been working underground as a bell operator at the Tumelo platinum mine for the past two years. She had been estranged from Mphangeli for a few years and in that time had found a job and



NONKULULEKO NGXANDE: The widow of Mpumzeni is still in mourning for her husband and has not ventured past her front gate for a year. Life at the homestead in the Eastern Cape is at a standstill

Now I am alone. If I have a problem, I am alone with it," says Ngxande.

She married Mpumzeni in Cape Town in 2000. He had been working as a farm labourer in Grabouw, earning R150 a week. When he got a job at Lonmin's Karee mine in 2007 it seemed a boon for the couple, who had two schoolgoing children.

as usual that day and went to the koppie. He came home at 2pm for lunch as he always did. Then he left, and never came home again," she says.

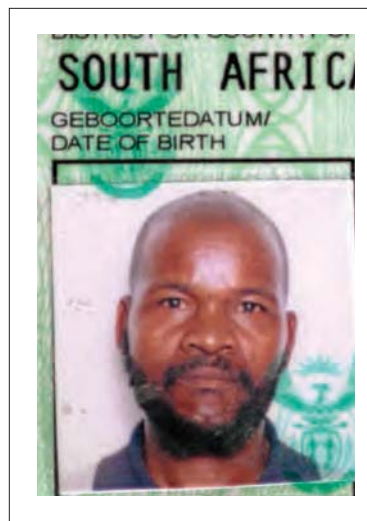
Distraught after hearing about the shooting at the koppie, she went to the Andrew Saffy Hospital at the mine, but could not find him. "On Saturday," says Ngxande, "his uncles came to Marikana and told me to stop looking for him because he was dead. I fainted."

Almost a year on, there are few signs that Ngxande has reconciled with her grief. At a cleansing ceremony held by the government at the Marikana koppies in July she was inconsolable, viewing the site of her husband's death, and collapsed with grief again.

"He was a parent to me. If I had a problem I would tell him about it.



NOLUNDI THUKUZA: The second wife (above) of Mphangeli lives in the Eastern Cape with her husband's traditional family strictly run by his father Tshoshotsho (far left). Mphangeli's first wife Nokwandisa (top left), with whom he had been trying to reconcile, lives in Northam where she works at a platinum mine



had another child, Phumeza, who was born in 2008. The couple had been attempting to reconcile when her husband died. Mphangeli had called just before six on the morning of August 16. "He asked again how Phumeza was doing and said he wanted to spend more time with the

child because he was unfamiliar with her," says Nokwandisa.

Even though Phumeza was not Mphangeli's biological child, she will be considered as such according to Xhosa tradition, says Nokwandisa, so her husband was "making an effort" to know her.

'If I have a problem, I am alone with it'

MPUMZENI NGXANDE
NGQELENI, EASTERN CAPE

Nonkululeko Ngxande grieves, with the wind as her only companion. A framed head-and-shoulders photograph of her husband, Mpumzeni, is the sole decoration in the sparse front room of her almost empty three-room house in Ngqeleni in the Eastern Cape.

As a grieving Xhosa *makothe*, the 39-year-old widow doesn't leave her home and, wearing her black *izile* or mourning dress, she sits on the floor to receive visitors.

Ngxande has been in mourning for a year, since her husband's death. She has not ventured past her front gate.

She remembers August 16 2012 in Marikana: "[My husband] woke up



Now, life stands still.

Renovations to their home have stopped and deep fissures in the walls let in water when it rains. A proposed new rondavel remains half completed. The unveiling of a tombstone for Mpumzeni's father has been put on hold.

In the shadow of the Marikana

massacre and after footage of police dragging Mozambican national Mido Macia to his death tied to the back of a van went viral, there is only one question on the increasingly angry lips of Ngxande's male relatives and neighbours: "Why are our government's police killing us like this?"

Marikana: The families

'Why is it always cabbage?'

THOBISILE ZIMBAMBELE
DIPUTANENG, LESOTHO

The photograph of her husband that Nokuthula Zimbambele keeps on her phone is no ordinary snapshot — it is a grim memento of violence and loss.

"Here is my husband," she says, offering the picture after gathering herself from tears. Scant warning, even in this age of countless everyday clicks.

It is a press picture taken off the internet. In it, a policeman is lifting Thobisile Zimbambele's body off the dust and blood at Marikana's koppies after the massacre there on August 16 last year. Thobisile is being held by the arm by a policeman and hangs limply to about the waist. He is surrounded by corpses, and by R5-wielding amaBerets (the tactical response team).

"I think they were finalising that he was dead," says Nokuthula. "But I think he might have been alive there."

Since Marikana, Nokuthula has lost all trust in the police and says her whole body shakes when she sees a policeman.

"They have no mercy," she says. "How can you shoot and kill someone and then kick a dead body? I shiver when I see the police."

Nor has she been impressed with police testimony at the Farlam Commission of Inquiry, which, she believes, is bent on "hiding the truth. You can see during cross-examination [of police witnesses] that just as the truth is coming out they don't answer the questions directly," she says.

Disbelieving of police commissioner Riah Piyegah's claim to the commission that police were defending themselves, Nokuthula says: "There are things that make a woman: sympathy and mercy. She has none of that."

The photograph is not the only thing Nokuthula carries with her. It is on her shoulders that the burden of clothing, feeding and sheltering an entire household falls. "We dish 11 plates in this house," she says.

There are her six children plus an orphaned niece, her Mamazalo, or mother-in-law, and the latter's two children. Nokuthula must also surely eat, but there is little evidence of that on her thin body.

Mamazalo, Thobisile's biological mother, deserted her son and his three sisters when they were young, says Nokuthula. He was raised by his grandmother, Thandiwe Baca, who died in March last year.

According to Nokuthula, Thobisile longed for the mother he never knew and spoke of her often. "But he thought she was dead," she says.

When Mamazalo returned to the family home just outside Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape in February 2011 Thobisile was at Lonmin, but he quickly came back.

"He couldn't wait," says Nokuthula. "He came back and hugged her and said: 'Mama, you can't leave again.'... He said, 'I wish I will have a long life to recover the time I lost with you, Mama.'"

Thobisile's father had remarried and Mamazalo had no home to live in. She asked her son to build a house for her and his four half-siblings.

"He said he would build a house," says Nokuthula. "He died before he could fulfil that promise, but I have continued that work."



NOKUTHULA ZIMBAMBELE: The widow of Thobisile has been left with the burden of providing for 11 people, including six children, an orphaned niece, her mother-in-law and the latter's two children. Collecting firewood from the forest is just one of the daily chores. Before Thobisile became a miner he made a living selling used clothing in Bloemfontein



So far she has spent R35 000 from policies paid out after Thobisile's death to build a rondavel and a two-room flat-topped house for her mother-in-law. All that remains is for the walls of the "flat" to be plastered and Mamazalo will be able to move in.

"My husband was loving and caring and his dream was to build a house for his mother," she says. "I made sure I fulfilled that dream

because of my love for my husband. I ensured that it was completed so that he can rest in peace."

But in doing so, Nokuthula has compromised her own immediate future. She knows this only too well, and rarely rests easy. With the children's education paid for by Lonmin, the financial burden has eased, but with only child support grants to rely on, "money is either for clothes or for food, not both".

