



## Media statement by the Bench Marks Foundation

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25 May 2016

#### **Rich People in Glass Houses....**

Ivanhoe Mines' recent media release published for the benefit of its shareholders, media and public at large, has stooped to a low level by singling out a community activist for the troubles it faces in the Limpopo area. The Bench Marks Foundation believes that only full transparency and accountability will serve as a basis for obtaining lasting peace and justice with and for the communities surrounding the mines. We therefore call on Ivanhoe Mines to urgently present to groups opposing their mining venture in Limpopo the following:

- the Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) for its operations there;
- water licenses to the concerned communities;
- full environmental impact assessments;
- the environmental management plan;
- the community consent to relocate graves found within the contested site in accordance with customary law;
- applications and the relocation plans for communities surrounding the development of a new shaft;
- the application to amend the mining right; and
- the agreements with the traditional authorities (local chief/s).

Instead of presenting these to the communities, Ivanhoe launched personal attacks on Mr Aubrey Langa as well as on civil society groups in general and on Mining Watch Canada, in particular, last week. We are proud to have as a friend and ally Mining Watch Canada, whose credentials are impeccable in supporting the cause of disempowered mining communities in Canada and internationally.

With regard to Mr Langa, Ivanhoe Mines' media release said that "Aubrey Langa, who has previously been convicted by South African courts of furnishing false information, robbery and attempted murder." Nowhere do they indicate that the attempted murder charge took place in the late 1970s in Apartheid South Africa. Nor do they state that this incident occurred while he was being escorted by the police and inside a police sedan vehicle. During this trip, he grabbed hold of the steering wheel, in what was

considered a suicide attempt, to overturn the vehicle into the river. The same white policemen in the vehicle had tortured Mr Langa and sought to obtain information about the whereabouts of his twin brother, who was allegedly transporting ANC activists to Botswana. Mr Langa at that time was a first year medical student and he took the rap for the car his brother used.

As to the false information charge that is alleged by the company; they did not state that this was for violations of the Traffic Act, and as to the robbery charge, Mr Langa regards this as a foolish act on his part for which he spent six years in jail from 1985. During that time, he completed a BSc degree as well as a number of legal courses with a view of proceeding with LLB after completing the BSc degree. In 2005, Mr Langa was recalled into the Langa Bakenberg Royal Family circle and given the responsibility for mining affairs within the Bakenberg tribe. He has carried out this duty since then and continues to do so. He has applied to have his records expunged - some 30 years after said events.

### **About Robert Friedland**

Today, we witness a man who is as powerful as he is unscrupulous. The reputable think-tank Institute for Security Studies reveals his connections with mercenary group, Executive Outcomes and his ventures in many countries such as Burma and Angola.

Friedland's mining empire extends from Indonesia to Fiji to Zambia and, because of his interest in putting profits before people, many have considered him a high-risk mining opportunist who "...thrives in countries that have dodgy governments that are reputed to be corrupt."<sup>1</sup>

Friedland's brushes with the law began when he too was young, far greater in magnitude than any that Mr Langa had, that impacted heavily on people, the environment and the community's wellbeing. Mr Langa's errors and indiscretions as a young man are minute in comparison to that of the mining mogul.

**Toxic Bob and the LSD:** In 1969, Robert Friedland ("Toxic Bob") was arrested for attempting to sell 8,000 "hits" of LSD to a narcotics agent in Portland, Maine. According to Pratap Chatterjee - *Mercenary Armies and Mineral Wealth* (Fall 1997)<sup>2</sup>-, Friedland ran an LSD smuggling business out of a college dormitory until he was busted by local undercover cops. Other reports confirm that the police confiscated an additional 16,000 hits from Friedland and his two partners, making it the largest drug bust in the state at the time.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/PEACECHAP5.PDF> Chapter 5: Executive Outcomes – A corporate conquest KhareenPech An old emperor in a new suit (page 12)

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/New\\_World\\_Order/Mercenaries\\_Minerals.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/New_World_Order/Mercenaries_Minerals.html)

John Capel, Executive Director of the Bench Marks Foundation speaking on behalf of his organization confirmed that many decades later, the “Friedland's mines have left a litany of human, and plant destruction. Where he leads, community dislocations and expensive clean-ups are the order of the day.

