

Fedusa wants Denel to halt job cuts

Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula must stop the retrenchment of over 530 aircraft specialists at Denel Aviation, the Federation of Unions of SA said on Monday (21 January)

"We believe that the minister is best-placed to deal with our concerns about this issue," Fedusa general secretary Dennis George said.

"Apart from the obvious loss of jobs and socio-economic repercussions, it would be very unfortunate if these retrenchments go ahead because we will lose critical skills required by our economy."

The defence department gave notice in June last year that it would cancel its contract for aircraft maintenance with Denel Aviation/Aero Manpower Group (AMG).

AMG is a business unit of state-owned defence company, Denel.

Negotiations were held to amend and possibly review the contract.

However, in November the SA Air Force said it would not renew its contract with Denel Aviation/AMG after 31 March.

Denel Aviation/AMG confirmed the decision on 15 January.

The company said because it had no contract or order beyond the end of the contract, it had no option but to let staff go.

Trade union Uasa, a Fedusa affiliate, represents more than half of the workers affected.

Uasa said the retrenchments would jeopardise the Air Force's defence capabilities. It said the company could have to pay an estimated R170m in severance packages.

George said the union federation sent a letter to Mapisa-Nqakula on Monday (21 January) asking for an urgent meeting to discuss the matter.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge