



15 JANUARY 2014

UPDATES ON WAGE DISPUTES IN THE MINING SECTOR

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) has registered significant membership growth to date within the Mining Sector. AMCU is currently the majority union within the Platinum Sector, and is the preferred labour movement in championing economic emancipation of the currently exploited and oppressed working class.

AMCU UNITY

In recent media releases, AMCU has been under attack from various retrogressive forces based on unfounded allegations aimed at destabilizing the unity of our members, as we look forward to the wage disputes within the Platinum, Gold and Coal sectors. This is done by gullible individuals, who are being used against the very same people they purport to represent. Such actions will only benefit the employers and derail the efforts of AMCU and its members to fight for a decent salary.

Mr Thebe Maswabi, who has uttered attacks on AMCU and its leadership, is a beneficiary of AMCU services and defense after being suspended for organizing an unprotected underground sitting, compromising the work of over 5 000 workers, while he was still the chairperson of Thembelani mine at Anglo American Platinum. Through the intervention of the AMCU President, he was reinstated and over 5 000 jobs were saved as workers returned back to work.

WAGE DISPUTES

AMCU has been engaged in wage negotiations, demanding a R12 500 minimum wage in the mining sector as mandated by our members. This has unsettled capitalists, who have over the years benefited from intensified exploitation of workers and profiteering in the wealth of our country. We are currently in dispute with various Mining Houses in the platinum and gold sectors with regards to this wage demand and we are in possession of CCMA non – resolutions certificates, giving us the rights to protected strike action.

AMCU has been mandated by the majority of its members to serve their employer with a 48 hours' notice to enable them to embark on a protected strike action at Impala Platinum mine. The process of obtaining and confirming mandate is continuing at Anglo American Platinum as well as at Lonmin. At the Gold sector, we have rejected the employer's 8% offer albeit after the other unions had signed this 8% offer. Our members have also voted in favor of strike in the Gold sector.

We strongly deny that there are leaders of AMCU at local branch, regional or national level who had received back payments or salary increases, as has been alleged to by various media houses. As far as we know it is illegal for an employer to pay union leadership with the view of persuading them to forfeit their rights. We would like those employers who are implicated in these allegations to confirm or distance themselves in media whether these are indeed true or not.

AMCU ACHIEVEMENTS

AMCU is the genuine vanguard of the working class and one of the few unions that has defended the right to decent employment for the workers. During the recent Anglo American Platinum retrenchments, the Company wanted to retrench 14 000 workers and AMCU was the only Union which embarked on a protected strike action in defense of the job loses. As a result the jobs were saved.

At Sibanyegold, the company wanted to retrench 1 600 workers and through the intervention of AMCU, those jobs were saved, while other so called big unions had signed for the retrenchments to go through.

You need not be reminded that between 2003/4 AMCU was the only union that successfully challenged the retrenchment of scores of workers at BHP Billiton and got a reinstatement order from the Labour Court. Once again the so called big unions had signed people's livelihood away.

Suffice to mention AMCU is not an employer and does not own any mines, hence has little control on which mines are opened or closed, but we will stop at nothing to protect the interest of the marginalized working class. We carry the interest and the mandate of our members at heart and this is what informs our core business.

In 2011, Lonmin has dismissed employees whilst they were belonging to NUM as a result of in fighting. At the time AMCU had not even have members at Lonmin. When Lonmin workers became members of AMCU, we took it upon ourselves in helping those workers who were dismissed simply because they were our fellow brothers. It is incorrect to say AMCU did not do anything about their dismissals. As we speak, their case is currently pending at the CCMA.

CONCLUSION

AMCU remains united and steadfast in its commitment to economically liberate and socially uplift the working class of South Africa. We reiterate that there are no members leaving or intending to leave the union. Those who are masquerading as AMCU members to spread all sorts of lies will be exposed very soon. Our members, workers and the public at large are not stupid and will not be misled by those elements. In fact AMCU continues to grow and enjoys the confidence and support of its members in various sectors.