"It's a hard, very difficult life," she says.

Like many widows, she is no longer able to scrape together enough money to participate in the monthly stokvel, which always brought in handy additional funds.

Her husband had four children out of wedlock and sometimes they visit, for as long as a month, inflating the roll call at the family's single daily meal. Her biggest challenge, says Nokuthula, "is food in the stomach ... ensuring that 10 stomachs are filled at sunset".

"Sometimes the children ask: 'Mama, when are we going to eat eggs again? Why is it always cabbage and potatoes?' I can only answer that they must get used to it," she says.

Nokuthula is determined, but sensitive and gentle. This is evident when her dogs run up to meet her at her gate and jump to lick at her hands — unusual in the rural Eastern Cape where canines are often treated like Dickensian orphans and cower from their owners.

She says she wants "to concentrate on my garden again, so that the money I spend on vegetables can be used for something else". But it has been difficult, because attending the

long-running commission hearings has left very little time for gardening.

And what small crops she has managed to grow are being raided by the animals that have taken to slipping in through the fence, which has grown porous of late.

"When I am at the commission and the firewood runs out, the children [who are left in the care of her oldest daughter, 21-year-old Sandisa] don't bother to go to the forest and collect more," says Nokuthula. "They just take it from my garden fence."

The commission is of little help, she adds, because "there are only moments of truth". It is clear, too, that, as the commission drags on, so too do the material and familial repercussions pile up for those whose loved ones died at Marikana.

Yet Nokuthula has none of the fatalism she sensed in her last conversation with her husband on the morning of August 16.

Over the phone he had told her that Lonmin was going to respond to their grievances that day.

"And he said, 'But if I die, don't cry.' I said, 'Why don't you return?' And he said, 'No, no, no. Don't call me again ... If I am left behind on the koppie, you will hear from the others.'"

Marikana: The families

'Maybe it's an evil spirit'

MGCINENI NOKI
THWALIKHULU, E CAPE

The man in the green blanket is unfamiliar to the family of Mgcineni "Mambush" Noki, who was killed at Marikana during the strike for which he had become a media poster boy.

Mambush's younger brother, Sinovuyo, says: "From what we saw [on the television and in the newspaper photographs] he seemed to be acting aggressively, but that was very uncharacteristic of him. I didn't recognise him."

Another brother, Mbulelo, who works in Carletonville, had visited Mambush at Marikana during the strike and Sinovuyo remembers that in a telephone conversation, "Mbulelo said Mambush had become a strange person and that he was acting very aggressively. It was not the brother we knew from childhood."

Sinovuyo says Mambush was an

easygoing man, who, when he was younger, or on holiday from the mines, spent his time at Thwalikhulu in the Eastern Cape leading a quietly pastoral life.

"Mambush used to tend his cows and goats the most," he says. "That is what he loved doing."

His brother also loved football and played in central defence for the village team, where "he was a leader and an organiser" and excelled to the point of being voted the best player in the Mqanduli District.

Describing Mambush as a "nice person", Sinovuyo relates the story of how his grandmother was accused of witchcraft and murdered by a mob wielding axes in 1996. He said the man who had made the allegations had borne animosity towards his grandmother.

"Mambush knew the man who killed our grandmother, but he didn't hold a grudge against him — he was forgiving. My brother used to greet him and ask: 'How are you doing?'"

Ruminating on the death of his grandmother and the — as yet unproven — allegations emanat-



MGCINENI NOKI: The 'man in the green blanket' was unfamiliar to family members who knew him as an easygoing person who loved football and spent time tending his cows and goats in the Eastern Cape



ing from government that the striking miners had thought themselves invincible because of the use of muti, Sinovuyo says: "Maybe there is an evil spirit around the family which is making people die ... Maybe it's just bad luck."

The portrayal of Mambush during the strike still affects the family. His wife, Nolvuyo, remains hesitant to speak and Sinovuyo says his brother's name has been "blacklisted" by some in the community.

"Sometimes you feel scared and you feel like you don't want to go out and see people," he says.

Together with Mbulelo, Mambush — who had several children of his

own — supported his four younger brothers and sisters after their parents died in the 1990s.

Sinovuyo says Mambush was planning to build a bigger home for the family and was also hoping to "surprise us by buying a car".

He hopes to replace Mambush at Marikana but, so far, there has been no offer from Lonmin.

Asked whether he is wary of working on the mines in light of the way his brother died, Sinovuyo says: "No. If I get a job on the mine it will make me feel like I am growing up because I will be supporting my family. I will be a man ... I want to complete my brother's dream

of building a new house."

Sinovuyo says he was unable to move on after Marikana until he attended the Farlam Commission of Inquiry: "The only way I could see the future was by confirming to myself that my brother was dead and finding out exactly had happened to him."

"The police were so dangerous to my brother," Sinovuyo says, remembering the day he saw the footage of his brother being killed. "I didn't call the family to update them that day — I was too angry. It was unbelievable to see someone speaking, speaking, speaking and then pointing the bullet at him."

'There is only salt and soup'

NTANDAZO NOKAMBA
KHALANDODA, E CAPE

I've been having visions of my brother. I have this dream of seeing my brother and child staring at me as if we are talking. They are always on my mind," says Molokwana Nokamba.

Molokwana's brother, Ntandazo, was killed at Marikana on August 16. His own 11-year-old child died "immediately after we buried my brother" from an illness he feels was exacerbated by the grief shrouding this closely knit extended family, who live in a clump of homesteads in the Khalandoda area near Mthatha in the Eastern Cape.

"The pain I feel inside I know I will take to my grave," said Molokwana in May this year. During an interview in March he had broken down and sobbed uncontrollably when remembering his brother — a public show of grief rarely seen among men in the Eastern Cape.

Months later, Molokwana's eyes retain that shell-shocked, haunted look that marks so many who are stricken by the trauma of violent loss. He says he has taken up smoking because of the financial stress, and drinking umqobothi — which he never did, before — "to forget".

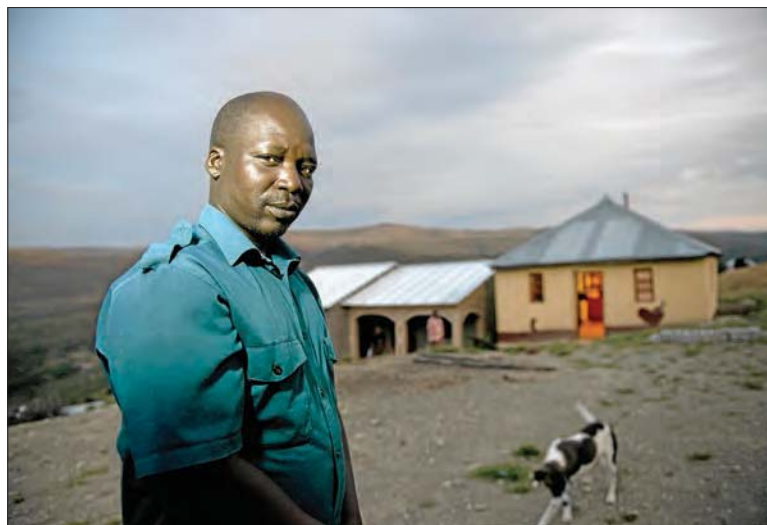
Molokwana used to collaborate with his brother on family projects around their homes, including building new structures and fortifying fences and kraals. He has now become the father figure for his brother's five children.

