
STATEMENT

I, the undersigned,

CHRISTINA FOTI MAROPENG

(ID _____)

do hereby state –

1 I am an adult female housekeeper, currently employed at
Thembi Game Reserve for 10 years, resident at
Rhadium.

2 The facts contained herein, save where the contrary appears, are within my own personal knowledge and to the best of my belief both true and correct.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

3 I was born on 9 June 1963 at Verdrag, Limpopo Province. I have lived in this province, near the Thabazimbi area for my whole life.

4 About 15 or so years ago, I completed my training as a traditional healer ("sangoma").


IMPORTANCE OF THE MADITMATLE (MELETSE) MOUNTAIN

5 From a young age, I went to the mountain known generally as the Meletse Mountain but known to my community as the Madimatle Mountain ("Madimatle") with my family and our church group on special occasions, in order to honour our ancestors.

6 Later in my life, I was taught by my father, and by his father (my grandfather) that Madimatle has important significance to our traditional life and sangoma practices.


F.C. Maropeng

- 7 The importance of the Madimatle has been passed on to generations of my family in the oral tradition of story telling.
- 8 I am aware that the Madimatle attracts a variety of different types of visitors from different cultural groups, churches and races as a sacred place. I have known of people coming from Johannesburg and as far as Polokwane and Mpumalanga to visit Madimatle, and more specifically the entrance to and chambers of the Gatkop Cave.
- 9 I know of at least two other traditional healers (including the chief sangoma Ntate Khumalo) who accompany patients to Madimatle for religious reasons.
- 10 In my sangoma practice, Madimatle is represented by the symbol of a specific stone amongst the items I use when "throwing the bones". The fall of this stone indicates a message to me from the ancestors that the patient must visit Madimatle as part of his/her healing process.
- 11 Some of the ways in which the Madimatle is of religious significance include –
 - 11.1 as the earthly base for all our ancestors and the place which houses the god of gods. I believe that all power comes from Madimatle;
 - 11.2 healing of people suffering from illness. I personally went to the Gatkop Cave after having been diagnosed with breast cancer and was due to have a mastectomy operation. After visiting Madimatle, I believe I was cured by my ancestors;
 - 11.3 young children are brought to Madimatle and Gatkop Cave for different purposes, including introduction to our ancestors;
 - 11.4 initiation of sangomas as part of their training; and
 - 11.5 as a site for undertaking a personal fast and prayer.
- 12 Due to the sacred and religious significance of Madimatle and the Gatkop Cave, certain behaviour is not allowed at or near these sites, including –


F.L. Mabapeng
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- 12.1 taking of photographs;
 - 12.2 use of torches, radios or cell phones. Caves are lit by candlelight;
 - 12.3 wearing of pants by female visitors;
 - 12.4 wearing of shoes (with the intention that the soil of the cave sticks to one's bare feet); and
 - 12.5 playing of loud music or making loud noise. Only songs of prayer or worship are allowed.
- 13 Before entering the Gatkop Cave, the appropriate ritual is to throw a stone into the mouth of the cave and to listen for one's path inside the cave.
- 14 On certain occasions, visitors may sleep over inside the cave.

EFFECT OF THE MINING ACTIVITY ON MADIMATLE

- 15 I am concerned that the mining activity will affect the ability of future generations to visit the mountain and Gatkop Cave for different purposes.
- 16 The mining activity will impede on our ability to have children initiated there.
- 17 The mining activity destroys the mood of Madimatle because part of ancestral worship requires a sense of peace and tranquillity. Noise and pollution of a mine change the character of the mountain.
- 18 I am also concerned that the blasting may collapse the caves. For me, this is very symbolic because the collapse of the caves would mean the collapse of this ancestral practice.

CONCLUSION

- 19 I have always know the Madimatle and Gatkop Cave area to be open and accessible to all people, without any fencing, cost or rules of entry.


FC Madimatle

- 20 If Madimatle and the Gatkop Cave is not available for us to use for our ancestral worship and other religious and cultural practices, there is no alternative venue that has such meaning for us. The effect of this is that these practices can no longer be undertaken, as this venue is essential to their occurrence.
- 21 I did not know that entry to the Gatkop Cave and access to Madimatle had been fenced off. I am upset about this because no one spoke to me about this and how it is affecting me and my beliefs. I would like to have been informed so that I could have gathered with other sangomas to discuss the consequences of these actions.
- 22 I believe that we have already witnessed the spiritual consequences of the closure of access to the Gatkop Cave and Madimatle in the form of the recent flooding in Bela-Bela, to which many lives were lost. I further believe that it is in the interest of the whole of South Africa to protect Madimatle and the Gatkop Cave.

