

NATIONAL DAY



OF ACTION





**General Secretary
Comrade Zola Saphetha**

Comrades

Please kindly receive the profound and revolutionary greetings from the red, transformative and militant national union of Bheki Mkhize and Yure Mdyogolo.

The national union has just emerged from a successful national programme of action which culminated into the national day of action on the 3rd September 2020. The national programme of action as driven by the union came against the background of the unfolding two-fold struggle we are currently waging, on one aspect the struggle against the coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic which has brought about drastic changes in our day to day way of life. Never in the history of mankind has a pandemic disrupted the world in such a short period of time. We have witnessed the devastating effects brought about this virus the world over, more especially from a socio-economic perspective.

The novel coronavirus since its outbreak in Wuhan, China late in November 2019 has had a devastating impact on the global community as evident with the global economy contracting drastically and this has led to massive job losses, high levels of unemployment and poverty and in all of this, workers and the working-class have had to bear the brunt of this pandemic.

The coronavirus outbreak has indeed confirmed what we have always known, that the capitalist system is a failed system with its neo-liberal model which must be abolished and our class (working class) usher in a socialist order for the greater good of humanity. COVID-19 has exposed the failures of the capitalist system and this is evident with inadequate response to the pandemic be it from a healthcare perspective, economic, social and others, etc.

In our context, when the first reported case of COVID-19 was announced on the 5th March 2020, we immediately called upon government and employers to ensure strict adherence to the Occupational Health and Safety Act,

World Health Organisation (WHO) COVID-19 regulations and guidelines. This, we did fully cognisant of the fact that it's workers that would be in the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 especially frontline workers and therefore needed to be protected at all material times as they execute the mammoth task of saving lives. We were however ignored by the government and employers to an extent of approaching courts to enforce compliance with regulations, for the provision of personal protective equipment and in the process ensure that our members and workers are safe and protected.

Over the course of the past few months, we have been vindicated by various reports that have emerged concurring with our fact-finding mission report that we published on the 28th July 2020 highlighting the struggle that members and workers in general are going through and confronted with in the fight against COVID-19.

Our fact-finding mission report gave a clear and detailed reflection on a number of areas particularly in the epicentre provinces (Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape) which amongst others include: lack of the provision of the adequate Personal Protective Equipment, Non-Compliance with OHS Act, Shortage of Staff, Authoritarian Hospital Management, etc.

On the other hand, we continue to wage a struggle to improve the conditions of our members and workers against all forms of exploitation. We have witnessed of late how government and employers have embarked on a deliberate plan of reversing the gains of workers and undermine the rights of workers using COVID-19 as an excuse. This has been done with a sole purpose of weakening the collective bargaining power of workers in particular and the trade union movement in general. The rights of workers never came on a silver platter but through a hard-earned struggle and the government and employers ought to know that workers shall never at any given time surrender their hard-won rights with easy but will fight any attempt.

This deliberate attempt of reversing the gains of workers is not necessarily new but seemingly it's currently at its peak spearhead by National Treasury and government through the implementation of austerity measures which have led to freezing of vacant posts, massive cuts in public social spending, cutting the wage bill amongst others. This goes totally against the developmental agenda of the country.

We have for the first time since the advent of democracy witnessed government totally with sheer contempt disregard collective bargaining through reneging on a signed collective agreement – Resolution 1 of 2018 for public servants. The refusal by government to implement a signed collective agreement is a clear signal that the road ahead is going to require us as workers and the broader trade union movement to unite and wage a relentless struggle to defend collective bargaining against the current onslaught by government and employers.

It is upon those basis that as a union we embarked on a national programme of action which culminated into the day of action on the 3rd September 2020, precisely to ensure that the struggles of workers are recognized and their grievances are addressed and further show and express appreciation for the sterling work tendered by workers in general and frontline workers in particular in their active duty to defend our people as a whole.

