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# ONLINE NUMSA NEWSLETTER

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FIRST TERM 2022





# NUMSA ONLINE NEWS LETTER

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

**President Andrew Chirwa**

Revolutionary greetings to all metal workers, Numsa staff, and the entire working-class. I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you back as we have begun the year 2022, and I hope that you all returned safely with new vigour for the class struggle ahead of us. The whole world has been ravaged by covid 19 for the past two years now, and sadly the year 2022 will be no different as we continue to live side by side with this virus, the global pandemic that has worsened the already dire living conditions of the working class and the poor. The levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequalities worldwide are unprecedented and at the highest proportions, we have ever experienced before in our lifetime.

As the most oppressed class and people, we have no choice but to stand on our resolve and confront these challenges because we are on our own.

The capitalist class and their representatives in governments are hard at work to ensure that the poor the working class are the ones who will pay the highest price for this global health and economic crisis. As a Union, we are confronted with the highest number of retrenchments notices within a short period as corporations scramble to save profit margins at the expense of workers. The evil practice of layoff/short-time work is the order of the day in many workplaces to the detriment of workers' ability to earn an income. It is even more disturbing that short-time work is only applicable to ordinary workers whilst management and executives continue to make their fat cheques and benefits without shame

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**The evil practice of lay-off/short-time work is the order of the day.**





## WORKING-CLASS SOLIDARITY!

There has never been the need for working-class solidarity to go beyond the union logo or union colour than now; otherwise, we risk being defeated by the capitalist class one by one until there is no one left who dares to open his mouth and challenge the bosses. It is time to revive our revolutionary consciousness, the time to restore our trade union consciousness and remind ourselves that we are weak as individual workers, but we stronger when we act together in unity, to remind ourselves that the interest of workers as a class is more important than our particular interest. Workers' unity is sacrosanct if we successfully defend ourselves against the greedy and arrogant bosses.



## THE YEAR 2022

The year 2022 is a year of class struggle, the year to fight, to reclaim our surplus-value that the bosses expropriate without fairly sharing with the workers who are the natural producers of wealth in this country and the whole world..



I should take this opportunity to salute metalworkers in the engineering sector for the gallant fight they displayed last October during the bitter struggle with the greedy bosses in that sector. Amid the deadly covid 19 pandemic and its crippling effect on the economy, company closures, retrenchments, and short times amongst many challenges, you demonstrated the true meaning of militancy and bravery. We have not achieved everything we demanded, but your militant action and unity are the only reason the bosses came to the party to settle for the strike.

The biggest struggle now is to extend the agreement to non-parties and ensure that all workers in the industry benefit from the new deal. This year, the automotive and Motor sectors will be bargaining as we approach the end of the three-year agreement deal. The road ahead will undoubtedly be difficult, and the bosses are still armed with the covid 19 pandemic and the underperforming economy, which fails to create the much-needed jobs. Therefore we need to gear ourselves up for bloody battle. We need to develop new strategies for struggling under new covid19 imposed conditions as we saw in the engineering sector.

