



13 May 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGAL AID SOUTH AFRICA PLEASED WITH HISTORIC RULING ON SILICOSIS CLASS ACTION

This morning, the High Court approved that a class action suit go ahead against 32 gold mining companies in South Africa. This decision is historic, and allows for the largest ever class action lawsuit in the country, as well as on the continent, to proceed. **Bongani Nkala and 55 Others v Harmony Gold Mining Company Ltd and 31 Others** will begin to set a precedent for holding the gold mining industry accountable to the mineworkers they employed. These mineworkers have contracted silicosis and tuberculosis, and this class action will begin the process of determining the liability of mining companies for damages as a result of their exposure to silica dust.

Bongani Nkala and 55 Others are represented by Richard Spoor Attorneys, Abrahams Kiewitz Attorneys and the Legal Resources Centre. Legal Aid South Africa is pleased to be funding the Legal Resources Centre in this incredibly significant matter. We have been funding silicosis litigation for the past ten years, also in conjunction with the Legal Resources Centre.

Previous litigation brought against Anglo American South Africa resulted in an out-of-court settlement for 19 individual former miners. This case was litigated by the Legal Resources Centre, Legal Aid South Africa and Leigh Day & Co. Solicitors of the UK.

Our Chief Legal Executive, Patrick Hundermark, says “This judgment further builds on the work done in prior silicosis litigation to ensure that a greater number of miners with silicosis can enforce their Constitutional rights to compensation for unsafe working environments that they had to endure.”

Such matters exemplify the work of Legal Aid South Africa, and highlights our mandate as set out in the Legal Aid South Africa Act (39 of 2014) and Section 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, to provide access to justice for the poor and vulnerable.

We are proud to be assisting the affected mineworkers, as well as their families, in upholding their Constitutional right to seek redress for being exposed to an unsafe work environment that was harmful to their health and well-being.

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Issued by the Communications Department of Legal Aid South Africa. For more information, please contact the National Spokesperson Lesleigh Timothy on 011 877 2204 or Gauteng Region Regional Communication Practitioner Godfrey Matsobe on 012 664 2921

Visit our website at 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.