

'He would have spoken'

KINGDOM MABUZA

NELSON Mandela would have definitely spoken out on the Marikana massacre and the Nkandla scandal, said Andrew Mlangeni, who served time alongside the former president on Robben Island.

Mlangeni said "unfortunately" Mandela had been ill on August 16 2012 when police opened fire on striking Lonmin mineworkers in North West.

It was the single most lethal use of force by South African security forces against civilians since 1960.

Similarly, Mandela was in and out of hospital as more and more became known about the "security upgrades" at Nkandla, President

Mlangeni on Mandela and Nkandla

Jacob Zuma's private home.

"Unfortunately, he was not very well and it was not possible for him to talk about these matters. If he was well he would have said something," said Mlangeni.

He said Mandela always prioritised the nation ahead of himself and his family.

"He never put his personal interests before his commitment to bettering the lives of the people. His leadership of our government was based on principles, purpose, integrity and moral ethics."

Mlangeni, who occupied the prison cell next to Mandela's, said

the former president lived for other people and devoted himself to a "better life for all South Africans".

"I can see [in] their eyes that our people still need [his] spirit.

"I can see in their tears of sorrow that they still need Madiba's spirit in their struggle to build a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous country," said Mlangeni.

Contrary to recent reports, Mlangeni expressed his doubts that Mandela was ever a member of the South African Communist Party.

Mlangeni said while he himself was a member of the party, he had

no memory of Mandela being active in it.

"Those who say Madiba was a member of the party must tell us where."

He said that while Mandela was a great leader, he did not make decisions selfishly and was guided by the collective leadership of the ANC.

"He was not advancing his own policies. He was guided by ANC policies. People think when you are the president you can do whatever you want."

But Mlangeni denied the ANC had become wayward and was losing support.

"We have not diverted from the policies of the ANC."