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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legal Aid South Africa to provide funding for injured and arrested miners in the Marikana Commission of Inquiry

Legal Aid South Africa (Legal Aid SA) today announced that it would provide funding for the legal representation of the injured and arrested miners in the Marikana Commission of Inquiry as required by the judgement handed down by the North Gauteng High Court.

Legal Aid SA has reiterated its concern that funding for Commissions of Inquiry was beyond its mandate and budget, and that providing this funding would have to be done by reducing its judicare budget for other criminal and civil matters. “In the final instance it should be understood that Legal Aid SA’s brief is to provide legal aid assistance to the indigent and vulnerable as contemplated in the Legal Aid Act and in the Constitution,” said Legal Aid SA CEO, Ms Vidhu Vedalankar.

She said by increasing the scope of assistance to be provided by Legal Aid SA, this ruling amounted to the organisation having to reduce its assistance to the poor and vulnerable in criminal and civil matters, to now assist those in Commissions of Inquiry, “This decision will affect the sustainability of the organisation in providing access to justice in criminal and civil legal aid matters for the poor and vulnerable, unless special funding is forthcoming, she said”

She added that the organisation’s annual budget allocation was fully utilised, with no allowance for anything outside its mandate. “The available funding, which was meant for criminal and civil legal aid for the poor will be compromised, meaning fewer people will receive legal aid in criminal and civil matters”.

To that effect, the CEO said the organisation was taking legal advice on whether it would appeal the judgment, while providing legal aid in this instance to the injured and arrested miners in the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, as legal aid funding for Commissions of Inquiry directly impacts on the organisation's sustainability.

- Ends -

Issued by the Communications Department of Legal Aid South Africa. For more information, please contact the National Spokesperson, Mpho Phasha on

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Visit our website on www.legal-aid.co.za or call the Legal Aid Advice Line on 0800 110 110.

Please be reminded that the name of our organisation **Legal Aid South Africa** is **correctly abbreviated as Legal Aid SA** and not as LASA. We respectfully request that you use the correct abbreviation **Legal Aid SA**, which is representative of our Mission to deliver quality **legal aid** services to the poor and vulnerable in South Africa.