

Police deny plan to end Marikana protest

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THE police's tactical chief has denied that specialised units were deployed to Marikana in Rustenburg to end the congregation of protesters at a koppie near an informal settlement.

Maj-Gen Charl Annandale, head of the police's specialised units, yesterday again defended the South African Police Service (SAPS) strategy which led to the shooting dead of 34 striking miners on August 16 last year.

Seventy others were injured during clashes with police.

Maj-Gen Annandale faced a barrage of questions from veteran human rights lawyer George Bizos SC at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, sitting in Rustenburg. Mr Bizos said the police's actions on August 16 were not to manage the crowd but to bring an end to the assembling of protesters at the koppie.

"The specialised units were in the majority.

"I will again mention that the deployment of the units was not meant to manage the crowd," Mr Bizos said.

Members of the public order policing unit were deployed on August 16 together with members of three specialised units — the national intervention unit, the special task force and the tactical response team — to disarm, disperse and arrest some of the 3,000 protesters who had been assembling on the koppie since August 12.

Maj-Gen Annandale said there were sufficient members of the public order policing unit to manage the crowd.

"I am going to put it to you that the inevitable inference to be drawn is that your conduct on the morning of the 16th was not to manage the crowd but to show force that would lead to violence," Mr Bizos said. Maj-Gen Annandale said this was incorrect.

Mr Bizos also said the police plan and police statements before the commission referred to the protesters as a homogenous group. But Mr Bizos put it to Maj-Gen Annandale that in his version of events, the police were particularly concerned with disarming a smaller, more militant group of around 300 protesters. "Where in the (police) plan is this (idea) of two different groups being treated separately?" he asked.

Maj-Gen Annandale said the overall plan provided for the actions of groups and individuals within the larger collective group. The inquiry continues.

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Cops altered Marikana story to fit expert testimony – Bizos

SAPA

POLICE changed their version of events at Marikana to fit the evidence of expert witnesses, the Farlam Commission of Inquiry has heard.

George Bizos, SC, said the police plan and police statements before the commission referred to the protesters as a homogenous group.

The police opened fire, killing 34 striking mineworkers and wounding 78, while trying to disperse a group gathered on a hill near Lonmin's platinum mine in Marikana on August 16.

Bizos, for the Legal Resource Centre and the Bench Marks Foundation, was cross-examining Major-General

Charl Annandale, who led the police special tactical operations team.

He put it to Annandale that in his version of events, police were particularly concerned with disarming a smaller, more militant group of about 300 protesters. "Where in the (police) plan is this (idea) of two different groups being treated separately?"

Annandale said the overall plan provided for the actions of groups and individuals within the larger collective group.

Bizos referred the commission to a statement by Brigadier Adriaan Calitz, who heads the North West operational response service.

In it Calitz referred to the protest-

ers as "acting as one group, and all of them associated themselves with the actions of each other... (with) the same intention and goal".

Ishmael Semanya, for the police, said there was no contradiction as Calitz also referred to the smaller, "very aggressive" group.

Bizos said references to the smaller group amounted to a "new version" of events. "We will submit that you (Annandale) are following the example that... policemen do not contradict each other, they support each other irrespective of the facts."

Annandale said: "Mr Bizos cannot make judgement over my integrity."

Police had considered the smaller

group during joint operations centre meetings and in debriefings at the end of the operation, he said.

"The fact that it is not exactly put in the words put by advocate Bizos does not mean it didn't happen. It did."

Annandale said there were witnesses to the meetings at the joint operations centre, including Lonmin management, who would confirm the smaller group was discussed.

"I'm certain Brigadier Calitz... will confirm his involvement in the debriefing at the joint operations centre that there were two different groups, that were armed differently, behaved differently and were dressed differently."

Cops 'not equipped' for strikers

By **SIMON NARE**

EVEN if the cops had a proper plan, they still wouldn't have been able to implement it!

This was the admission of Major-General Charl Annandale at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry yesterday. He is from the police tactical special operations group.

Under cross-examination by Advocate George Bizos, Annandale admitted that the cops developed a plan that was based on previous experience.

He said the strike which led to the massacre was unique and one of a kind encountered in the history of the South African police.

He also admitted that the members of the public order policing unit were not trained to deal with the situation.

"Their weapons were limited to

Advocate Howard Varney (left) and George Bizos at the Marikana Inquiry in Rustenburg yesterday.

Photo by Jan Right

the use of minimum force.

"The strike at Marikana required more than just crowd management."

He said the police came under attack before they could implement their plan.

"What happened next was a reaction to the situation in the line of self-defence," he said.

Annandale said lessons had been learnt from the massacre which will be used to train cops.

"Our training will have to be re-

viewed to prepare the police to better handle situations like that of Marikana," he said.

Earlier, Annandale differed with expert testimony that it would have been impossible to disarm 3 000 strikers with only 700 cops.

The plan was to disperse the group into smaller groups using stun grenades.

"After that it would have been easier for cops to disarm and arrest them," he said.

Police tune on Marikana 'changed'

POLICE changed their version of events at Marikana to fit the evidence of expert witnesses, the Farlam Commission of Inquiry heard yesterday.

George Bizos said police statements before referred to protesters as a homogenous group.

The police shot dead 34 striking mineworkers and wounded 78 while trying to disperse a group on a hill near Lonmin's platinum mine in Marikana on August 16.

The commission is holding hearings in Rustenburg as part of its probe into the circumstances of these deaths and those of 10 people the preceding week.

The 10 included two police officers and two security guards. Bizos was acting for the Legal Resource Centre and the Bench Marks Foundation.

He was cross-examining Maj-Gen Charl Annandale who led the police tactical operations team.

He put it to Annandale that in his version of events the police were particularly concerned with disarming a smaller, more militant group of 300 protesters.

"Where in the plan is this (idea) of two different groups being treated separately?" he asked.

Annandale said the plan provided for the actions of groups and individuals within the larger group. Bizos referred the commission to a statement made by Brig Adriaan Calitz who heads the North West response service.

In the statement Calitz refers to the protesters as "acting as one group and all of them associated themselves with the actions of each other (with) the same intention and goal."

Ishmael Semanya for the police said there was no contradiction. Semanya said Calitz also referred to the smaller, "very aggressive" group. Bizos maintained references to the smaller group amounted to a "new version".

"You (Annandale) are following the example policemen support each other irrespective of what the facts are."

Annandale objected. "Mr Bizos cannot make judgment over my integrity." He said police had considered the smaller group during meetings and in debriefings.

"The fact that it is not exactly put in the words put by advocate Bizos does not mean it did not happen. Indeed it did."

Annandale said there were witnesses at the meetings including Lonmin management, who would confirm the smaller group was discussed. "It (the description of a group of 3 000) refers to the collective group. Part of the collective was the militant one (of around 300 protesters)." - Sapa