Currently unemployed, his last job was construction work on a school in KwaZulu-Natal, which ended in June last year: "You must be mindful that we work for guys who get tenders, and if they don't get tenders, we don't get jobs," he says, adding that internal ANC politics before and after its national conference in Mangaung last year has affected his employment opportunities.

The only income Ntandazo's



NOSAKHE NOKAMBA: The widow of Ntandazo now has to rely on child support grants. Ntandazo's brother, Molokwana (below), is still struggling to recover from the loss



widow, Nosakhe, receives now, is the child support grant for each of the children.

Ntandazo used to send home R2000 a month and now, Nosakhe says, "there is no money to buy my

children clothes" and by the middle of the month, "there is only salt and soup" in the kitchen.

Nosakhe speaks in flat whispers, staring ahead at no one and nothing. Unresolved grief manifests itself

everywhere in the Nokamba family. Nosakhe says her children suffer constant "pains" and her 14-year-old, Khuselwa, could not write her exams last year.

Asked whether the family has

sought assistance from government social workers, Molokwana says: "It will not change anything. My brother is gone and my other frustrations, like not having a job or money, will still be there."



Marikana: The families

'I hoped for a knock on the door'

THABISO MOSEBETSANE
LUQHOQWENI, E CAPE

When Ntombizolile Mosebetsane asked Anele*, a friend of her husband Thabiso, to help her to look for him on the Saturday after the Marikana massacre, his first instinct was "to go to Phokeng mortuary".

"But I wanted to do the best for my sister," he says. So he drove around with her for hours to various hospitals and police stations — to no avail.

Ntombizolile had been desperately searching for her husband since August 16. She says on that day Thabiso did not return from the mountain for lunch, as he usually did. Later that afternoon "someone told me that children are dying on the koppie" and that "police had surrounded the miners with wire and people were carrying bodies".

"I lost all power," says Ntombizolile. "I sat down and waited because people were returning." But Thabiso did not. And no one knew where he was.

Later that evening, Ntombizolile "went to the mountain" but was turned away by police, who told her to go to Lonmin's number one shaft at Middelkraal for more information.

"On Thursday night I couldn't sleep because I didn't know where my husband was, but I hoped for a knock on the door," she says.

The next day Ntombizolile went to Middelkraal with the wife of another miner, but the authorities could not provide any information or lists of the dead, arrested and injured miners.

Nor did they have any luck at the Marikana police station, Wonderkop, or the Andrew Saffy Hospital at the mine.

Meanwhile, her friend's husband called to say he was alive and "in hiding" — but that he did not know where Thabiso was.

On Saturday, Ntombizolile visited four hospitals in the area — and again failed to find Thabiso.

Her sister-in-law Motshidisi, who is an informal trader in Rustenburg, sent a text message saying she had heard Thabiso was at the Jericho police station.

Ntombizolile went there with Anele and Katiso, Thabiso's son from a previous marriage, for an identity parade of miners. This also failed to solve the mystery.

When, on Sunday, Anele and a few others went to Phokeng mortuary and returned to say it was closed, Ntombizolile suspected "they were hiding something from me".

On Monday, she learned it was the death of her husband.

Describing her ordeal, Ntombizolile says: "How do you have hope over five days, not knowing where your husband is?"

"August 16 reminds me of June 16," says Anele. "It was like a dream, maybe a nightmare, this failure by government and Lonmin."

He had been at the mountain on the morning of August 16 but left to go grocery shopping in Marikana's squalid main strip. En route, he "saw three Lonmin buses loading lots of police into them".

"Later, I got a call from someone who had been on the mountain to say: 'People are dying at Wonderkop, where are you?'" says Anele, who



NTOMBIZOLILE MOSEBETSANE: The widow of Thabiso describes her husband as 'a man with a big heart who supported many children'. This has caused tension in the family with two of Thabiso's children living with his mother Ntombizanele (below left) — and the households at odds over his money. The family picture is of the couple on their wedding day



admits to being in a state of bewilderment after the massacre, withdrawing from the world and only making contact with it again when Ntombizolile asked for his help.

In the days leading up to the massacre life in the shacklands around the Lonmin platinum mine was tense. A curfew appeared to be in place as people died to the soundtrack of helicopters roving overhead and rubber bullets being fired into the night.

Anele says: "Police were com-

ing day and night, day and night — patrolling [the informal settlement of] Nkaneng. They were shooting at people, even if they were in the yard. I remember once we were playing a card game and they shot at us. I didn't understand why."

He says there is a different tension now.

The rivalry between the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union and the National Union of Mineworkers continues, especially as the former



was only recognised as the majority union at Lonmin this week.

Anele, who has worked at the mine since 2008, says Lonmin has instructed miners that "no one can talk about what happened on August 16 underground. If you do they say you are influencing people and we are scared of being fired."

He says that this directive means miners "are not free", and that management "has put us in a pot and placed a lid over us".

Personal differences are also simmering in the Mosebetsane family. Thabiso was described by his wife as "a man with a big heart who supported many children, even those who were not his own". These included three biological sons with his first wife, who died in 2003, and a daughter that his second wife — who died in 2006 — brought into their marriage from a previous relationship and "who Thabiso accepted as his own", according to his sister, Nomakhepu.

There is also Chantelle, the baby he had with Ntombizolile, and the two children she brought into their marriage.

The two youngest children from Thabiso's previous marriages live with his mother and sister near

Matatiele in the Eastern Cape. Ntombizolile lives with her children in Luqhoqweni, near Lusikisiki.

Both households are impoverished and at odds over which children should be beneficiaries of Thabiso's provident fund — and who will replace him on the mine, should Lonmin ever make the offer.

There is also no indication from government that the inconsistent food parcels handed out by the department of social development will be provided to both households — placing a further burden on the women who run them.

Looking through her handbag for her husband's identity document, Ntombizolile comes up with some paracetamol packets: "This is what I have survived on since Marikana," she says.

"Each and every day at the [Farlam] commission I start with a Grandpa [headache powder] and I use it again at the end of the commission. I have had a terrible headache since Marikana — that is why you see me with different painkillers."

* Anele's name has been changed, as he still works at Lonmin and does not want to expose himself to possible victimisation

Marikana: The families



'I see my son in this house'

MVUYISI PATO BIZANA, EASTERN CAPE

The bodies of the dead miners at Marikana did not lie on the ground long enough to attract carrion-feeders, but vultures have been circling their families ever since August 16 last year.

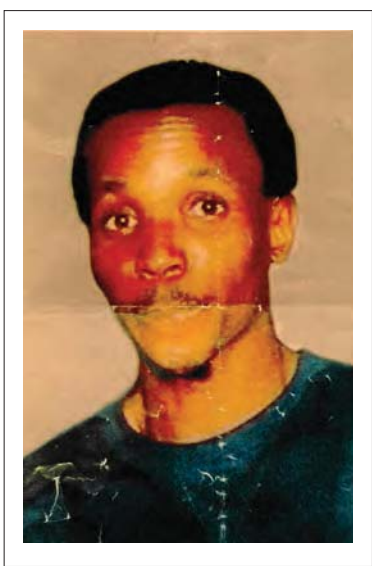
"People started calling us soon afterwards saying they wanted to be our lawyers and that carried on into this year," says Mongezi Pato, whose son Mvuyisi was killed at the koppies. "But I tell them that we are represented by lawyers already."

