

MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEHAWU SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

Friday June 16, 2017

The National Education Health & Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] signed an agreement with the Department of Home Affairs last night as an attempt to avert the imminent strike.

This agreement came after a marathon of failed negotiations between the union and the management of the department up until the intervention meeting held yesterday at the Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council [PSCBC]. This intervention meeting was attended by both Ministers of the Public Service and Administration and Home affairs.

Since the national bargaining meeting convened on the 12th June 2017, the union has been engaging with the Director General, Mr. Mkhuseli Apleni and Public Service and Administration in pursuit of finding an amicable solution to the dispute with no success. The national union has been persuading the department to withdraw circular no. 2 of 2015 which introduced unilaterally the new working hours hence the dispute. As a result, workers were forced to work under these unbearable working hours, as consequences workers were subjected to disciplinary hearings while others were given leave without pay for not complying with the circular.

The signed agreement confirms the withdrawal of the circular and that workers will revert back to the working conditions that were applied prior to the introduction of the imposed new working hours by the Director General.

In the signed agreement an understanding and a directive was reached that the department must table in the bargaining chamber a proposal on the new working arrangements for negotiations with Labour.

On Monday, the 19th June 2017, between 07H00 and 12H00, the unions will use the time to report back to their members and workers in general on the contents of the signed agreement. In this regard, the union will deploy its office bearers and officials to all offices and workplaces for reporting back purposes and consulting members on the settlement of the strike.

As much as we are elated that an agreement has been reached, we are still worried that this matter was protracted for such a long time due to the arrogance and intransigence of the Department of Home Affairs management, in particular of the Director General. Lack of willingness by the department to negotiate with unions in earnest has led to commotion and chaos which nearly led to a strike.

This process should serve as a lesson to the management and the Director General must pay a particular attention to the fact that workers shall never allow to be bullied, submissive and compelled to work for peanuts and under bad working conditions. We call on the department to treat workers with the dignity they deserve and to prioritize its workforce instead of spending exorbitant fees on senior counsels in order to fight its own employees.

NEHAWU will tirelessly continue to champion the cause of its members and workers in general against any form of exploitative tendencies by employers. At this point, the union applauds its members for remaining resolute after a barrage of frivolous legal actions by the department while on the other hand appreciates the intervention by the two Ministers and the spirit in which they have handled the matter.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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