Your Excellency,

We are writing to you to express our deepest concern regarding the recent killings of human rights defenders, Ayanda Ngila in the eKhenana settlement and Siyabonga Manqele in the eNkanini settlement in Cato Manor, Durban, South Africa.

According to credible information, Ayanda Ngila was shot and killed on 8 March 2022 by four men allegedly connected to the African National Congress (ANC) party in Durban.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Ayanda Ngila was Deputy Chairperson of Abahlali baseMjondolo’s eKhenana settlement in Durban, South Africa. His tragic killing appears to be part of a pattern of ongoing attacks on the community and its members. The eKhenana settlement has been facing attempts at forcible evictions, and its leaders have been facing ongoing attacks. Recently, two leaders had their homes burnt to the ground, and in 2021 alone, 11 leaders were arrested on trumped up charges. Ayanda Ngila was arrested twice and at one point spent 6 months in prison on false murder charges. On Sunday, 6 March 2022, members of the ANC allegedly attacked members of Abahlali baseMjondolo after their General Assembly in the eKhenana settlement. Two Abahlali members were injured after being hit by axes and had to be rushed to the hospital, and the entrance to the settlement was vandalized.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Siyabonga Manqele was shot and killed when he rushed, unarmed, to the aid of his wife, Thandeka Sithunsa, who was being assaulted by masked police during a night raid of the eNkanini settlement. According to witnesses, masked police arrived at the settlement at 11 pm on 11 March 2022 in cars without license plates. The police claimed to be searching for unlicensed firearms and began assaulting and arresting community members. After the killing of Siyabonga Manqele, police used stun grenades and tear gas to disperse the crowds, Four community members were taken to the police station, including Thandeka Sithunsa.[[3]](#footnote-3)

We also wish to express our outrage and indignation regarding the repeated acts of violence and oppression faced by members of wider Abahlali baseMjondolo of which the killings of Ayanda Ngila and Siyabonga Manqele are the most recent examples. Since its inception in 2005, the movement has faced forcible evictions and demolishment of homes; communities face impoverishment, hunger and unnecessary fires in the face of lack of public provision of basic necessities; Abahlali baseMjondolo leaders have been attacked and have repeatedly been forced to go into hiding; and 20 leaders have lost their life to assassinations. As a member of ESCR-Net, we have repeatedly denounced the ongoing criminalization and repression of Abahlali baseMjondolo leaders, including other recent attacks on the eKhenana settlement.

Abahlali baseMjondolo is carrying out critical human rights work, supporting South Africa in living up to its ideals and Constitution. In the face of unemployment, impoverishment, ack of public services or public provision and brutal attacks, they promote important alternatives of cooperation and solidarity among the poor, which are being modeled in the eKhenana settlement.

We call on the South African authorities to ensure an immediate, independent and thorough investigations into the killings of Ayanda Ngila and Siyabonga Manqele. Those responsible must be held accountable.

***The attacks on Abahlali baseMjondolo must stop now!***

1. Nomfundo Xolo (9 March 2022): Ayanda Ngila’s murder devastates eKhenana, NewFrame. Can be found here: <https://www.newframe.com/ayanda-ngilas-murder-will-linger-in-ekhenana/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Abahlali baseMjondolo (8 March 2022):Violent ANC attack on the eKhenana Commune on Sunday night – activists hospitalised. Can be found here: <http://abahlali.org/node/17442/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Abahlali basemjondolo (12 March 2022):Masked police officers murder resident of the eNkanini Occupation, can be found here: http://abahlali.org/node/17470/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)