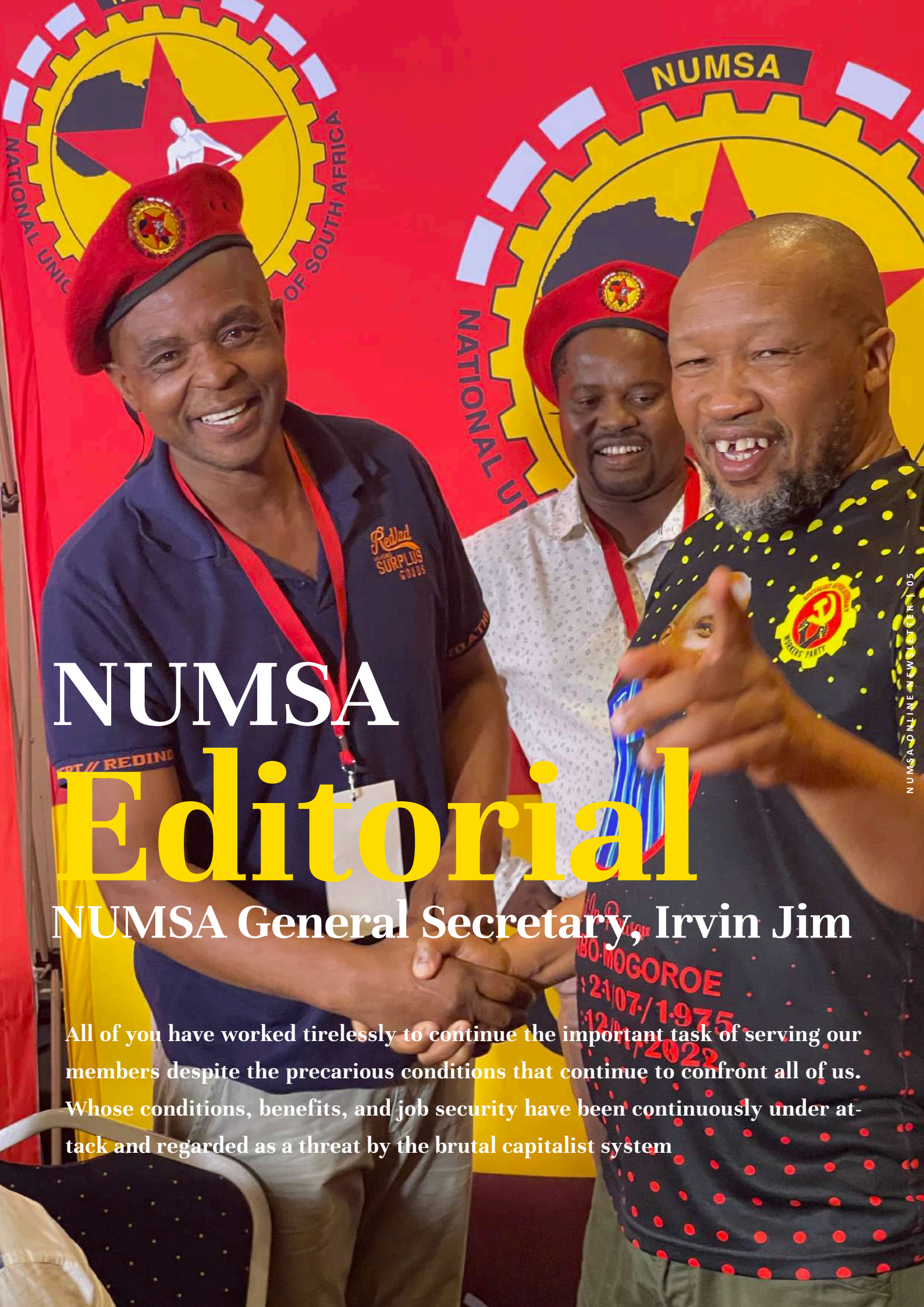
# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We call on all our members in their workplaces to start engaging on the key demands we should place on the table of employers this year and start mobilising to support that demand.

Let us give the enemy no quarter to divide us, lest we risk failing to make any real strides in this round of collective bargaining. Let us set aside our prejudices and unite with all workers in the entire industry to challenge the bosses to improve the conditions of work and make meaningful wage increases. The future is in the hands of workers. The struggle continues

**Aluta Continua**





# NUMSA

# Editorial

## NUMSA General Secretary, Irvin Jim

All of you have worked tirelessly to continue the important task of serving our members despite the precarious conditions that continue to confront all of us. Whose conditions, benefits, and job security have been continuously under attack and regarded as a threat by the brutal capitalist system



As we have commenced 2022, the Leadership would like to take this moment and salute our entire membership, shop stewards, activists and leaders of our organisation. All of you have worked tirelessly to continue the important task of serving our members despite the precarious conditions that continue to confront all of us. Whose conditions, benefits, and job security have been continuously under attack and regarded as a threat by the brutal capitalist system. This capitalist system has subjected millions of our people into a permanent state of hopelessness over a sustained period. Many young people have been victims of unemployment and poverty despite securing adequate education. Moreover, a tiny minority that owns the means of production under this greedy capitalist system continues to maximise profit at the expense of the majority, who have been rendered landless, economically marginalised, and dispossessed. The young are the future; the power lies with them to fight for a change! We have lost many comrades, family, and friends we love since the pandemic unleashed itself on our shores in 2020. We send our sincerest, most profound condolences to the families who have lost loved ones.

As the union's Leadership, we have had to contend with various economic closures that the government imposed under the Leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa in the name of saving lives. We had to contend that while some sectors of the economy were completely closed, others such as mining were allowed to operate

A few weeks after the first Covid-19 lockdown was imposed, we protested this interim policy demanding that manufacturing be one of the sectors driving the South African economy. Furthermore, where most of our members sweat and toil in order to have a plate of food on the table to take care not only of the family but extended families who are victims of unemployment – be allowed to operate and that workers be allowed to work as in the face of high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality, to labour is a prime necessity for life. We were simultaneously very firm that all health and safety measures to preserve life must be protected and adhered to.