This statement was orally translated from English into Sepedi and then signed at

TEMBI LOAGI on this 14 APRIL ~~March~~ 2014



Christina Foti Maropeng
CHRISTINA FOTI MAROPENG


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STATEMENT

I, the undersigned,

ITUMELANG IM
AMITIAM
DUDU MAROPENG

(ID 9211281176085)

do hereby state -

- 1 I am an adult female housekeeper, currently resident at Radium, North West Province.
- 2 The facts contained herein, save where the contrary appears, are within my own personal knowledge and to the best of my belief both true and correct.
- 3 I was born on 28 November 1992^{Im}. I grew up in Radium and I have lived in this area for my whole life.
- 4 My mother is a sangoma, practising in the Thabazimbi area. She always told me that the Meletse Mountain but known to my community as the Madimatle Mountain ("Madimatle") has to be respected. She told me that both she and my grandfather were born knowing this mountain. I believe Madimatle has healing powers and is capable of healing even terminal illness.
- 5 I learned yesterday that access to Madimatle, as well as the Gatkop Cave, has been denied by a fence.
- 6 I am deeply upset about the mining activity and this denial of access for several reasons -
 - 6.1 I was not notified;
 - 6.2 I am concerned about future generations losing out on participating in significant religious, spiritual and cultural practices which take place at Madimatle and Gatkop Cave. On a personal level should I be required by my

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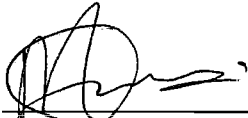
ancestors to do so in a time of need, I would like to be able to take my daughter to the Gatkop Cave;

6.3 mining activity in Madimatle which would result in the destruction and/or permanent closure of the Gatkop Cave would, for me, be as spiritually severe as digging up my ancestor's graves; and

6.4 I believe that in times of difficulty, my ancestors are able to respond to my suffering by calling on me to go to Madimatle to connect with them there. I am worried that if I receive such a calling from my ancestors at a future time, I will not be able to respond and go to Madimatle because of the mining activity and/or any consequent damage to or destruction of the Gatkop Cave.

7 I do not want to have to tell my daughter "there was a mountain", I want to show her that there is a mountain. I don't want to give up on my great grandparents' mountain.

Signed at Zandspruit on this 25 March 2014



DUBU MAROPENG

ITUMBELENG MITTAH

STATEMENT

I, the undersigned,

JOHANNA MAMPENG MOLLO

(ID 740323_____)

do hereby state -

- 1 I am an adult female, currently resident at
Roosberg. I am employed by Helen B Magdelaine Kok as a
housekeeper for the last 14 years J.M.M.
- 2 The facts contained herein, save where the contrary appears, are within my own personal knowledge and to the best of my belief both true and correct.
- 3 I was born on 23 March 1974 at Rockpoort, Limpopo Province. I have lived in this area for my whole life.
- 4 When I was a young girl, I used to go with my grandparents to the mountain known generally as the Meletse Mountain but known to my community as the Madimatle Mountain ("Madimatle") to go "phahla" or to "phasa", which is a method of opening the gateway to communicate with our ancestors by way of sacrifice, which would include slaughtering of a sheep, traditional beer, tobacco and snuff to honour our ancestors.
- 5 We would "phahla" or "phasa" at a specific place in the entrance of Gatkop Cave on Madimatle, where the sheep's blood was spilled on the ground.
- 6 Until recently, I visited Madimatle approximately 16 times per year, usually in a large gathering of family and community members.
- 7 Until yesterday, I did not know that entry to the Gatkop Cave and access to Madimatle had been fenced off. This upsets me because I feel that someone should have spoken to me and other community members about this because it is an

important place and it is important to me to be able to take my children to phahla on Madimatle.

- 8 In my family's practices, any event of significance, such as a death or birth in the family, must be announced to the ancestors from the Gatkop Cave.
- 9 Denial of access to Madimatle is affecting our ability to communicate and to stay connected with our ancestors under our religious and cultural practices.

This statement was orally translated from English into Sepedi and then signed at Zandspruit on this 25 March 2014.

J. m. mollo
JOHANNA MAMPENG MOLLO

STATEMENT

I, the undersigned,

MOREWANE THOMAS MOTHLOKI
(ID3810185165080)

do hereby state –

- 1 I am an adult male pensioner, currently resident at Madimatle.
- 2 The facts contained herein, save where the contrary appears, are within my own personal knowledge and to the best of my belief both true and correct.
- 3 I was born on 18 October 1938 in Madimatle. I have lived in this area my whole life.
- 4 Ever since I was born, I have known of the healing powers of Madimatle Mountain. People go to the mountain for healing, commemorating and speaking to ancestors. I also know of "Meletje" Mountain (meaning "associated with water").
- 5 I was surprised about a year or so ago when people came to take samples on the mountain. I then noticed that there was a road being constructed on the mountain.
- 6 I have not had any dealings with any person from the mine. There have been no prior discussions with me about a mining operation.
- 7 According to my knowledge, the entire area is owned by the mine. The previous farm owners and employers who were living here (with whom I was living when I was employed) moved when the mining came.
- 8 When the mine people arrived here at Madimatle, I had already been living here since 1938. I had been a herdsman here prior to retiring as a pensioner.

