

A protester licks his spear outside the Lonmin mine in Rustenburg. Photo: Reuters



Violent clashes between police and striking miners have left between seven and 18 people dead at the last count. But the miners – specifically, the rock drillers – are determined to stay on their outcrop until they are heard. But it's more than a strike, writes GREG MARINOVICH – it's becoming a war



Protesters sing as they hold weapons outside a mine in Rustenburg. Photo: Reuters



Policeman (right) fires at protesting miners outside Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine in Rustenburg.



A striking mine worker holds an axe outside a South African mine in Rustenburg, 100 km (62 miles) northwest of Johannesburg, August 15, 2012. Thousands of striking miners armed with machetes and sticks faced off with South African police on Wednesday at Lonmin's Marikana mine after it halted production following the deaths of 10 people in fighting between rival unions. Lonmin, the world's third-largest platinum producer, has threatened to sack 3 000 rock drill operators if they fail to end a wildcat pay strike that started on Friday at Marikana, its flagship mine.

Image by: SIPHIWE SIBEKO / REUTERS



Striking miners chant slogans outside a South African mine in Rustenburg, 100 km (62 miles) northwest of Johannesburg, August 15, 2012. Thousands of striking miners armed with machetes

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Image by: SIPHIWE SIBEKO / REUTERS



Protesting miners approach the police before they were shot at outside Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine in Rustenburg.