Last year we were vigilant enough out of our working-class, ideological perspective to realise and remind ourselves that the capitalist class never wastes any possibility to maximise profits, which is always at the expense of workers. Due to the global crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2022, we allowed employers not to give workers in the engineering sector an increase by signing a standstill agreement. Any scrutiny of the financials of various sectors of the economy will point out that although there were companies that were negatively affected by Covid-19, there were also companies that made money during Covid-19. That is why we were forced to challenge the engineering sector employers and bosses in 2021, calling on them to make the necessary wage improvements for workers in the engineering sector.

When they decided to repeat what they secured in 2020 where they did not increase workers, employers and associations refused to make a meaningful offer



However, we had exhausted ourselves through negotiations for months, trying to persuade them to come to the party. As a mandate-driven union, having been left with no option, we listened to our members and embarked on a militant, national strike. It was NUMSA's militant national strike that forced the bosses to settle with us on no less than 6% for three years, breaking new ground in the best interest of workers against an openly forged alliance between the state and the bosses who believed workers deserved nothing over a 1,5% increase. They demonstrated when the state withdrew a signed agreement of 7% with the public sector workers in the previous year and imposed a 1,5% increase on all workers in the public sector and the workers of Eskom.

**That is why we were forced to challenge the engineering sector employers and bosses in 2021, calling on them to make the necessary wage improvements for workers in the engineering sector. .**





## IMF AND WORLD BANK

The strategy by the alliance of the state and the bosses is to attack the wage bill to impose a neo-liberal, political and ideological stance so that they continue to conform to the sell-out Washington Consensus and keep the IMF, World Bank and rating agencies happy and smiling at the expense of the working class, both the employed and the unemployed, who are economically marginalised, dispossessed and landless. The militant, national strike of the engineering sector must be a message to this capitalist alliance that workers' rights are human rights. Metalworkers rose against the alliance that dictated that workers would not receive their deserved increases. Metalworkers have set their precedent that united workers say no to government and the bosses' attempts to put a moratorium on wage increases for their capitalist interests regardless of which sector they belong to.

## GMSA, AND MBSA

Through this message, we are informing, mobilising and organising the entire working class across all sectors of our economy to ready themselves for the 2022 round of wage negotiations. This year, NUMSA will be engaging in the most challenging negotiations in the auto sector. The seven-car manufacturers, the OEMs (VWSA, Toyota SA, Nissan SA, Ford SA, BMW SA, Isuzu, traditionally known as GMSA, and MBSA). as well as in the truck and bus, in the Motor sector, which involves all component value chain companies, from Chapter 1 to Chapter 4, as well as Sector 5 involving all garages in the country. We will also be negotiating in the Tyre sector (Continental, Bridgestone, Sumitomo, Good Year) and the Bus passenger sector. We are also negotiating in-house agreements with South32, Samancor and ArcelorMittal, and the security sector, where negotiations resumed earlier this year, January 2022. We have begun a process of engagement with the Plastic employers with whom we are exploring what should be the nature and content to settle this round of negotiations in 2022.







Our message to all Metalworkers is that you must organise and ready yourselves for any eventuality. We are approaching these negotiations with a sober mind and a sense of strength and courage, given the resolve and demonstrated revolutionary courage and militancy of engineering workers. However, the Numsa Leadership must attempt to settle this round of negotiations in 2022 without any strike, and employers must be prepared to make the necessary wage offers to deliver a living wage and improve workers' benefits and conditions of employment. A strike must be our last resort. We call on all employers negotiating in 2022 to negotiate honestly and in good faith to settle this round of negotiations.

Our members at Eskom were victims of the government's unilaterally imposed sell-out increase of 1,5%! We have taken this refusal by Eskom to give our members their deserved increase to arbitration, demanding that Eskom must improve workers' wages and pay the living wage owed to all workers everywhere. We refuse to accept that our members' wages will be cut by 20% at PetroSA, and we are currently fighting against the retrenchment of 850 workers. As a union, we have been waging a consistent campaign and struggle demanding that we not allow the current GCEO of Eskom Andre de Ruyter to privatise our country's energy provision.

We call on Minister Gwede Mantashe not to allow international oil companies (IOCs) to close refineries and import finished products into the country by abusing licences, destroying jobs and the economy. Privatisation will not just result in massive job losses. International experiences show, clearly, that it will also result in colossal electricity tariff price increases for consumers. In South Africa, in the context of mass unemployment and impoverishment, that will inevitably mean violent disconnections at the hands of the state.

