

**Statement at 51st session of the UN Human Rights Council
General Debate Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration
and Programme of Action
30 September 2022
Speaker: Mqapheli Bonono**

Mr President, *this is a joint statement*¹.

I am here to speak for Abahlali baseMjondolo, a democratic grassroots movement of over 115,000 members across South Africa.

Our movement was formed in 2005 to struggle for a just and equal society based on respect and dignity for all people. Most of our members live in appalling conditions in shacks. We organise for access to land and decent housing, to build women's power from below, and against xenophobia – objectives that strongly align with key commitments set out in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Since our movement was formed we have faced severe repression including slander, assault, arrest, violent and unlawful evictions, false imprisonment, torture and killings. The situation has been particularly dire in the city of Durban.

Since 2009, twenty-four of our leaders have been killed; some by the police, others by armed state forces and some by assassins linked to local politicians. So far this year we have lost four comrades. One was murdered by masked police officers and three were murdered by assassins.

There are only two cases in which the perpetrators of these killings have been brought to justice. A police officer was imprisoned for twelve years for the murder of Nqobile Nzuzua in

¹ ISHR, Abahlali baseMjondolo, Africa solidarity Network (ASONET); AIXARRA Restorative Justice Forum; Akahata A.c.; Albamovimientos; Amílcar Cabral Political Ideological and Training School; Assembly of Caribbean People; Centre for Applied Legal Studies; Centre for Earth works; Centre for Faith and Community, University of Pretoria; CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation; Claude Leon Chair in Earth Justice and Stewardship; Coalition of African Lesbians; Coalition Togolaise des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CTDDH); CODEPINK; Communist party of Nepal (unified sicialust); Federación Rural para la producción y el Arraigo – Argentina; Feminist Foreign Policy Project; Habitat International Coalition; Helping hands; Izquierda Libertaria; Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice; La Part Du Colibri; Market Users Committee; Mazdoor Kissan Party Pakistan; Movimento Brasil Popular; Movimiento Popular Nuestramérica; MVIWATA; National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA); National Union of the Homeless; No Cold War; Parti Socialis Malaysia (PSM); Party for Socialism and Liberation; Patria Grande; PUDEMO; Right2Know Campaign; Sexual Rights Initiative; Socialist Revolutionary Worker's Party; Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa; South Durban Community Environmental Alliance; Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network; The People's Forum; Trade Union for Musicians; Union de Vecinos; UNITE; Vukani Environmental Justice Movement in Action (VEJMA); West African Human Rights Defenders' Network/Réseau Ouest Africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains; Workers Democratic Way (Morocco); Young socialist artist.

2013. In 2014, two local politicians were sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Thuli Ndlovu.

There has been no justice for the other twenty-two comrades that we have lost to the politics of blood.

We call on the UN to take a stand against the ongoing murder of our leaders and we call on our own government to urgently establish a national commission of inquiry into these murders and to ensure justice for all victims of political killings in South Africa.

Thank you.