

Motlanthe calls for mines to change conditions of employment

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Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe has called on mining houses to change their conditions of employment to enable miners to visit their homes and see their families more often.



(Image: GCIS)

The migrant labour system, which had been inherited from the apartheid era, was still in use and was deepening rural poverty, dividing and breaking families, and has had dire consequences for women and children, he said while answering oral questions in the National Assembly on Wednesday.

The Deputy President said the migrant labour system was also depriving communities of human capital as workers were forced to seek employment outside their home towns. They ended up living in informal settlements or single sex hostels where HIV infections were high.

Referring to the "tragic" events at Marikana, which is now being investigated by the Farlam Commission of Inquiry, he said that the migrant labour system was the cause.

If anything could emerge from the "painful saga" it is the elimination of the migrant labour system, he said.

Describing some of the effects of this system, the Deputy President said that miners worked for 12 months before going home for a week at the end of the year to see their families.

Won't be drawn on abuse of public funds

He urged mining houses to consider a change which would see miners working for between five to six weeks at a time before being allowed to go home for about two weeks.

He also said mining houses should provide better decent, safe transport for miners to go to their real homes. This would address most of the challenges and consequences of establishing secondary homes.

In answer to a question by Democratic Party Parliamentary leader Lindiwe Mazibuko about establishing a multi-party committee to tackle these problems, the Deputy President urged her to wait for the Farlam Commission's report.

"This is a societal problem. Whatever ad hoc committee is formed to deal with these problems should involve all parties," he said.

The Deputy President declined to be drawn into answering a question about what Mazibuko called an abuse of public funds at President Jacob Zuma's private residence in Nkandla, but said that the Minister of Public Works, Thembelani Thulas Nxesi, was likely to clarify.

Responding to a question on the tweet of the national DA leader Helen Zille in which she referred to black people migrating to the Western Cape as refugees, he said they should rather be called fellow South Africans and even compatriots.

Asked by the Freedom Front plus about establishing a ministry for minorities, he said the Constitution protected all South Africans - therefore there was no need for such a ministry.

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