

# SA metal sector says it has exhausted means to end strike

The body representing South Africa's steel and engineering industry said on Tuesday that it has failed to reach a deal to end a crippling strike, after a union rejected its final wage offer over the weekend.



(Image: Wikimedia Commons)

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) rejected on Sunday a 10% wage hike offer by the industry, aimed at ending the two-week walkout.

Employers spokesman Kaizer Nyatsumba said in a statement that in a meeting with a union on Monday, industry representatives had "exhausted our mandate" and withdrawn "the final offer made last week".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, with the current industrial action continuing to damage our economy," Nyatsumba said.

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

Union leaders have framed the dispute as part of a broader class struggle to redress the wrongs of apartheid and colonialism, demanding "double digit" increases.

In its list of demands, the union insisted it would strike until the lowest paid non-skilled workers made around R6,000 (\$560, €410) a month, a roughly 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 walkout 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 giant 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 shifts 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

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>