Thomas

- 16 First of all, the access to the mine never had a big fence or that gate historically when I was growing up. This is a novelty. The last time I tried to access Madimatle was on 11 March 2014. I did not try to enter through the gate. In my belief, even though the gate is closed, I do not believe that it is actually locked.
- 17 There is no specific time of the day or year that people access Madimatle. Day and night every day, people want to access Madimatle, there is no busy or quiet period.
- 18 I know of people wanting to gain access since the notice board was erected. In this week alone, 3 different cars approached me to say they would like access. As the gate is currently not locked, the mine policy is that people must first come to me, and I must send them through, so people have been able to access it even though there is the notice board. I am the one who puts the locks on and they are hanging on the gate handle but not locked.
- 19 I think the mine people are very much aware of the need of the people to access the mine area and that the people from the mine based in Thabazimbi are aware of this.
- 20 Even though the mine has put up the notice board and have this "access" policy, they are in a difficult position because trying to control access to the mine is very difficult. In my view they will have a very tough time. The policy does not work and people will not stop accessing Madimatle.
- 21 To my knowledge, there are no longer people constructing the road, after prospecting activities as they simply dug up the road and left it as it is, without any rehabilitation.
- 22 I witnessed a lot of activity in the form of trucks driving past the house when the road construction was underway, now and again, the noise from the machinery is quite noticeable. I was not affected as much by the dust.
- 23 I do not see how there could be a mine that co-exists with the cave. In my opinion it is still unlikely that there will be a mine. I find it very difficult to imagine a mine in that are, so close to the mountain and the caves.

Thomas

- 9 I think that there was some kind of meeting between the mining officials and the farm owners who were my employers in this area, but I was not invited to and did not attend. I was not party to those discussions.
- 10 The mine people approached me to ask me to relocate to another property, but I refused on the basis that I was born here, raised here and have no desire to move anywhere else. The mine people came back and informed me that they had discussed my matter in Pretoria and indicated to me that they had agree that I remain on the farm but only within the bounds of this fence around my house, no further, because the entire surrounding property is now owned by the mine.
- 11 I was never given any money, promises or any benefit from the mine.

ACCESS TO MADIMATLE

- 12 As a result of having lived near the entrance to Gatkop Cave at Madimatle, I have for many years often shown visitors to Madimatle where and how to access the Gatkop Cave.
- 13 Over my lifetime, it is impossible for me to quantify how many people access the mountain on a daily basis or have accessed the mountain over the years because the number of people who often enter the mountain and cave is far too vast.
- 14 I often go to Madimatle because I grew up here but I have not had the calling to become a sangoma. Part of the purpose of the mountain is for sangoma initiation process, but it also has significance to many people for many different reasons.
- 15 I think that the notice board preventing entry to Madimatle without permission was put up in about the 3rd month of this year, very recently. Since the board was put up, various people from the mining house have come here and requested me to control the locks to the access gate. I said I want nothing to do with or have any involvement with the access issue. I do not want to man the gate or refuse people access. People from the mining company have been coming in and out, wanting to block access. I know they have put up a sign, but I do not think the gate is locked, to my knowledge the gate is not locked.

Thomas

- 24 It is too difficult to identify the people who come to Madimatle. People come from all over, including Moruleng, Welgevaar, Mabopane, Ga-Rankuwa, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Lesotho and "Rhodesia".
- 25 There is no traditional, customary king, chief or clan that connects the people here. We are all mainly labour tenants working on farms and lodges.

This statement was orally translated from English into Sepedi and then signed at Madimatle on this 25 March 2014.

thomas

MOREWANE THOMAS MOTHLOKI

STATEMENT

I, the undersigned,

MATLALA STEPIHNA MOTHLOKI (Nee MATJINA)
(ID4005080290088)

do hereby state –

1. I am an adult female pensioner, currently resident at Madimatle.
2. The facts contained herein, save where the contrary appears, are within my own personal knowledge and to the best of my belief both true and correct.
3. I was born on 8 May 1940 in Rankane, Rankin's Pass, Alma District and raised in Rooiberg.
4. I started living here in Madimatle through my marriage to Mr Thomas Mothloki in 1967. I worked as a house keeper to the farm owner, Elisa Pole.
5. I have been going to Madimatle often with other community members, for purposes of praying over the years. It was through the Apostolic Church that I would go there to pray. We often conduct "phahla" practice for the purposes of talking to the elders that are no longer. We are able to talk to them about ailments, about problems or our desires and we request them to intercede on our behalf, as they are closest to God. This is also a form of communication where I notify the ancestors of all significant events in my life, such as the birth of a child or a death in the family.
6. I definitely do not believe that there is any other place that we could use as an alternative to Madimatle. This is the "Great Place" and only place we have known for purposes of worship, prayer and to "phahla".
7. There are lots and lots of people who go there almost on their death beds and come back healed. A lot of them have been to the mountain years and years ago. It is not a myth, in reality that is what I believe. I do not know what makes the



Madimatle mountain so powerful. It is simply a natural creation. One cannot have an answer for everything. In my belief system, not knowing is acceptable, because we are a part of nature and nature is so vast that we cannot know all the answers.

8. I had no knowledge of the construction of the mine or that there is a mine due to be constructed.
9. We can and could see from our home the construction of the road through the mountain. I feel powerless because the mine owns the land. I feel I have no recourse.

This statement was orally translated from English into Sepedi and then signed at Madimatle on this 25 March 2014.

X

MATLALA STEPIHNA MOTHLOKI (Nee MATJINA)