“Our sister organizations have told us that, in the USA, the calamitous failure of the Summitville gold heap-leach project in Colorado, which was mal-constructed by his company Galactic Resources, resulted in heavy metal pollution from this mine. The remediation measures to contain the damage cost the American people well over \$100 million”.

Friedland resigned all his positions at Galactic in 1990, as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began building a criminal case against him and his fellow directors. In May 1996, trustees for the bankrupt Summitville mining company (a wholly owned subsidiary of Galactic) pleaded guilty to 40 felony counts, mostly related to unauthorized pollutant discharges at the Colorado mine. The trustees were hit with the maximum \$20 million penalty. "This sets a tone that significant crimes were committed at the mine," U.S. assistant attorney Ken Fimberg was quoted as saying. Meanwhile, Friedland escaped U.S. enforcement agents by moving both his assets and himself out of the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Capel is supported by numerous studies such as *Grave Diggers: A Report on Mining in Burma*, authored by mining expert Roger Moody and supported by Canadian civil society organizations, which document how people have been driven from their land to facilitate the expansion of the mine under Ivanhoe. This resulted in the dislocation of hundreds of villagers, whose property was confiscated without compensation.

International NGOs say that Friedland and the Burmese military junta were a marriage made in hell. He thus stands accused of contributing to untold environmental disasters as well as to mercenaries with a military junta that killed 10,000 people in 1988 (to crush a student uprising) that turned Burma into a vast slave labour camp, as well as the world's leading heroin exporter.

For these violations of human rights, the United Nations found that torture, summary executions, slave labour, rape, forced displacement, and oppression of minorities were commonplace in Burma.

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<sup>3</sup> Moody, R, “The Mercenary Miner Robert Friedland Goes to Asia”  
<http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/mm0697.09.html>

In Sierra Leone,<sup>4</sup> Friedland's company Diamond Works, which owns two diamond mines, has been linked to the notorious South African mercenary group Executive Outcomes (EO), made up of apartheid-era military officers who specialize in assassination and disinformation.

Capel adds "We have noticed that in all the places where Friedland has operated he has endeared himself to the governments in power and/or the relatives of powerful politicians. We want to know who his backers in South Africa are that give him the temerity to ride rough-shod over the rights and aspirations of poor mine communities."

The Bench Marks Foundation calls on the company, Ivanhoe, to publically express their outrage at the attempted assassination of community activists Holly Maponya and Charlotte Chaba, on April 18 of this year, as well as the May 9th assault of Nomsa Magongoa. All three have been actively asserting their customary rights to consent to development, and demanding compensation for lost livelihoods.

Bench Marks Foundation further calls on Ivanhoe to assist society, and in particular the police, by putting up as reward, a sum of R100 000 for anyone who can provide information that will lead to the arrest of those involved in the attempted murder of Mr Maponya. Furthermore, Ivanhoe must assert publically that it will, from now on, abide by human and environmental rights – and respect the will of the people.

The Bench Marks Foundation is an organisation that monitors multinational corporations to ensure that they meet minimum social, environmental and economic standards and promotes an ethical and critical voice on what constitutes corporate social responsibility.

For more information on the Bench Marks Foundation, go to [www.bench-marks.org.za](http://www.bench-marks.org.za).

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<sup>4</sup> Asad Ismi, 2001: "Toxic Bob" Wastes Burma Forced labour and pollution rampant at Canadian-owned mine

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

<b>Bench Marks Foundation Contact:</b>
Mr John Capel: Executive Director 011 832 1743 or 082 870 8861 Email: <a href="mailto:jcapel@eject.co.za">jcapel@eject.co.za</a>
Mr Hassan Lorgat: Works in Research, Advocacy and Strategy 082 362 6180 Email: <a href="mailto:hassenlorgat@yahoo.com">hassenlorgat@yahoo.com</a>