His wife, Alexia, adds: "In October or November, someone offered me R500 to sign some documents and they said that they will help us get money for our son's death. I refused."

This sort of opportunism runs through the post-Marikana experience for many families. Sometimes they feel it from the government, too.

Sixty-five-year-old Mongezi is a can-do sort of guy. When he heard of Mvuyisi's death he went to Marikana to identify the body and found it "doubly heartbreaking" when he saw how his son had died. "It looked like he was shot in the back. It showed that he wasn't fighting."

Mongezi "decided to never set foot in Marikana again" and brought Mvuyisi home as quickly as possible for the family to bury him and then to try to move on with their lives.



At the time, unaware that the government had committed R25 000 for each family's funeral costs, Mongezi paid for the funeral by selling one of his cows. He is still owed R8 000 by the Alfred Nzo municipality in Bizana, near where he lives, and is struggling to get that money reimbursed.

The food parcels that the municipality delivered for Mvuyisi's funeral also showed signs of pilfering: a case of 340ml milk containers had been opened with only five remaining. And some of the items included, such as two tins of fish and 5kg of mealie meal, were derisory in the context of huge communal funerals where a village has to be fed.



MONGEZI PATO: The father of Mvuyisi brought his son's body home as soon as possible from Marikana and paid for the funeral himself, unaware that the government was contributing R25 000 — now he is still owed R8 000 of that money. Mongezi has completed the house his son had started building for his family and looks after the orange tree his son planted nearby

Alexia says this was an affront to her family and her dead son.

Mongezi says his son was due back home in August to begin lobolo negotiations to marry Nobungwele, the mother of his two children, Cebo (4) and Sinawo (2).

"My son was saving up to get the cows necessary for the lobolo. Now there is a vacuum where he would have been, and the many grandchildren he would have blessed me with," says Mongezi.

He has completed the house nearby that Mvuyisi had started in preparation for married life.

"My dream is to fill the house with my children and the children of my deceased son," says Mongezi. "I had

to complete it. I see my son in this house."

He says he has used the R15 000 he has so far been reimbursed by the government for the funeral to complete the house.

During a tour of the house, Mongezi remarks on his son's green fingers, and his love of gardening. Pointing to an orange tree in the yard where he had recently been adding fertiliser, Mongezi says: "That tree is a symbol of a person who had care and love. When I see the tree bearing fruit, it also reminds me of my son."

The couple appears to find joy in the little things that remind them of a son whom his mother describes

as "a joker, a comedian who always made people laugh". They find it in the trees that he grew, and in the horses he trained. They reconnect with Mongezi through his two young children whom they evidently adore and who are constantly running around under their feet.

They find joy in the gargantuan things, too. Outside the family home a pig that rivals President Jacob Zuma's nephew Khulubuse in girth is snuffling around for more food. Mvuyisi brought the pig home before he died and he has become a family pet. "We treat him as if he is family too," says Alexia with a laugh. "He eats a lot, but he brings us happiness."

Marikana: The families

'I just buy the basics'

BONGINKOSI YONA
KWAMAQASHU, E CAPE

Bonginkosi Yona was nuts for Kaizer Chiefs. He would sit entranced, giving a running commentary while watching their games at home on television. This passion eventually converted his wife, Nandipha, to the yellow and black.

Remembering the Amakhosi match they attended together at the Royal Bafokeng stadium in Rustenburg while she was heavily pregnant, Nandipha laughs: "Chiefs were losing but were attacking and trying to score. He joked that I shouldn't go into labour at the stadium because I would have to go and give birth on my own."

Their baby boy, Mihle, was born on August 7, nine days before police at the Marikana koppies killed Bonginkosi.

Sitting in her two-room house in KwaMaqashu in the Eastern Cape, with a picture of the couple kitted out in Chiefs clobber hanging on a wall, Nandipha says her husband was excited about the birth of their second child — they also have a six-year-old boy, Babalo — and when scans could not ascertain Mihle's gender, Bonginkosi remained adamant that he "will only have boys".

"I wanted a girl and I hadn't bought any clothes because we were not sure," she says.

When Nandipha was discharged from hospital, Bonginkosi, who was earning R5 000 a month, told her that a strike had started at the Lonmin mines over better wages. Fearing for his safety, she had warned him to stay at home, but he said the strike was important "because we have another mouth to feed".

Returning to their shack in Nkaneng with her newborn, Nandipha remained anxious about her husband's safety, remembering when he had been shot during a strike at Groblersdal, where he had worked before moving to Lonmin in 2010: "He was going to work when he was confronted by some people. A fight started and he was shot in the leg. He came home, showed me the wound, cleaned and bandaged it and then went back to work. I was fearful that something like this would happen again," she says.

Her anxiety meant the couple never discussed the strike and she was "relieved every day when my husband would return home from the mountain for lunch, and then in the evening".

But on August 16 Bonginkosi didn't return for lunch. Or supper. A neighbour told her about the shootings, saying that "people had been killed, injured and arrested and my husband could be any of these". He then went out to look for Bonginkosi — in vain.

"The following morning I went to the Bethal Prison and my husband's name was on a list of people arrested. I asked the police to call him. They said they did several times, but he wasn't there and I should go away. They swore at me, but I refused to go because his name was on the list. Eventually I went to every single cell in the prison calling out his name, but he wasn't there," says Nandipha.

Bonginkosi's younger brother eventually found her husband's corpse at Phokeng mortuary on the Sunday. Reliving the moment she was told of her husband's death,



NANDIPHA YONA: The widow of Bonginkosi gave birth to their second child nine days before her husband was killed at Marikana. Bonginkosi, a devoted Kaizer Chiefs fan and a pastor in the Zion Christian Church, is buried near their home in KwaMaqashu in the Eastern Cape



Nandipha says: "I see myself sitting on the floor, but I don't remember anything else."

"Even though he held Mihle, my son will never know how his father looked and what sort of man he was," says Nandipha. "Sons need their fathers."

Asked what she will tell her sons about their father, Nandipha says: "Just what I know about him. He was a good man, a people's person, someone who was very kind and loved God."

Bonginkosi was a pastor in the Zion Christian Church who "used



to love singing Christian songs. He would start singing in the house and I would follow him, and the neighbours would think there was a church going on in our shack."

Nandipha says her husband's favourite verse was Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

For his years of labour at various mines Bonginkosi's family will receive an R80 000 provident

fund payout. Nandipha has already received R40 000, with the second half expected after August 16.

"I had to use some of that money, about R30 000, to fix this house after we moved back from Marikana and I am using the change from that to live on because otherwise all I get is the two child support grants [totaling R580 a month]. There is no money going into the bank, I am just taking money out, but how can I say 'no, I mustn't withdraw money' if the children fall sick, or we need to eat?" she asks.