We have been firm in rejecting the rolling blackouts, or so-called load shedding, which is a result of maladministration, corruption and poor maintenance, and we continue to call on the ANC government to fire both the clueless current board of Eskom and the current GCEO, Andre De Ruyter as they have completely failed the country and the economy. Their load shedding cost the country not less than R500 billion from 2018 to 2022 or R125 billion per year, and because of this mess which takes place under the failed ANC, the so-called new dawn of Cyril Ramaphosa, no leading media houses are prepared to expose this absolute disaster and crippling of the South African economy under the current ANC administration. This year we will remain focussed, as we did last year in the engineering sector, in pursuit of collective bargaining for fair living wages, benefits and conditions of employment as the union's core business in all negotiating sectors. Another urgent task is to ensure that the agreements we signed in 2021 in the engineering sector are gazetted and extended to non-parties. We would have to fight and ensure that workers in the plastic industry get their deserved increase this year.



In the mining industry, we closed 2021, having registered victories, notably in Harmony and Glencore, where we secured substantial improvements for workers. Against the current commodity boom, NUMSA refused to give mining workers a modest increase. In Harmony, those workers who are the lowest paid received no less than an R1000 increase per year in a three-year agreement to address a genuine demand for a living wage by workers in the mining industry, particularly in Marikana. We can now safely say that in Harmony, workers will have realised this significant demand of being paid no less than R12 500 per month by the end of the three-year agreement. The highest-paid workers secured a 6% increase per year. Of course, this was the settlement on wages at Harmony, which was accompanied by substantial material improvements to workers' benefits and conditions of employment. Below is the increase we secured for Glencore workers, and this is the breakdown of the impact on workers' pay:

The lowest-paid workers who received 7,5% in year one received no less than R988, and all other benefits will increase accordingly. We are calling on all workers in the mining industry to voluntarily join NUMSA as the union of their choice, motivated by the fact that NUMSA is and will remain a militant, revolutionary, worker-controlled union.

We are busy rolling out plans across all sectors that are negotiating this year, and the key to such a process is the democratic collection of demands from our members in general meetings. We shall convene a National Bargaining Conference to consolidate members' demands, followed by pre-bargaining processes where we shall engage with employers



at a senior level, followed by the process of tabling demands and resuming negotiations for this round of collective bargaining in 2022. This round of negotiations is dedicated to improving wages and benefits for workers, and we are making a clarion call to all workers in the sectors where we organise that you are unorganised if you are not a NUMSA member. We call on workers to join NUMSA, organise or starve.

We are also pleased to inform our members and all union structures that the last Central Committee (December 2021) mandated us to issue a notice for a National Congress, which will take place in June 2022. All NUMSA regions are convening their Regional Congresses as a build-up towards the National Congress, where the Leadership of the Union shall be elected. The Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Sedibeng have already convened their Regional Congresses.

We will convene a National Bargaining Conference, which will prepare our bargaining strategies to drive negotiations in these sectors. We shall be preparing for the 11th National Congress that will take place in June 2022.

The National Congress will be a platform to discuss all worker and working-class miseries and worker and working-class frustrations. We will take our cue from the Central Committee that instructed us to continue to build the SRWP as the vanguard party of the revolution, a genuine communist party that must lead in taking up struggles of the working class and the poor. This is especially necessary given the vote of no confidence passed by the masses to many political parties in the country, including the ANC, through the local government elections of 2021. We now have a local government made up of a pizza of coalitions of political parties who have failed to win the political confidence of our people.





The SRWP took a conscious decision not to contest elections in the local government elections in 2021, and instead, it resolved to focus on mobilisation, to lead in the struggle of the working class, and to raise once more the importance of addressing the class question which is the real national question. We will continue our struggle for an expansionary budget to deliver quality infrastructure and stimulate economic growth. We will continue to campaign for a constitution that affirms the vision of our freedoms that was generated in the liberation struggle. We must ensure that we have a constitution that upholds the people's parliament and the people's voice in a radically democratic Republic, rooted in worker and community control.

We also take this opportunity to celebrate the NUMSA International Officer, comrade Christine Olivier, who has been elected as IndustriALL Assistant General Secretary. We wish her and her collective the best luck in their leadership role. This is not only a victory to have our NUMSA comrade occupy a leadership role in our international federation, but a historic and strategic deployment. As a union, we have broken new ground in deploying an unquestionably competent leader in the organisation's international and critical sphere. NUMSA as a union must not only celebrate with pride this deployment, but the lesson for all of us is that there is no replacement for being a champion of the compulsory and sacrosanct unity that makes us strong.

United we stand, divided we fall. Amandla!





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