

Where is justice for Pinky Mosiane?

On 7 February 2012 Pinky Mosiane was found dead underground at an Anglo American platinum mine's Rustenburg shaft. She was apparently raped, and a used condom found next to her. At the time of her death, there were 13 men underground with Pinky. They are all suspects.

South African Press Association reported that Pinky, who was a mineworker, was found in a pool of blood underground by one of her colleagues who immediately reported the incident to the mine management. According to North West provincial police communications head, Brigadier Thulani Ngubane, a stone with blood stains on it and a lunch box were found next to the body.

Pinky, according to the *Times*, came from Tshing, a township on the outskirts of Ventersdorp, in North West. This horrific incident left her family with broken dreams and many unanswered questions. Pinky's mother, Mary, told the newspaper that her daughter's seven-year-old son, Didintle, was now without both parents. His father had died the previous year. 'It pains me that [Didintle] is worried that he doesn't have a father or a mother,' she said.

'Last night,' the grandmother told the newspaper, 'he asked me if he doesn't have both parents'. 'I said "Yes" but God will help us,' she said responding to her grandson.

Pinky's death was an attempted rape said Mary. She told the *Times* that the family believed someone was trying to rape her daughter because her colleagues found her with her trousers pulled down to her knees. 'I'm sure they were trying to rape her. They probably hit her with a blunt object on the back of her head. I'm told that she was bleeding through her nose and ears. When they found her, she was still alive. They alerted the mine's safety officials but when they got there she had already died,' said Mary. The grieving mother told the *Times* that it would have been easier for the family to accept had her daughter died on the streets. 'To die at work is something else; it's difficult to accept.'

She admitted to being first worried when her daughter got a job in the mine to work underground, but Pinky 'assured me that everything was fine'. A day before she died, Mary told the *Times*, Pinky spoke to her about conducting a traditional ceremony to thank the ancestors for her job. 'We were planning to do that at the end of this month but now her life has been extinguished,' she said.

BREADWINNER

The grandmother of the now eight-year-old grandson said her daughter had promised to build her a proper family house with electricity, running water and indoor toilets. Recalls Mary: 'She started working there in November [2011] and I was happy because I am a single mother. She helped me a lot and she was like the father of this family.'

Mary, who at the time lived in a two-roomed house that had been extended with corrugated iron sheeting, told the *Times* Pinky surprised her during the Christmas holidays when she promised her a house. 'Her plan was to build a house. She wanted to build me a house by the end of this year. She had already started saving R3,000 a month through a stop order. I was looking forward to that house, but God had other plans.' She is, however, hopeful that she will get her house one day because Anglo American had promised to employ Pinky's 25-year-old brother, Teboho.

Mary - who was still recovering from the death of her sister, Thoko, who died in October 2011 - was so devastated by Pinky's death



Cosatu is keen to know what has happened to the Pinky Mosiane case says Gertrude Mtsweni above.

that she was admitted at the Paul Kruger Hospital, in Rustenburg, according to the *Times*. 'This pain [Pinky's death] adds to that pain [of Thoko's death]. My sister worked in town and she also helped me here in the house. Now I have to be the father and mother of this house. It's hard.'

Chamber of Mines spokesperson Jabu Maphalala told the *Times* then that 'Safety in the mines is an issue, but the chamber [deals] with safety issues such as rock falls, dust and noise and [does] not deal with gender-specific safety issues.' Maphalala said the chamber had no figures on the number of women miners in South Africa nor had it heard of Pinky's murder at the time. 'We don't know of any rape issues in the mines. I can't say it is not an issue, though. But I haven't heard of it before,' he said.

Media reports say Anglo Platinum had about 3,815 workers - 262 of them women. No arrests had been made at the time and

to date and we are yet to hear of DNA results from samples taken from Pinky's body, which Ngubane said would determine whether she was raped (or not). A murder docket was immediately opened.

It has been one-and-a-half years since Pinky's death in February last year without any progress report or the outcome of any investigation from the police, Anglo Platinum or any other media follow-up on this gruesome incident. What are we therefore to make of this?

Following the incident NUM general secretary Frans Baleni released a statement saying the union was 'disgusted' at what happened to Pinky. 'We condemn the barbaric and Neanderthal act that happened,' he said. Baleni called on all law enforcement agencies 'to ensure that no stone is left unturned and that perpetrators are brought to book,' adding that the union was particularly disappointed that after

many years of campaigning for equal rights and for women to be allowed to do any work, beasts would like to unceremoniously turn back the clock. He said it was 'disappointing that women workers have to in pursuit of livelihoods, while being subjected to the evils of capitalism, face yet another challenge, that of being invaded and killed by co-workers who are supposed to be their protectors and comrades in arms.'

Baleni said although the 'culprits' were unknown at the time; it was only 'beast men that [could] carry out the barbaric act as machinery do not have the capability to do that'. Baleni appealed to female workers, especially those working underground and where the majority were men, to remain calm while investigations were underway. He also asked Department of Mineral Resources to 'reject any innuendo that seeks to bar women from working underground'.



Frans Baleni was disgusted by the rape and murder.

So when will South Africans ever know what happened to Pinky Mosiane, and will those responsible for her murder see the might of the law and justice being done?

COSATU OUTRAGED

The national gender coordinator of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), Gertrude Mtsweni released a statement 'unreservedly' condemning this inhumane act and that the federation union was 'revolted and outraged' at the incident. Mtsweni called the rape and murder a primitive 'atrocious' which was only taking us back to the Stone Age.

She said Cosatu and its affiliates had fought long and hard for men and women to be treated equally at the workplace not only by their bosses but by fellow workers as well. 'This heinous act needs an urgent response from our law enforcement agencies to apprehend the perpetrator(s) and from the employers to prevent similar events ever happening in the future,' said Mtsweni.

Both Cosatu and NUM said not only were women in the mining industry

or any other industry subjected to 'evils of capitalism' but that they also faced challenges '[of their privacy] being invaded'.

Mineral Resources Minister Susan Shabangu also promised to visit Pinky's family. Expressing grave concern at the incident, the minister called on mining companies to institute stringent measures to ensure the safety of women in mining and the wilful implementation of gender equality principles.

On International Women's Day on 8 March, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) called for the immediate apprehension of Pinky's killer(s). ICEM general secretary Manfred Warda said workplace violence against women in any form 'is a glaring violation of decent work and a severe signal of gender inequality'.

ICEM statistics showed that seven of ten women suffer some kind of gender-related violence at some point in their lives and that 50% of women in the European Union suffer on-the-job harassment or bullying. The organisation vouched in a statement at the time not to rest until the perpetrator(s) of this bestial act were apprehended and shown justice.

So when will South Africans ever know what happened to Pinky Mosiane, and will those responsible for her murder see the might of the law and justice being done? Why has Anglo Platinum been so quiet about the issue for so long? **LB**

See <http://akanyangafrika.wordpress.com/2013/01/24/where-is-justice-for-anglo-platinums-murdered-female-underground-worker-pinky-mosiane/>