"I can't buy red meat. I don't buy

sausages anymore. Or Tastic rice. I just buy the basics," she says, longing for the time when her husband would take the family to a fast-food chicken outlet on payday. "We would get a six-piece meal," she remembers. "Whatever drinks we wanted — and ice cream for Babalo."

These are luxuries now. As are birthday cakes. So, when Babalo turned six earlier this year, "my child could not understand why there was no cake, but I have to spend my money on baby formula and nappies".

She spends R120 on 50 nappies and R150 on baby formula. "But that doesn't last to the end of the month," she says.

Nandipha has received five food parcels from the government since August last year, but instead of mealie meal and beans, which Mihle is too young to eat, she would prefer useful items such as formula.

Like many of the Marikana widows, Nandipha feels ignored and disregarded by government as she struggles to piece together her life without a husband and breadwinner. "The government treats us like this because they killed our husbands, saying they were criminals. Maybe they feel we are the wives of criminals, so they treat us like dirt."

Marikana: The families

'My baby needs to grow up'

ANELE MDIZENI
ELLIOTDALE, E CAPE

On a Friday afternoon in February about 20 young boys are practising stick fighting with thin branches tipped with leaves outside Notshovile Mdzizeni's house near Elliotdale in the Eastern Cape. They range from about four to 14 and the thwacks they administer vary from negligible taps to those boisterous enough to elicit a resounding "Ouch!".

Notshovile says her son Anele, who was 29 years old when he died at Marikana, relished the sport when he was younger. It is popular in this area, where the carrying of sticks and knobkerries by men is ubiquitous.

At her son's grave Notshovile, who is a sangoma, starts to cry. She says that of her five children Anele "was the best one to me" and since his death "food doesn't satisfy me any more".

Anele's grave looks across a ravine towards the house he had built recently for himself and his young wife, Unathi. Notshovile says because of the migrant nature of his work Anele only got to stay there for a week before he died.

A week is seven days more than he had with his baby daughter, Asisipho (whose name means "special girl"), who was born in January this year.

A bright smile masks Unathi's pain



NOTSHOVILE MDIZENI: The mother of Anele says that of her five children 'he was the best one to me'. Anele's wife Unathi gave birth to their daughter in January this year



and worry — especially when she talks about her daughter's future.

"My baby needs to grow up but it will be without her father," she says. "I am struggling to get benefits [from the government and Lonmin] now, and I am worried about how I will provide for her in the future."

Notshovile has also felt the financial pinch since her son's death. Her identity book says she is 55 but she looks and believes she is much older. She cannot draw a pension and relies for survival on a remittance from her eldest son Vuyisani, who works at Secunda, and social grants for her

grandchildren. "I'm like a baby to my son," she says. "The things he does for me, I should be doing for him."

Unathi has been mourning at her mother's house, close to Notshovile's, but soon she must return to the home she shared so briefly with Anele. This fills her with trepidation and sadness. She says her husband, who played football for the local team, Freedom Fighters, and loved gospel and R&B music, was a considerate and loving man. "If I was at Marikana and said I was homesick for the Eastern Cape he would surprise me with taxi fare to visit."

'I'm beginning to be free'

NKOSIYABO XALABILE
MTHATHA, EASTERN CAPE

Lilita Xalabile spent just 19 precious days together with Nkosiyo Xalabile as his wife. They were married on July 7 2012. He returned to Lonmin's Marikana mine after their honeymoon, and died in the massacre on August 16.

At our first meeting with Lilita, in March, she was mourning alone in the room she was renting in Dalubuhle township on the outskirts of Mthatha. The little room felt like a solitary confinement cell; grief dripped oppressively off the four walls.

Lilita said that it had been difficult to grieve openly at her husband's family home near Elliotdale in the Eastern Cape.

"My tears remind my mother-in-law and my husband's family of their loss," she said, fidgeting with her wedding band.

So, with her diploma in office management from the Walter Sisulu University, the 27-year-old returned to Mthatha to look for work.

She was intent on imagining and piecing together a life different from the one she dreamed of on her wedding day. It was difficult: jobs are scarce in Mthatha; pain and trauma are not.

"He was open," said Lilita of her husband. "A quiet man, but he had lots of friends."

She and Nkosiyo were members of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church when they met at a church conference in 2011. He started calling her incessantly and she vacillated about whether or not to meet him.

"He would keep on calling me and



calling me. Eventually we were going to meet on a Saturday, but then I changed my mind. I don't know why. He buzzed me and I refused to meet," she said.

Persistence appeared to make the heart grow fonder, though: "He kept calling me until my heart got absorbed by him."

In the days leading up to August 16 Lilita had become increasingly anxious about her husband's safety and had told him: "People say people are dying at Marikana, but I don't even see it in the news. Why don't you come back home?"

"He said he didn't have the money to come back and that management was going to give the miners an answer on Thursday. He said he had to go to the koppie every day because 'it is better to die in the army than to get killed in the house.'"

In March Lilita was hanging on to her Christian faith for succour, attending church four times a week.

She later moved to Hermanus to live with her sister and continue her job hunt.

In a telephonic interview in August,



LILITA XALABILE: The wife of Nkosiyo, who died only 19 days after their wedding

she says the move is helping her reconcile with her grief.

"I'm beginning to be free," she says. "In Hermanus I can talk to anybody about whatever I want to talk about and it is healing me. In Mthatha people knew me, so even before I could open my mouth, they were feeling pity for me. I'm freer now," she says.

Lilita is working as a cashier at



a local supermarket and plans to continue her studies and complete a higher diploma in office management next year. Lonmin has agreed to pay for her education.

She is thoroughly disillusioned with the inconclusiveness of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry. "It is clear that the people [who did the] shooting at Marikana are known,

but they remain unknown at the commission," she says. "The commission is exposing the families to all the footage of our loved ones dying, but, in exchange for opening all these wounds, there are no answers, no truth," says Lilita. "Things are staying hidden at the commission, the truth is being hidden there. They should just close it down."

Marikana: The families

'All I can get is a coffin'

THABILE MPUMZA
MOUNT AYLIFF, E CAPE

On her darkest days Xolelwa Mpumza feels that all she will get from the Farlam Commission of Inquiry is a coffin for herself.

She looks harried and bleary-eyed on the morning of May 31. Recently returned from Rustenburg, she says that when she stepped off the bus after the 14-hour journey she found her family home near Mount Ayliff in the Eastern Cape "looking like a kraal".

When Xolelwa attends the commission, the six children in her care — aged between seven and 13 — fend for themselves, with loose oversight from neighbours. Her eldest nephew, Wanda, leads the pack.

When her parents died a few years ago, her brother Thabile became the family's sole breadwinner. But he was killed at Marikana, so Xolelwa is now "mother, father and aunt" to her 11-year-old son, Olwethu, her dead brother's seven-year-old daughter, Inga, and another three nephews and a niece.

Kids being kids, they have been playing with a blown-up condom as a balloon, and the piles of clothes in the six-room house belie the claim of the eldest, that the best thing about his aunt being back is "that we don't have to do the washing".

"I heard from an uncle that sometimes the children cook, sometimes they don't cook," Xolelwa says. "I worry about them when I am away. Whether they are getting food, if it's raining or cold, if everything is upside down in the house or if they are doing their schoolwork. I come back and I clean up after them. I have to cook tonight, but I am tired. It seems all that I can get from the commission is a coffin. I may die."