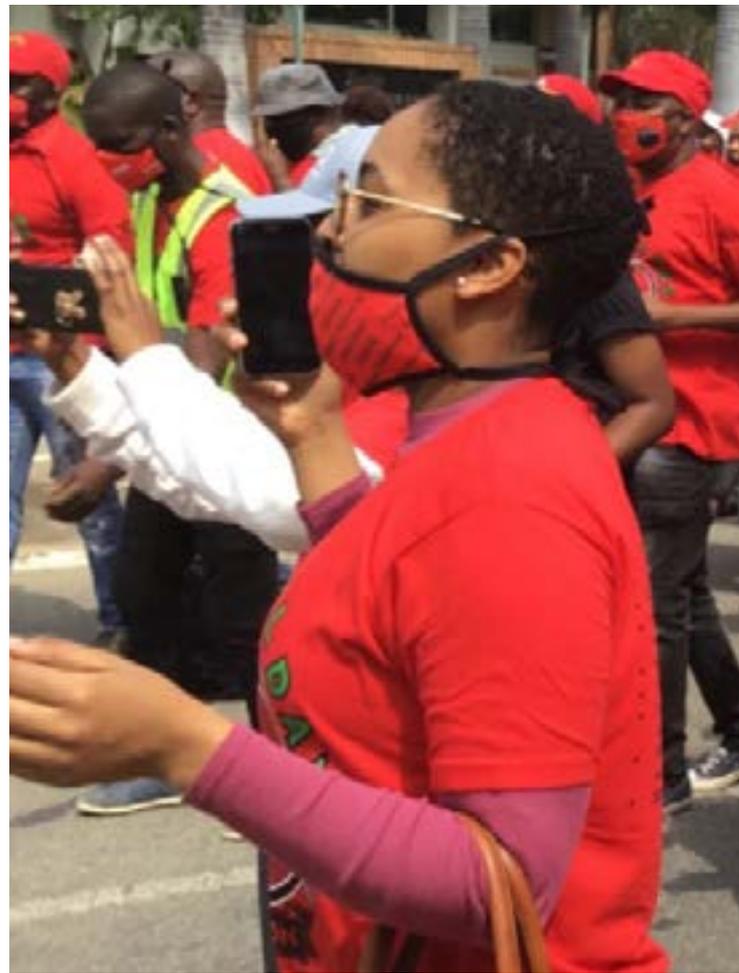
Comrades, we have developed this bulletin to reflect on the successful National Day of Action that was organised on the 3rd September 2020 across all provinces with submissions of our memorandum of demands to the government political heads such as the President, National Speaker of the National Assembly and Premiers in all nine provinces.

Amandla!!!
Matla!!!
All Power!!!
Aluta!!!

The national union convened a National Day of Action on the 3rd September 2020. The Day of Action was convened across all nine provinces with memorandums of demands submitted to government leadership outlining clearly our demands that must be addressed by government favourable to the national union.

Our national day of action was supported by various progressive formations, including our federation COSATU, SACP, SASCO, YCL and SAUS.

The national day of action also received messages of support internationally from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the WFTU Trade Union International of the Public Services and Allied (TUI-PS&A), DRC Worker's And Peasants' Consciousness (CTP), DRC; All Militant Workers Front (PAME), Greece; Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), India; Trade Union International of Workers in Agriculture, Food, Commerce and Allied Workers; Pasyek-Peo, Cyprus; Trade Union International Public Service and Allied (TUI-PS&A) of Latin America; National Federation of Unions of Workers in Public and Social Functions (FNSTFP), Portugal; WFTU in



the Asia Pacific Region; Unione Sindacale di Base (USB), Italy; Worker's House, Iran; Amalgamated Rural Teacher's Unions of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ); Communist Party of Swaziland (CPS), Botswana Land Boards Local Authorities and Health Workers Union (BLLAHWU), Lesotho Teachers Trade Union (LTTU) and the Trade Union Of Workers In Local Administration of Athens, Greece.

These messages of support from our international compatriots demonstrate our international class character as a national union as clear stipulated in our clarion call of advancing internationalism.



