

Pondoland mining: (PART 2)

Only the jackal will survive



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Mining is not ideal - it will destroy our land, end our agriculture, damage the environment and negatively affect animals and people.

This is the opinion of Simnikiwe Danca (25), a member of the Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC) and part of the Yes4Youth programme.

Yes4Youth is run by the Wild Trust and sponsored by Nedbank, and supports 100 young people in the Amadiba area.

The programme focuses on exploring how land care, agro-ecology and tourism can create work opportunities that strengthen centuries-old culture and traditions of land custodianship and at the same time, protecting the environment.

“Bringing mining to Xolobeni where agriculture and ecotourism are thriving is like putting a jackal and goats together in the same enclosure.

“Only one will survive, so we do not agree with Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Gwede Mantashe when he says mining

could co-exist with ecotourism and agriculture,” says Simnikiwe.

WILL IT PROVIDE JOBS?

He doesn’t believe that mining will bring employment, as he thinks the mining company will bring in people who are trained for the job, leaving locals out in the cold.

Uppermost in his mind he says is the fear is that mining will result in there being no land for their livestock, and that they will have to leave..

He is angry with government which he says has ‘oppressed’ them.

“The government has kicked us like stray dogs but I will die for this land.”

Siyabonga Ndovela (26), a young leader from Mtentu village, and also a member of the ACC says when he thinks about the mining proposal, the first thing that comes to mind is his late grandfather, Mzondi Ndovela, who was involved in the Pondo Revolt and who said, “The

value of land, especially Pondoland, can’t compare to money, ever”.

“They protected the land for us, the younger generation, not expecting that some (those who are pro-mining) would sell the land to rich people who would come and destroy it.

“My grandfather always said this is our legacy, the only legacy

we have, as the land has everything we need in our lives,” he said.

“We know what we are fighting for, and we are ready for anything.

“We are here to protect the legacy, our

inheritance, for our children. So we are not just fighting for us, but for our children, so they can live on this land.

“The court ruled in our favour, but even had it not, we are ready.

“They can bring whatever, we are prepared to die for this land. We will stand in front of their vehicles and they can drive over us. We can’t just stand by and watch them.”

Shona Aylward recently took part in the Wild Coast hike sponsored by the environmental journalism training agency, Roving Reporters and the 8 Mile Club.



Siyabonga Ndovela, a young leader from Mtentu village.



Simnikiwe Danca, a member of the Amadiba Crisis Committee.

A rural idyll under threat.
PHOTO BY SHONA AYLWARD

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