

# Marikana commission on the ropes

THE Marikana Commission of Inquiry could collapse following the withdrawal of a fourth legal team yesterday.

George Bizos became the third participant to provisionally withdraw from the commission, pending the outcome of a court application for the state to cover the legal fees of wounded and arrested miners.

Bizos, former president Nelson Mandela's lawyer, is acting for the Benchmarks Foundation and the family of one of the 34 dead miners, Papi Ledingwane.

The commission yesterday said it was concerned at the withdrawals and that such action "undermines" its work.

Advocate Dali Mpofu's team, representing the wounded and arrested miners, on Monday became the first to withdraw pending judgment on his Pretoria High Court application for state funding.

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On Tuesday, lawyers representing the families of dead miners and those representing the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union also pulled out.

In a letter addressed to the commission chair,

Judge Ian Farlam, Legal Resources Centre's director Janet Love said: "Following the announcement by the legal representatives of the accused and injured miners and the families, our clients have also instructed us to provisionally withdraw from participating in the commission."

The dramatic developments this week have raised fears of damaging the credibility of the commission.

"These [withdrawals] are provisional pending the judgment. The commission will continue with its work while we await the verdict," the commission's spokesman, Tshepo Mahlangu, said.

He said the judgment was expected to be delivered today.

He said all parties that have pulled out must appear before the commission tomorrow to update the commission on the developments regarding the court action.

The parties must also update the body on the latest instructions from their clients. — *Sipho Masombuka*