

MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEHAWU DISPUTE AT DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

Tuesday June 13, 2017

The National Education Health & Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] wants to categorically put it on record that it has not served a strike notice on the dispute with the Department of Home Affairs yet.

The union convened its national bargaining meeting on 12th June 2017, as a worker controlled union to provide an update on the status of the dispute of mutual interest lodged at the GPSSBC, the Border Management Agency processes and the Modernisation project. Due to the intransigence of the management under the leadership of the arrogant Director-General, Mr Apleni, the union find itself forced to mobilize its members for a possible fight against the employer.

As a result of this national meeting, all structures of our national union were directed to go back to basics to report and consult on the outcomes of the national bargaining meeting and to also sort a mandate on a way forward. The reporting and consultation process will run as from today, 13th until 23rd June 2017. Upon receiving a mandate from members to strike, the union will issue a strike notice to the department by 26th June 2017 as per the labour legislative framework.

In this regard, the national union condemns the misleading information that is being spread around by the Director General of the Department. In his press conference held last week he announced that NEHAWU is part of the unions that have served the Department with a notice to strike as of Monday June 19, 2017. The truth is that NEHAWU as a union organising workers in the Department has not as yet serve a notice to strike so we find it malicious that the DG decided to say all unions, including NEHAWU have served notices when only two unions have taken that route.

Despite the expression of dissatisfaction by workers, the DG last week on the 7th June 2017 applied for the matter to be arbitrated, as a sign of proving that he is hell-bent on fighting workers and not prepared to resolve the current dispute in the department. This application for arbitration by him is ridiculous considering that the Department is a respondent in the process. We see this as nothing but a delaying tactic by the department. These silly stunts will not deter workers from struggling for payment for Saturday work, provision of both transport and child care facilities and better working conditions.

As NEHAWU we are also calling on the department to reveal to the country how much it has spent to date on the Senior Counsel utilized to fight its own employees, noting the fact that the same department is forever pleading poverty. This is despite the fact that the department has qualified Human Resources personnel and legal team that it can utilise for such disputes. As soon as we conclude the consultation process with members, the public will be informed accordingly of our decision in relation to the current impasse.

At this point, we want to warn the DG about his cheap stance and portraying the department as a victim whilst pitting the public against its employees and unions, as he has already done so by painting a false picture that citizens might not be able to secure death certificates in order to bury their loved ones as a result of the strike. If he is so sensitive and a caring manager as he projects himself, we therefore openly challenge him to do the right thing to avert the strike by giving workers what is due to them including withdrawing his delaying tactics in the form of the application for arbitration.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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