

COPS 'COULD NOT INFILTRATE STRIKERS'

By SIMON NARE

COPS had extreme difficulty gathering intelligence before the Marikana massacre . . .

The Marikana inquiry was told yesterday that a team of crime intelligence cops failed to infiltrate the strikers.

Specialised operations head, Major-General Charl Annandale, said nine crime analysts were sent from the national office to gather intelligence, along with two others from the Gauteng provincial office. There were also 30 detectives working on cases in the area.

We were in the dark, says Annandale

But informers had pulled out in fear of their lives, said Annandale.

"It was extremely difficult . . . to infiltrate a group of 300 people who were at the forefront," he said.

"It was so difficult because we didn't know who these people were."

Annandale said snipers were sent to shoot identified strikers who would be shooting at the police. Two helicopters

were also sent.

Annandale defended the use of the Special Task Force, saying this unit and the National Intervention Unit were best placed to respond to the wildcat strike.

He said at first there was no dialogue between strikers and police.

He called for a hostage negotiator, who came with two other negotiators. But they failed to get strikers to lay down

their arms and return to work.

Annandale detailed cop efforts to get rival mine unions around the negotiation table.

He took the hot seat yesterday after National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega was excused until Advocate Dali Mpfu recovers from injuries suffered when he was attacked in East London two weeks ago.

Police say informant killed at Marikana

A POLICE informant was killed in Marikana, North West, amid the wage-related unrest last August, the Farlam Commission heard yesterday.

Major-General Charl Annandale said the victim was a security guard at Lonmin's platinum mine. The guard was one of 10 people killed in the week before August 16, when police shot dead 34 miners.

Annandale, who headed the police special tactical operations team during the unrest, told the commission that the police had brought in negotiators prior to the shooting. Five representatives for the protesters told the negotiators they only wanted to speak to mine management.

Lonmin said it would hold talks with workers only once they returned to their jobs.

Annandale said police held talks with the heads of the National Union of Mineworkers and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) and asked that they address their striking members. After the meeting, the union leaders refused to travel together with the police to the koppie where the workers had camped for several days.

It appeared there was no trust between the two sides and they did not want to be seen together, said Annandale.

Amcu president Joseph Mathunjwa spoke to workers and told police the armed workers would lay down their weapons the next morning.

The commission heard about a body found close to the koppie on August 14.

In his evidence-in-chief, Annandale said police spokesman Captain Dennis Adriaio had reported to him that the deceased was lying on his back and that he had a huge open wound on his face and head.

Annandale told the commission that the plan the police tried to execute on August 16 was a collective one that had been put together several days before the shooting. The hearings continue. Sapa