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PRESS STATEMENT

VICTORY FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION INSTITUTE AS CHARGES AGAINST 9 PROTESTERS OF THE GA-PILA MINING COMMUNITY WITHDRAWN

The Freedom of Expression Institute is pleased to announce that on 07 November 2018 Senior Prosecutor, R Mashaite, withdrew all the charges against the 9 members of the Ga-Pila community who were arrested on 14 June 2018 on charges of public violence and trespassing after conducting a peaceful sit-in outside the Anglo owned Mogalakwena Mine.

The Ga-Pila community has a long-running dispute with Anglo Platinum Mine stemming from negotiations which commenced in 1991. These negotiations resulted in a dissatisfactory relocation site and relocation packages for the community to accommodate the Mogalakwena Platinum Mine. This dispute led the Ga-Pila community to gather in a peaceful sit-in, on 14 June 2018, outside the Mine gate in protest against mine management and their conduct through the negotiation process. The protest action led to the nine arrests.

On 28 September 2018 the nine accused appeared in the Mahwelereng Magistrate's Court where counsel, Adv Mandla Mkhathswa from the Johannesburg Bar, who was acting *pro bono* for the accused, requested to submit representations to the Senior Public Prosecutor. He stated that it would be in the interest of justice to make representations to the SPP as he believed that this matter was one of a land dispossession rather than that of unlawful protest action.

The 9 appeared in the Mahwelereng Magistrate's Court on 22 November 2018 to have the matter formally withdrawn before the Magistrate, Ms Mashindi.

For more information, please contact: **Nompumelelo Kekana – FXI: 011-482-1913 or 079 232 1937**