Her fatalism has been compounded by repeat viewings of footage from Marikana and hearing police testimony that, for her, obscures the truth at a commission she feels will never end.

"The commission is stressing me, causing me pain, but I have to be updated [about her brother's death]," she says, adding that she "is tired" and "will take a long break and maybe only go back in September".

Xolelwa is only 32, but she is sickly and the physical strain of the excursions to Rustenburg, added to a hangover from the trauma, has led to her being hospitalised several times after fainting at the commission.

She gets "just Panado and drips" at the government hospital and says she avoids government social workers at the commission because all they ask is: "How are you?"

"That is all they can do," she says.

Daily survival is a struggle that has not been ameliorated by her brother having been dismissed from Lonmin in May 2011. This means the mining company will not pay the education costs of the six children who depended on the remittance that had until August last year been coming from his work as a mechanic in Marikana.

Family feuds have also created instability. Xolelwa says her brother, Siyabulela (Wanda's father), does not contribute to the upkeep of the household but, as the eldest son, wants to claim the family home. Other siblings "just work for themselves" and contribute little to the family budget, she says. Thabile



XOLELWA MPUMZA: The sister of Thabile is now 'mother, father and aunt' to six children. Her brother was the 'problem-solver' for the family and played a leading role in the community. He was also a keen football fan and a popular player in the local team



had provided both financial and emotional succour in the face of the relentless problems. Now she feels the noose is constantly tightening around her neck.

Thabile was a strapping, dreadlocked 26-year-old. A "problem-solver" for both his family and his community, he was quietly spoken, but popular with the ladies, according to his friends and sister.

He played left back or left wing-back for Fighters FC, the local team, where his nickname was Skapie Malatsi, after the former Kaizer Chiefs player.

Sibusiso Mpumza, Thabile's friend and Fighters FC team manager, said he bought football kit and balls for the team when he was working at Lonmin. Quiet off the field, Thabile was, according to Sibusiso,

robust and physical on it.

"A bit like [former Nigerian defender] Taribo West, except that he hated taking penalties. Whenever there was a shoot-out, the crowd would chant his name: 'Skapie! Skapie! Skapie!'. He was very popular around here," says Sibusiso.

"When I told the guys that Thabile was gone, they asked: 'What do you mean, coach? What do you mean?' Everybody felt the pain and the young ones took it especially badly. It was a mess, a serious mess."

Siminikiwe Mgalo, a friend and teammate of Thabile since childhood, says he had a telepathic understanding with him on Fighters FC's left flank. "There is a saying that men don't cry, but when I heard the news that Thabile had died I felt tears running down my cheeks," he

says. "I couldn't stop the tears and I didn't eat that day."

Holding a Fighters FC team photograph, Siminikiwe says he was too emotional to speak at Thabile's *umlendelo*, the all-night ceremony before a Xhosa funeral, when the congregation sings and speakers remember the dead person.

"My heart was willing to say a lot of good things about Thabile — he was the father in this house, who went to the mines very young, because he felt he had to support his family when his parents died — but I couldn't," he says. "I feel more pain now. I look at this photo a lot, when I want to remember him."

Both Siminikiwe and Sibusiso blame the police for their friend's death. They say it is a common feeling in the community, especially

among the young men here, who "retain anger" for the police when they patrol the area.

Comparing the Marikana massacre with killings under apartheid, Sibusiso says: "I didn't think it would happen again, it surprised everyone. We are free, we didn't think it would happen again — for the police to shoot workers like that."

As Xolelwa frets about supper for six hungry mouths — save for a few cans of soft drink and some yoghurt, her fridge is empty — she remarks that neither the government nor its long-running commission seems to care very much for the families of those who died.

Yet she is steadfast — stooped, but not defeated. She observes, wryly, that she would have fitted in well on her brother's team, Fighters FC.

Marikana: The families

'I hate all of them'

THEMBELAKHE MATI
NTABANKULU, E CAPE

ThembElakhe Mati died on August 13 last year. His family believes they will never know who killed him, as witnesses who are still working at Marikana fear they will be snuffed out if they speak up. There is little faith in the protection the state has offered in return for their testimony.

The miner appears in footage showing police dispersing mine-workers on August 13 – fuelling speculation that they might have targeted him. But the police told the Farlam Commission of Inquiry that they found Thembelakhe's body among the shacks around the mine and deny having been involved in his death.

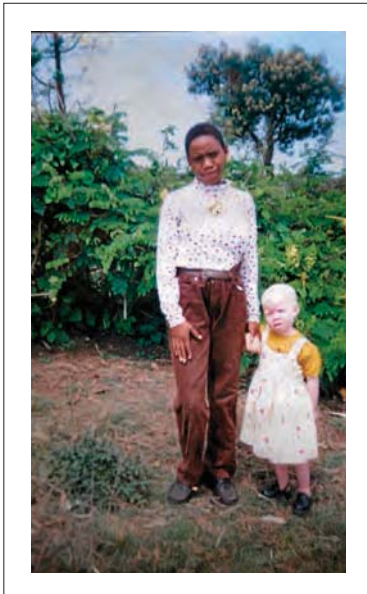
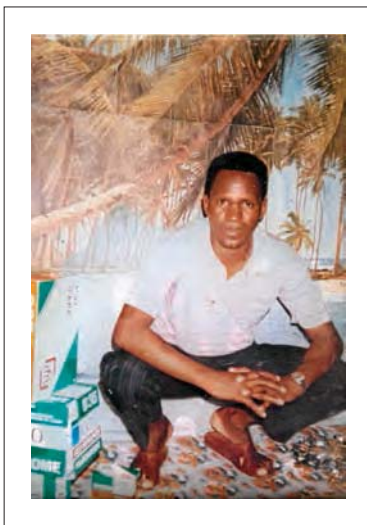
His wife, Florence, believes they were responsible. "I hate all of them," she says bitterly. "It doesn't matter where they come from, even the ones from Ntabankulu, where I live. I hate all of them. I can't help it."

Thembelakhe's uncle, Lanford Geotyelwa, is attending the commission's hearings. He is unequivocal in his belief that "the government must have had something to do with Marikana".

He says the "unsatisfactory" testimony from police representatives, including national commissioner Riah Phiyegah, suggests they have something to hide.

"They had a plan and a part" in Thembelakhe's murder, Lanford says.

"Since Jacob Zuma became president, everything we hear about the police is about shooting and killing.



Zuma has shown no remorse for what happened to our loved ones," says Lanford. "He didn't say or do enough for what his government did."



FLORENCE MATI: The widow of Thembelakhe is now struggling to survive on child support grants which must pay for everything, including expensive sun cream for her daughter who is a child with albinism

And now Marikana is being used against everyone else, Lanford says.

During a recent march to the Ntabankulu municipal offices to protest against inadequate service delivery, he says, officials told protesters that "marches don't help anyone because when you march another Marikana will happen".

"But we have the right to march, to complain about the people we elected, and not die for it," he insists.

Neither he nor Florence feels they can vote in the next election, both because of Marikana and their own circumstances: the land they live on is wild forest – idyllic to the eye; hard on the rest of the body.

