



16 January 2025

To: President of South Africa
Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa
Electronic message to: malebo@presidency.gov.za

Dear President Ramaphosa,

IN RE: COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE BUFFELSFONTEIN MINE CRISIS

The unfolding disaster at the Buffelsfontein Mine at Stilfontein in the North West province has brought devastating images and testimony from those affected by the ongoing crisis.

Since the start of the Government's rescue operation, aimed at clamping down on the illegal mining at Stilfontein, the bodies of more than 78 illegal miners have been recovered.

This operation comes after months of debate and public discourse around illegal mining and the actions of so-called "zama-zamas" in our country. The ongoing situation at Stilfontein has greatly polarised our nation, and while we are a diverse society, we must be united at this critical juncture.

Buffelsfontein has quickly degenerated into a humanitarian crisis that has drawn the attention of not only domestic, but also of international observers, NGOs, and commentators. The emergence of so many dead and reports of many more trapped underground, poses serious questions about not only what transpired at Buffelsfontein over recent months, but also how the situation has deteriorated to such a disturbing extent.

It also taken attention from the daily needs of ordinary South Africans, the foremost priorities being economic growth and job creation.

While the Government is indeed pursuing a rescue operation, the next step is for us to determine how we reached this point and where we go from here. We must ensure that a situation like this does not arise again.

In order for a full and frank account to be received as to what transpired at Buffelsfontein, the actions or inactions of the various state and private roleplayers, and recommendations to be given as to how to remedy what is clearly devolving into a national crisis. A full-scale commission of inquiry is called for.

It is my submission, and request, that you utilise your powers under law to establish such a commission of inquiry. By allowing an empowered body, headed by an independent chairperson, to investigate both the prelude and subsequent crisis at Buffelsfontein, South Africans will be able to come to grips with not only the unfolding crisis, but formulate an understanding as to how matters came to this point.

It is high time that we bring the crisis at Buffelsfontein, and indeed the spate of illegal mining activities across the country, under extreme scrutiny.

I trust that you will consider this request favourably and look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Mr James Lorimer, MP