

# Ethical Wine Trade Campaign letter to Systembolaget

Stockholm 2013-06-17

## To Mr. Göran Klintberg, Systembolaget

We, the Ethical Wine Trade campaign, representing workers in the wine industry in South Africa, Chile, Argentina and Sweden are writing to you about the ongoing repression of farm workers on South African wine farms supplying Systembolaget.

After the implementation of the new minimum wage of R105 per day, workers have been mistreated and their rights violated in numerous ways.

In the Langeberg Municipality:

- Farmers are refusing to comply with the new minimum wage.
- Farmers are unilaterally changing and terminating contracts.
- Farmers are deducting rent, water and electricity costs over and above the maximum 10% deductions.
- Workers are being threatened with evictions.
- Shop stewards and union members are being discriminated against in terms of access to benefits and dismissals.
- Trade union rights are being taken away.
- Dismissed workers are being prevented from accessing jobs on other farms and other subsistence activities that workers usually undertake, such as selling of canes, are being denied to workers.
- Women workers are facing the brunt of casualisations and changes in contract. This has severe implications for farm children and the ongoing sexism in our society.

We include some examples below from different farms that supply to your companies:

**- On La Colline farm, 6 workers have been dismissed and contracts unilaterally changes. Some of the dismissed workers have lived and worked on the farm for over 20 years and are now threatened with dismissals and evictions.**

Union recognitions and organizational rights have been withdrawn.

Rent, electricity and transport was previously free but now workers are forced to pay. CCMA agreements regarding the provision of services such as transport have been reneged on. Union members have also been discriminated against. The above matters have been referred to the Labour Court. We are appalled by such attacks on workers' democratic rights and livelihoods.

- On Noree farm, 5 workers have been dismissed and all the women's contracts were unilaterally changed from permanent to casual workers. Workers are being forced to pay more for rent and electricity, cancelling out the gains of the minimum wage increase. Workers are no longer provided with free transport for their children to school and crèche and to town as per the CCMA agreement. Workers say they are forced to send their children to school with hungry stomachs.

- On Goudmyn farm over 15 women farm workers have been dismissed. Over 50 children's lives are affected by these dismissals. Workers were told that there is no more work for them even though some have worked and lived on the farm for as long as 20 years. Rent, electricity and transport was provided but now workers are forced to pay for such. These deductions are above the 10% prescribed by the Sectoral Determination. Workers say that their children are hungry and that they can no longer afford transport for their children to school and transport to the doctor when they are sick. Other farms where similar violations are occurring include Riverhouse, Voerspoed, Wonderfontein, Uitkyk, La Maison, Sunshine, Almond Grove, Le Grand and Leeuwenkuil.

We believe that this situation is intolerable and that it threatens the lives of many workers and their children. This situation could have repercussions for years to come unless it is immediately resolved. We demand that Systembolaget immediately take action to solve the problems on the supplier farms.

Through the Ethical Wine Trade campaign  
CSAAWU, South African farm workers union  
Sikhula Sonke, South African farm workers union  
Bawusa, South African farm workers union

UST, Argentinian farm workers organization  
ANAMURI, Chilean farm workers organization  
SAC, Systembolaget shop workers union  
Livs, procordia club, Swedish food processing union  
Afrikagrupperna, Swedish solidarity organization  
Latinamerikagrupperna, Swedish solidarity organization