It has neither running water nor electricity and is far from schools

and clinics. And the way is dangerous. Florence says the youngest of her six children, Siziphiwe, was killed while travelling on a school bus a few years ago.

The loss of her husband is taking a further toll. He used to send home R3000 a month for the household.

She must now survive on three child support grants, which add up to R870 a month. Her daughter Asisipho requires special sun protection cream for her albinism, which costs about R400 a month.

So their diet no longer contains fish or meat and consists of pap, potatoes or samp, supplemented by cabbage grown in the garden.

"I have a big family to feed and I get panic attacks. I feel as if I am hav-

ing a heart attack and I have to sit down and be quiet," says Florence. "Sometimes I have sleepless nights or I go to bed and I wish I never wake up in the morning."

She says her husband would "play like a child with his children when he came home". He didn't like going to church, but he loved football and encouraged his son Vuyisani and daughter Yolokazi to play for the local football teams, United and New Leaders.

"He was not like other miners who had second wives at Marikana," says Florence. "He was a quiet man who used to visit us five times a year. I could visit whenever I wanted and when I did I would find him in his room sitting quietly."

'He was not there to strike'

FEZILE SAPHENDU
KWAYIMANI, EASTERN CAPE

In the rural Eastern Cape, Saturdays are for attending funerals and Sundays for going to church and football matches.

With televisions and newspapers a scarcity, Ntombi Saphendu, the sister of miner Fezile David Saphendu, first heard about the massacre at a funeral on August 18.

"One of the speakers at the funeral said that 34 miners had died at Marikana and he asked us to pray for the families of those men. At the time when we prayed I didn't know that my brother was one of them, but I had a strange feeling inside me," she says.

With no airtime to call her brother and check up on his safety, she tried later from her other brother Thembinkosi's phone: "Someone picked up the phone and then the call was dropped" and her suspicions grew.

Her mother, Nolindile, says she was at another funeral where she had a "very bad feeling that something terrible had happened".

On Sunday, the elders gathered at the family home in Kwayimani, near Coffee Bay, to break the news of Fezile's death.

The last time the family had heard from Fezile was the night before the massacre, when he had called to say he was returning home from church



in Marikana. The 23-year-old miner was a devout member of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) and his sister says he belonged to the choir, where he "loved to sing until the morning at the church".

In his room in Kwayimani the five framed pictures on the walls are of ZCC prophets and of the church's holy ground at Mount Moria in Limpopo. Ntombi says her youngest brother was not political, but he was religious and had gone to the mountain on that fateful day "not to strike, but to get a report back from Lonmin and to deliver food" to some of his colleagues.



NOLINDILE SAPHENDU: The mother of Fezile says her son was a devout Zion Christian Church member who loved to sing at the church

His mother says this was in keeping with his dutiful personality: he was always helping around the house, going to fetch water, walking with her to the local doctor to check up on her arthritis and doing considerate things such as calling on Mother's Day. He was also saving up to marry his childhood sweetheart.

"He was very young as a person, but he was mature," says his mother. Sitting in her rondavel, her *iqhiya* (traditional Xhosa headwrap) framing a face lined like weathered sandstone that barely appears to register emotion, the 64-year-old Nolindile says: "What I miss most about my son is that he was a practical joker who always made his mother laugh."



Marikana: The families

'At least now I know'

PHUMZILE SOKANYILE
NDAMAZULU, E CAPE

Trauma stalks the families of Marikana's slain. This is most apparent in the hunted look in the eyes of their widows.

In March this year Nosingile Sokanyile appeared harried and disorientated — as if, since the death of her husband Phumzile on August 13 last year, she had been on the run from reality.

During a visit at the end of May Nosingile retained the appearance of someone who had not found peace of mind. She did not remember our earlier meeting.

The joyful screams of children riding cardboard boxes down a steep hill nearby were in direct contrast to the pall of distress and gloom that shrouded Nosingile and her aquamarine two-room house as we spoke.

In an interview in June, she admits to having been "in a bad way" after her husband's death.

"All five of my children failed at school after their father died. My daughter Fezeka failed grade 12 last year. I wasn't in a good enough state to look after them then," she says. "Then, in January, I was admitted to East London hospital for a month because they found I had cervical cancer."

Nosingile says her "body was weak" by that stage and she "was on drips and vomiting a lot, and suffering from diarrhoea".

Her children are slowly getting better after the loss of their father, says Nosingile, and while Lonmin paid the fees for the local schools the three youngest attend, she hopes to send them to boarding school next year. This is a trend among most of the miners' families, as it guarantees a better education than the local rural schools and means that children are clothed and fed adequately.

As we speak, Nosingile is assisting with a family ritual to ward off bad luck. Besides her husband's death, the extended family also lost a relative working in Marikana who died in a car crash and another family member who was killed in a shack fire while working at Impala Platinum.

The family elders had decided that an *ishkuzo* (exorcism) ceremony to appease the ancestors was required.

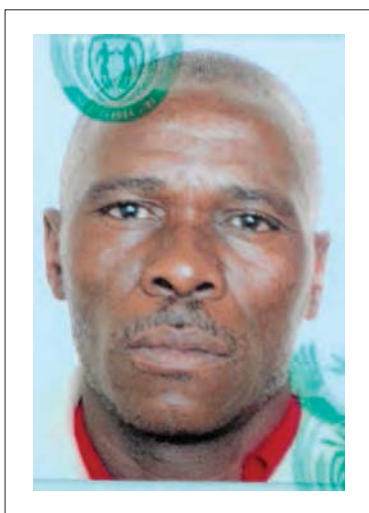
Nosingile, who has been busying herself in preparation for the three-day event, appears to be slowly emerging from the shell-shocked state she was in during our previous visits.

Having visited the Marikana kopies for a cleansing ceremony hosted by the government earlier in June, Nosingile says she will now attend the Farlam Commission's hearings.

"At first I didn't know what happened to my husband," she says. "I'd only heard stories. But going to the mountain, seeing where my husband died and getting the photos [in a file the families' lawyers at the Socio-Economic Rights Institute compiled on each victim] has helped me. Otherwise I would be sitting here at home not knowing anything about my husband's death."

"It has helped me tremendously now that I have a clear picture of how he died and what happened to him," she adds. "At least now I know."

Growing up in Ndamazulu village in the Eastern Cape, Phumzile and Nosingile were childhood sweethearts who had dated since 1984.



Nosingile Sokanyile: The widow of Phumzile has struggled to come to terms with the death of her husband whose overalls still hang on a fence at the homestead. The family, beset by bad luck, conducted a ceremony to appease the ancestors but life is still harsh in the rural Eastern Cape where water has to be carried long distances

She would rather that her eldest son, Lindikhaya (27), continues his studies to be a mechanic at a further education and training college in nearby Libode.

"I've never liked the idea of working in the mines, especially when I went to Marikana to visit my husband and saw the conditions he lived and worked in," says Nosingile. "But it was the only work he could get. And it is the only way we can make ends meet now that he is gone, so I would rather go instead of my son."

On a Friday morning, the air in Ndamazulu is still. Yet Phumzile's work overalls flutter as they dry, hanging over the fence surrounding the maize field in which he is buried, as if awakened by the thumping bass from the kwaito music Lindikhaya is playing nearby.

