

One person shot dead in protest at RBPlat mine on Wednesday night

By [Allan Seccombe](#)

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A person was shot dead near Royal Bafokeng Platinum's (RBPlat's) North Shaft on Wednesday evening, during a protest by about 100 people including former employees of the company.



Photo: Royal Bafokeng Platinum

Suspicion was that the shot was fired from within the crowd.

RBPlat says the protest resulted from its decision to fire 14 employees in December. This followed their involvement in unprotected strike action in 2017 as well as making threats to other employees and damaging property.

During the protest at North Shaft, a conveyor belt was set alight and a guard house and gate were damaged, prompting mine security to fire rubber bullets and paint balls at the crowd to break up the protest, RBPlat said in a statement.

"During the course of the incident an individual within the crowd was shot and killed by live ammunition. Based on preliminary evidence, including video footage, it is believed that the shooting was from within the group of protestors. The deceased was not employed by RBPlat," it said.

The police have started a criminal investigation into the incident.

Management of mining companies have, after various events, described their awareness of labour and social protests around their operations flaring up.

They feared these potentially spiralling out of control like they did near Lonmin's Marikana operations, where a total of 45 people were killed in 2012, with police killing 34 of those people during a protest in August.

"RBPlat management has called on local community members to refrain from engaging in violence, threatening behaviour and damage to property. The company notes widespread protest action currently underway in the Rustenburg area unrelated to mining issues, and calls for calm by all parties," the company said.

Local media reports from Rustenburg said parts of community in the town had attacked drug dealers and their homes.

RBPlat said operations at Bafokeng Rasimone Platinum Mine, where North Shaft is located, were unaffected by Wednesday's events.

Source: *BDpro*

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