



**Media statement by the Bench Marks Foundation**

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**Home destroyed on eve of mining study publication**

Johannesburg, Tuesday 25 October 2016

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The home of a member of a rural community was burnt down last night while he was on his way to speak at the launch of a study about the negative impact of mining on his community.

Mr Tshehla Tshehlakgolo is a leading member of the Magobading community in the Limpopo Province. The village is a subject of a study, "Life before and during mining" into Magobading's relocation fourteen years ago as a result of mining. It was published in Johannesburg today by the Bench Marks Foundation.

Delegates at the Bench Marks conference being held in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, heard with shock and horror of the incident and of the loss of Mr Tshehlakgolo's home and all his belongings. A spontaneous collection was made to assist the victim and his family.

Bench Marks Chief Executive Officer, John Capel, said: "We are appalled at this incident. Although we do not know, at this stage, who was responsible for this act, we believe it indicates the level of intimidation, tension and victimisation that frequently surrounds communities who have been relocated to make way for mining.

Fourteen years ago, the people of three villages in Sekhukhuneland, Limpopo Province, were relocated by Anglo Platinum to make way for mining activity. They were consolidated into one village, Magobading.

"The result is a deeply unhappy and dissatisfied community that lacks the means to sustain itself, has no grazing or arable land, suffers from high levels of unemployment, and is riven with tension and intimidation, to mention just a few of its challenges.

"The problems of Magobading can be traced directly to the results of poor compensation, loss of opportunities, and unfulfilled promises made to them by mining operator Anglo Platinum at the time of their relocation," Capel said.

The Bench Marks report, the eleventh in the "Policy Gap" series, provides detailed research into conditions of living for the affected communities before and after their relocation. It paints a grim picture of the impact of mining relocations on people, particularly in rural areas, from economic, social, cultural and environmental points of view.

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Bench Marks Foundation is an independent non-governmental organisation mandated by churches to monitor the practices of multi-national corporations to

- ensure they respect human rights;
- protect the environment;
- ensure that profit-making is not done at the expense of other interest groups; and
- ensure that those most negatively impacted upon are heard, protected and accommodated within the business plans of the corporations.

The Foundation was launched in 2001 by the Rt Rev Dr Jo Seoka who chairs the organisation and by member churches of the SACC.

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