

POLICE NOT ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH

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Political Reporter

THE South African Police Service did not have sufficient radio communication equipment during the Marikana operation as a result of incompatible systems.

This admission at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry by Major-General Charl Annandale prompted commission chairman Ian Farlam to ask police to act urgently.

“Do not wait for the outcome of the commission, get on with it now,” a visibly concerned Farlam said. Annandale had explained that during the operation at Marikana police used both analogue and digital systems which then led to a collapse of communications.

In a statement submitted as evidence, an expert witness criticised the SAPS operation at Marikana, particularly that analogue radio communication was problematic. Police blame the pylons in the area.

“There is no written evidence of a planned radio communication network. As is common international practice, there should have been two radio networks, one for information/intelligence management and another as an operational network, coordinating the units in the field,” said Addie Hendricks, an expert on police operations.

Annandale, who is giving evidence-in-chief at the hearing in Rustenburg, said police were aware of the problem and had been considering the roll-out of a “radio project”.

He said the roll-out of a single radio network would cost a staggering R600-million per province. He also admitted that the video recording systems were not suitable.

Meanwhile, Lonmin counsel Schalk Burger yesterday expressed

Marikana communication woes

frustration at the slow progress of the commission’s work. He urged Farlam to give direction to ensure that the hearing was concluded.

He said he estimated, with the current rate of proceedings and the number of witnesses still to appear, that the hearing would carry on into next year. He said the way in which police counsel Ishmael Semanya was leading evidence was unfair to

all, including the families. “This is not the forum to probe potential civil claims and it’s not the forum to settle scores or for grandstanding and sensation,” he said.

He was supported by evidence leaders and Muzi Msimang, representing some of the survivors of the massacre with advocate Dali Mpofu. “We are not moving an inch. It is painful to sit here and find

nothing achieved at the end of the day. We have other work,” Msimang said. The hearing had been expected to conclude in January but President Jacob Zuma granted an extension to the end of May.

Farlam agreed that the commission needed to move faster but added that it had already started negotiating about another extension. He also hinted at a possible recess.

Police to review operational aspects following Marikana

POLICE are reviewing several operational aspects following the Marikana wage-related unrest last year that left 44 people dead, the Farlam Commission heard yesterday.

Major-General Charl Annandale said the SA Police Service realised there were shortcomings in the public operations unit which dealt with crowd management.

Annandale headed the special tactical operations team at Marikana. He was giving his evidence-in-chief before the commission in Rustenburg.

Among other things, police had noted they had insufficient radio communications and had been working on improving the system for several years.

Earlier he told the commission that each province would need around R600 million to upgrade their radio communications systems from analogue to digital.

New video camera equipment was also being acquired for police to use when attend-

ing to public unrest. "For the 2012/13 financial year I have made available R500 000 to buy more professional cameras, hard drives and overhead projectors," he said.

Earlier in the week, Annandale said police had not

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**R500 000 made
available for better
police cameras**
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been able to provide proper video evidence of Marikana because one of the operators had forgotten to record the events that unfolded.

Another said he experienced technical difficulties with the equipment.

Others reportedly had to withdraw from the area as protesting miners from Lonmin's platinum mine had threatened them, labelling

them as police spies.

Annandale said training on camera use and how to capture material that could be used as evidence was now being given to officers.

An executive committee to oversee this had been formed.

Nine other police units would also be established and the shortage of officers in the public order unit would be addressed.

Schalk Burger SC, for Lonmin, said he was surprised to hear of this action.

"I thought the SAPS was waiting for outcomes from the commission," said Burger.

He was referring to a response by national police commissioner Riah Phiyega last week that police would wait for the outcomes of the commission before deciding on remedial action.

The commission, chaired by retired Judge Ian Farlam, is investigating the Marikana massacres, where police shot dead 34 miners on August 16 last year. Sapa

Marikana: Police radios didn't work properly!

By **SIMON NARE**

THE cops had radios... but many of them could not talk to each other!

Tactical specialised operations head Major-General Charl Annandale admitted at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry that police were using different types of radios during the operations and this led to a breakdown of communications by different units.

North West police were using analogue radios while Gauteng cops were using digital.

In addition, the radios weren't working properly and only a single channel was used for communication. Annandale was responding to international public order policing expert Eddie Hen-

drickx, whose expert evidence about the police operation in Marikana was submitted yesterday.

Hendrickx said there was no evidence of a planned radio communication network. He said there should have been two radio networks. Annandale also raised concerns about the capturing of events on video.

"The whole operation should have been filmed, especially if the intention was to charge people later."

■ Advocate Schalk Burger, representing Lonmin, blasted his colleagues for grandstanding. Attorney Muzi Msimang, who is instructing Advocate Dali Mpofu, said they would be happy if the commission was speeded up.

Slow pace of Marikana probe irks lawyers

SAMUEL MUNGADZE

Staff Writer

LAWYERS appearing before the Farlam Commission of Inquiry in Rustenburg have asked the judge to try to speed up proceedings, arguing that the commission would be sitting until well into next year at the current pace.

The inquiry into the circumstances of the deaths of 44 people after an illegal strike at Lonmin's Marikana mine began at the start of August, and is still only in its first phase.

Lawyers yesterday asked Judge Ian Farlam to expedite mat-

ters, citing spiralling expenses and prolonged suffering and distress among the families of victims.

The lawyers said that at the rate the hearings were being conducted, the commission was likely to be concluded next year.

This commission was given a R75m budget, but the lawyers said this would balloon as an extension of the commission's work was inevitable.

"It looks like we'll need another eight months of evidence. It seems the second phase will not see day before sometime in 2014. It's unfair on the fiscus, it's unfair to the families, it prolongs their pain.

It seems the commission will not conclude the hearing before the end of the year," said Schalk Burger SC, counsel for platinum miner Lonmin.

"This is not the forum to settle scores. I submit that the way we have led thus far is unfair to the public of this country. Do we really have to wait to 2014 for that (second) phase? I can't simply accommodate another year of this," Mr Burger said.

George Bizos SC, for the Legal Resources Centre, agreed.

"Our resources are not limitless, steps should be taken to expedite the process," he said.

Henry Muzi Msimang, who is on the legal team led by advocate Dali Mpfu, representing around 270 Marikana families, was more scathing in his view of the delays.

"We don't want to see this matter running further, we are not being paid by government. We would like to see this matter go to finality. We keep on getting witnesses, it has cost us a fortune," Mr Msimang said.

Judge Farlam acknowledged the concerns and said he would engage with the Presidency, but would not provide details.

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