

WEEKLY INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS UPDATE

Sunday 9 October 2016

REMUNERATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Platinum wage negotiations

Both Joseph Mathunjwa, President of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu), as well as leaders in the Platinum Industry are positive that the wage talks between unions and the major producers could be concluded in October 2016 thereby preventing a repeat of the strike action in 2014.

SASOL Mining

Industrial action at SASOL Mining is still continuing with Amcu still remaining with its demands for a R12,500 minimum wage and cases of violence and intimidation still being reported. An Amcu member, who is alleged to be a union shop steward, is facing possible kidnapping charges after a Sasol employee identified him as one of the people who had allegedly kidnapped him. The police are investigating other cases of malicious damage to property, assault and arson believed to be linked to members of Amcu picketing. Since the beginning of the picketing, over 10 cars had been torched in eMbalenhle and eMzinoni.

Wage inequalities in SA Mining

The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) President, Joseph Mathunjwa said at the Joburg Indaba that in order to deal with the inequalities in SA, the capitalist programme needs to be radically disrupted. Mathunjwa stated that the unions could not trust mining houses until the wage gap between CEOs and workers was narrowed. At the same event, veteran unionist Dr James Motlatsi said the mining sector needed to undo its legacy of not taking care of poor miners.

DISPUTES, INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Cosatu march

Cosatu supporters marched in various South African cities on Friday to mark International Day for Decent Work. Amongst the Cosatu demands were a minimum wage, decent working conditions, adequate public transport and the implementation of the National Health Insurance. In their demands specific to Parliament in Cape Town Cosatu called on "the rich" to come forward and take responsibility for funding.

Samwu and municipalities

As part of the Cosatu marches, the SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) is demanding that (temporary) contract workers be employed by cities across the country. However, the SA Local Government Association (Salga) indicated that it does not have an adopted policy position on the EPWP workers being permanently employed in municipalities and that placing thousands of EPWP workers on the local government payroll would have serious implications for towns and cities.

Sibanye's Cooke 4

Sibanye Gold resumed its Cooke 4 operations last Wednesday following clashes between members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union

(Amcu), which left four miners injured. The clashes were as a result of illegal industrial action, which started on Monday regarding membership verification.

Ranthimo Nkosi, a Jonrik contractor and NUM member, suffered severe head injuries during the clashes and died as a result of his injuries.

JOB MARKET, JOB CREATION, RESTRUCTURING AND RETRENCHMENTS

Stats SA quarterly survey

According to the Stats SA quarterly survey report, employment figures dropped by 0.7%, or by 67,000 jobs, in the second quarter of 2016. All industries, except electricity and construction, shed jobs. However, on a year-on-year basis, there was an increase of 30,000 jobs. Job losses were recorded in social and personal services; manufacturing; trade; transport and communications; finance and business services; and mining and quarrying. One thousand jobs, or a 0.2% increase, was reported in the construction industry, while figures remained unchanged in the electricity sector.

Marriott hotel expansion

More than R3 billion will be invested in South Africa by the Amdec Group for five Marriott International branded hotels. These hotel developments are expected to have positive economic spin-offs, with about 8,000 construction-related jobs and more than 700 permanent new hospitality jobs expected to be created.

Edcon staff increases

As part of a recovery plan, Edcon Holdings, owner of the Edgars and Jet chains, plans to increase its workforce by almost 7% and slash prices. The company is seeking to lure customers back to its stores with more than 2,000 new staff specifically trained in the clothing ranges in their departments. The move will help to undo the impact of job cuts made by Edcon in 2007. About a fifth of the job increases may come from stores Edcon is closing, while the rest will be newly hired.

COMMUNITY, LEGAL AND GENERAL

WFTU congress

At the 17th World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) congress on Wednesday, President Jacob Zuma cited the dangers of the capitalist system in his speech. He called on workers to continue fighting the system, saying: "No capitalist society will say to the workers 'we have heard you, take it and create what you want'." He stated that capitalism was a system in crisis. Workers thus faced an ongoing struggle globally to respond to this.