

# Strikers call for Coca-Cola advert ban at World Cup

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Disgruntled employees of Amalgamated Beverage Industries (ABI), the soft drinks division of South African Breweries (SAB), have vowed to continue with their month-long strike action until their wage demands are met.

The company has remained steadfast on an across-the-board wage increase of 7.8% and a wage and benefits increase of 8.3%.

In a bid to intensify the impact of the strike, Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) and labour federation Cosatu called on South Africans to boycott SAB and ABI products.

Earlier this week, the union wrote a letter to football body Fifa's organising committee chief executive Danny Jordaan asking him to cancel Coca-Cola marketing at the upcoming World Cup.

Fawu general secretary Katishi Masemola said his union was committed to engaging in a campaign to "smash" the brand and expose abusive practices of labour brokers and the exploitation of crew members in ABI delivery trucks bearing the Coca-Cola logo.

"Our submission to the organising committee is focused at prohibiting Coca-Cola sponsorship during the World Cup but it should be noted that we are not in any way planning to disrupt the soccer event."

Rich Mkhondo, chief of communications for the organising committee, said Jordaan would "respond in due course".

ABI managing director John Ustas said it was "lamentable" that workers were losing pay as a result of the strike action.

He said his company's wage and benefits offer compared "favourably" with packages offered by other companies in the industry, and was two percentage points above the current inflation rate of 5.8%.

"ABI is already one of the highest-paying employers in the country, and the wage offer will bring the minimum wage for unskilled workers to R7235 a month," Ustas said.

The strike has been marked by violence and intimidation and the arrest of about 100 workers at different ABI depots around Johannesburg.

*Source: Sunday Times*

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