

# On waiting list for years, only some miners get decent lodgings

According to *TimesLIVE*, the squalid living conditions for miners were among the reasons for the bloody strike at the platinum mine in Marikana, 110 kilometres northwest of Johannesburg.

At the Nkaneng informal settlement, there are two communal toilets and a water tap for the more than 30 inhabitants. From one's door there is a direct view of the Rowland mine shaft -- one of four operated in Marikana by British firm Lonmin.

The shanty's landlord -- the first to have squatted there in the 1990s -- charges R350 in monthly rent, plus R100 for electricity. But for less rent than that, some lucky ones have moved into brick-and-mortar family units provided by the mine operator. The units were recently renovated from communal hostels into one or two-bedroom apartments with a living room, a toilet and a kitchen. "We were on a waiting list since 2005 and we only got this place last year," said Nosimo Faleni, mother of two, whose husband has worked at the mine since 1997.

Under the government-instituted mining charter, Lonmin has plans to build more houses, but there will not be enough for every worker. The company employs 28,000 people, and plans to provide 2,970 housing units in the next two years, *TimesLIVE* says. For those still in the old-style 1970s hostels, it's an ordeal -- four beds per room, no doors, no privacy.

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