Despite the fast-paced soundtrack, time passes slowly here. As does grief.

provide all the things that he had not been able to previously and to build up our home."

Each time we visit, the construction of a new rondavel appears closer to completion. Nosingile says she has been using the money from her husband's provident fund to build it.

Phumzile used to send home R2000 a month for the household and Nosingile says she now relies on the child support grant of R290 for each of her two youngest children, Yolanda (13) and Sinikiziwe (8), to get through the month.

"We can only buy the bare minimum of groceries, not even winter clothes for the children, now," she says.

According to Nosingile, her husband was a humorous and thoughtful man who would always call to check what his children needed before one of his biannual trips home: "He would bring those things for them: sweets, yoghurt, sometimes a soccer ball or a cellphone. I didn't ask for anything."

There are no jobs in the rural Eastern Cape, except for when a government project is launched. Nosingile hopes that she will be able to replace her husband at Lonmin, if the mining company ever makes the offer — most families have been told it will happen once the Farlam Commission has concluded its findings.

Marikana: The families

'How can you love me?

BONGANI NQONGOPHELE

ELLIOTDALE, EASTERN CAPE

Marikana's grapes of wrath have produced a bitter vintage for the families of the dead. Trauma, unresolved grief and impoverishment converge in desperation and, sometimes, squabbles for the scant resources left behind.

The death of Bongani Nqongophele has torn his family apart, as acrimony grows over how best to use his provident fund and who to send to Lonmin in the event of the platinum mining company allowing families to replace those killed in August last year.

Nombulelo, Bongani's wife, is 30 years old. She wants to work at Lonmin, she says. "Because I am still young."

She has a five-year-old daughter, Anga, who is epileptic. Nombulelo wants to ensure that Anga's medical needs and longer-term future are secure. Without the R5 000 remittance Bongani used to send home, Nombulelo is increasingly worried about that future.

But because Bongani also helped to support his mother, two sisters and their 10 dependents, the elders of the Nqongophele family have other plans.

"After my son passed away we had a meeting at home," says Bongani's mother, Nongqondile. "The elders asked my son's wife if we could not replace Bongani with my son Khanyile, who lives in Cape Town. My daughter-in-law just cried and cried. Now she is no longer part of the family and has moved back with her parents [near Cofimvaba]."

Nongqondile says that if Khanyile — who has a low-paying job and does not send money home to the Eastern Cape — does replace Bongani, "the entire family would benefit".

She says, at meetings with the other miners' families, "it was mentioned that while the wife is named as the beneficiary [of the provident fund], there are others in the family, and the wives must play the same role as the sons ... Even after the death of my son my daughter-in-law was playing that role of buying the groceries and things [with the provident fund money], but that changed when she left the house."

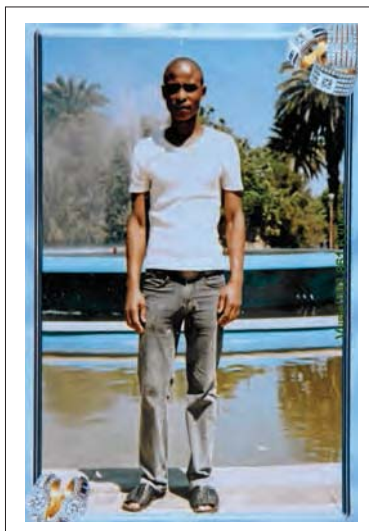
Nongqondile says soon after the family meeting Nombulelo "packed up and left ... because of that disagreement with the elders. I wasn't here, I was in Klerksdorp."

Nombulelo says she left because recriminations and accusations started to fly, including the charge that she had caused her husband's death using witchcraft. She started to fear for her safety at the Nqongophele family home in Elliotdale in the Eastern Cape.

Both Nongqondile and Nombulelo say their relationship was very good while Bongani was alive.

"It pains me because I told myself I was going to stay in Elliotdale and remain with my husband's family," says Nombulelo. "But I don't feel happy that I am forced back here, to my parent's home. I don't think the problems with my in-laws can be fixed."

Nongqondile also fears it may be too late for reconciliation. "I don't know if I can see my daughter-in-law as part of the family anymore."



NOMBULELO NQONGOPHELE: The widow of Bongani had a good relationship with her husband's mother Nongqondile (below) before his death, but now the family is split over who should take his job at the mine. The house which the couple had started building near the Nqongophele homestead stands unfinished and empty

The row appears set to continue for now. Later this month, the family will meet again for a traditional cleansing ceremony and the unveiling of Bongani's tombstone. There is no telling whether anything will be resolved there.

For the 85-year-old Nongqondile, who draws a state pension while her daughters receive child support grants for their children, there are very few options left for the family. Lonmin is paying for the education of Siphosethu, a child Bongani had out of wedlock, who lives with her mother nearby, but not that of his nieces and nephews.

Nongqondile's late husband, Mfumane, was also a miner. But he did not receive injury compensation or a provident fund payout when he was discharged.

The social development department has mooted the introduction of a sewing programme in the area, but the *gogo* worries that she won't be able to take part. Since her son's death, she has become increasingly frail and sickly.

"I am old," Nongqondile says. "My husband used to beat me and abuse me, so my arms are weak. I can't promise I can do that work."

She says her husband was a violent man who liked order. "Things had to go his way. If it wasn't how he liked



it, he would punish everyone. Me, the family — he wasn't picky."

Her son often bore the brunt of his father's physical anger, she says, and she could see her husband's traits growing in Bongani.

"Whenever things were not going his way, he had a short temper and would also start beating up people ... Bongani liked drinking and he always started fights with the other boys, but his father didn't entertain his drinking and fighting."

These characteristics, says Nongqondile, made her worry about

Bongani's safety during the strike.

Nombulelo remembers a "charming" man who liked the pop group Westlife and started wooing her even before they met. Bongani had first set eyes on Nombulelo in her sister Nosipho's photo album — they were neighbours in Klerksdorp, where he worked before moving to Lonmin in 2011.

"After he saw the picture he started calling me all the time," says Nombulelo. "At first, when he started contacting me he used to say 'I love you!' I told him, 'Hey, we have not

met, how can you love me? Let's wait until we meet in Klerksdorp."

They met in 2007 after Nombulelo went to Klerksdorp to look for a job.

"I usually don't trust people very easily, but I felt I could trust him," she says. "Everything just attracted me to him: the way he talked and the way he charmed me. I knew he was a good man."

They were married a year later and, after Anga was born, the couple started building a new house near the Nqongophele family homestead.

Domestic life seemed blissful. In a lighter moment, Nombulelo remembers that Bongani's favourite meal was rice, meat and vegetables — always with white bread: "I used to warn him that white shop bread would give him piles, but he loved it." Marikana changed all that.

Nombulelo remembers bathing at the Nqongophele family home on the Saturday after the massacre, and hearing "angry voices" outside. Bongani, who usually called twice a day, had been unreachable since the morning of that Thursday.

She says she tried to kill herself when the news of Bongani's death filtered through.

"I knew he was gone. I took the cow dip medication and I drank it. I knew it marked the end of my husband, so I wanted to mark my own end, too."