Bheki Cele

Minister of Police

v/ Amnesty International i Norge

Postboks 702 sentrum

0106 Oslo

Dear Minister Cele,

I am deeply concerned about the continued violent harassment of members of the movement Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM), and the threats and intimidations against Thapelo Mohapi, General Secretary of AbM.

AbM is a grassroots movement with some 115,000 members who engage for the rights to access to land and adequate housing. They are based in Cato Manor, a suburb of eThekwini, where many inhabitants are affected by housing shortages and a host of other challenges that undermine their possibility of living a live in safety and dignity. As they cannot afford the high rental costs, they often end up in informal settlements, setting up makeshift homes with limited or no access to services such as water or sanitation.

The work of Thapelo Mohapi and AbM to demand political action to realize the rights to housing and social security for everyone, has made them the subject of smear campaigns and violent attacks. According to AbM, 25 of their members have been killed since the movement’s inception in 2005. In 2022 alone, three AbM members from the eKhenana branch were killed. Countless other members have been attacked and their properties destroyed.

Thapelo Mohapi himself has been forced to live in hiding after facing ongoing threats and intimidation for his work.

I call on you to urgently establish an investigative unit to swiftly, transparently and effectively investigate the allegations of a pattern of threats, harassment and killings of AbM members, bringing the suspected perpetrators to justice in fair trials and putting an end to the attacks against AbM.

Yours sincerely