

## **MEDIA STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **NEHAWU SUPPORTS SWAZILAND PUBLIC SERVANTS STRIKE**

Tuesday October 24, 2017

The National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] supports the strike by the National Public Service and Allied Workers Union [NAPSAWU], Swaziland National Association of Teachers [SNAT] and the Swaziland Democratic Nurses Union [SWADNU] which started today.

We condemn the use of brute force by the Swazi police in their quest to quell the protests. As NEHAWU, we demand the immediate release of those who have been arrested by the police. The use of brute force and arrests are highhandedness tactics meant to serve as threats in order for workers to cower and subsequently end the strike.

Workers are demanding 9% salary increase while the Swazi government has offered 0%. This is amid rumours that the very same government has given senior public servants salary increases that could be as much as 18% while they plead poverty when they have to increase salaries of the rank-and-file workers. This is a smack in the face for workers who toil very hard to make the Swazi public service to function properly at times with no resources from the government.

The responsibility for intensifying the misery of the people and the rate of exploitation of workers and peasants should be borne by the government of the vainglorious dictator, King Mswati III. It is at his behest that there is refusal to unban political parties, release political prisoners and allow genuine democratic elections to take place.

We condemn the South African government for its ominous silence and almost tacit acceptance of the current political situation. We are concerned about the rise of extremely disturbing indications that our government foreign policy on Swaziland is now increasingly subordinated to feudal family relations.

As an internationalist trade union we will highlight the persecution of Swaziland trade unionist through the imminent public service bill, the brute force and undermining of their right to strike. In this regard, we will organise demonstrations to both the Swazi Embassy in Pretoria and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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