MEMORANDUM OF DEMANDS

On the 3rd September 2020, the national union came out across all our sectors supported by our federation and shoulder to shoulder with our allied formations of the mass democratic movement, to put across all the key demands of all our members to all the political heads of the land, in every provincial capital and the seat of the national government itself, the Union Buildings, as well as the law-makers at the National Parliament in Cape Town. Key amongst these demands are those arising from the appallingly unsafe working conditions in the face of the COVID-19, especially in many of our public health

institutions, including:

- a) That COVID-19 must not be used as an excuse to reverse the hard fought gains of the workers.
- b) That government must urgently take steps away from a neoliberal economic policy paradigm, with its austerity measures that results in burdens on working people and their livelihoods.
- c) We demand full compliance of with the OHS Act by all workplaces and ensuring that risk assessments and infections

control and prevention measures are put in place and the immediate establishment of OHS committees in all workplaces. The Occupational Health and Safety Act must be implemented in full to protect workers.

- d) Infected workers must return to work only on the following conditions: They have completed the mandatory 10 days of self-isolation, they have undergone a medical evaluation confirming fitness to work if they have had moderate or severe illness, they strictly adhere to personal hygiene, wearing of masks and social distancing. Managers at institutional level must closely monitor symptoms of such workers returning to work.
- e) We call on the NDOH to issue a circular, explicitly prohibiting institutional managers from preventing workers to go on quarantine if they believe they have been exposed, whether at home or at the workplace. The circular must explicitly prohibit managers from issuing or communicating any kind of threats or intimidating notices or letters to workers in such a way that they are forced to work when they have been



diagnosed COVID-19 positive but without symptoms or when they have been in contact with individuals diagnosed COVID-19 positive.

- f) We demand NDOH to mandate the daily screening of healthcare workers and that it must roll-out a national testing programme of Non-Communicable Diseases, as many of the frontline workers actually live with such underlying diseases without being aware, which causes complications and deaths when such NCDs are only discovered at the late stage.
- g) We demand that the Department of Health must engage with the Health Professions Council of South Africa [HPCSA] to expedite the applications and to review the postponed arrangements for the board exams for the foreign-trained doctors and other healthcare workers, whether South African or not. Similarly, we demand that the South African Nursing Council [SANC] must review its decision on the registration of the foreign-trained nurses.







- h) We demand that the NDOH must review the process of reporting on COVID-19 fatalities in all institutions to ensure adherence with uniform standards as recommended by the WHO. In this regard, we also call on the NDOH to compel all institutional managers to regularly update NEHAWU and other trade unions on all Coronavirus and COVID-19 data especially pertaining to the healthcare workers in the institutions.
- i) We demand to government to urgently fill all vacant posts in the public healthcare sector and ensure that we start to build building blocks for the implementation of the National Health Insurance [NHI].
- j) We demand that government must implement a Risk allowance for frontline workers for the hard work and sacrifice of their lives and families during this fight against this invisible enemy.
- k) We demand that all COIDA claims be processed in line with the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 130 of 1993.
- l) We urgently demand the procurement and provision of adequate PPE's for frontline workers in particular based on credible figures of the total workforce and the type of work performed by occupational categories of employees.
- m) We call on government to abandon the current decentralised and fragmented approach in the procurement of PPEs, as determined by the Guidelines on the Management of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Public Service issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

- n) We demand the provision of psycho-social support to all workers and their families who are infected and affected by COVID-19.
- o) We demand the respect and protection of our collective bargaining right across all sectors and that neo-liberal policies must not be used by the states as a pretext to dismantle collective bargaining right. To this effect we demand the full implementation of the following resolutions in the public service:
 1. PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2018 clause 3.3 in full without failure and stop wasting money through the protracted legal processes.
 2. The abolishment of salary level 1 and 2 in the public service and filling all vacant posts in public service.



3. Full implementation of PSCBC resolution 7 of 2015 on Government employees Housing Scheme and PSCBC Resolution 5 of 2015 on the new danger dispensation.
4. Full time employment of Community Health Workers at salary level 3 by all provinces and that they must be integrated into the public service.

Given the urgency of addressing all the demands above, due to their direct impact on service delivery and the negative on our members, we demand response to the union within a period of 7 days from the day of receipt, failing which we declare our intention to embark on an extensive national campaign aimed at withdrawing our labour power as from the 10th September 2020 in all sectors NEHAWU organises until our demands are met favourable to workers.

This memorandum was handed over to the South African government through the President, National Speaker of the National Assembly and all Premiers in all nine province on the 03rd of September 2020.















