

## Seifsa says it has "exhausted" means to end strike

The Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (Seifsa) said it has failed to reach a deal to end a crippling strike, after a union rejected its final wage offer over the weekend.



Seifsa representative, Kaizer Nyatsumba says that the federation has exhausted all means it has of reaching a settlement with striking Numsa members. Image: [KMN Holdings](#)

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) rejected a 10% wage hike offered by the industry in an effort to end the two-week-long strike.

Employers spokesman Kaizer Nyatsumba said in a statement that in a meeting with a union industry representatives had exhausted their mandate and withdrawn the final offer made last week.

Workers were offered a 10% wage hike this year, followed by an increase of 9.5% in 2015 and 9% in 2016.

"It is regrettable that our final offer intended to end the strike was not accepted. The current industrial action is continuing to damage SA's economy," Nyatsumba said.

Over 200,000 Numsa members in the key engineering and metal sector downed tools on 1 July over pay.

### Minimum wage of R6,000 a month plus allowances

Union leaders have framed the dispute as part of a broader class struggle to redress the wrongs of apartheid and it is demanding double digit increases from employers.

In its list of demands, the union insisted it would strike until the lowest paid non-skilled workers made R6,000 rand a month, equivalent to a 12% increase.

It also wants a one-year deal rather than the three years offered by employers and is calling for increased staff housing allowances. Numsa spokesman Castro Ngobese told AFP that there were no wage talks going on right now.

The strike began just days after the end of a five-month platinum strike, which caused the economy to contract in the first quarter and pushed the country to the brink of recession.

The stoppages are set to have a knock-on effect on car manufacturing firms, as component suppliers are participating in the strike.

Car manufacturer BMW said last week that nine of its more than 200 suppliers were hit by the industrial action and the company planned to reduce its production to deal with metal shortages.

Dozens of Numsa members have been arrested for public violence and intimidation of non-striking workers since the walkout began.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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