



**Memorandum of Demands to SA Steel Mills management for its relentless attack on workers' rights!
28 May 2024**

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) members in the Sedibeng region gathered near the offices of SA Steel Mills to register their anger towards the company, which is under the management of Alfeco holdings. It is disgraceful that in a country like South Africa, after the painful journey we experienced under Apartheid, that there are brutal companies who behave as if nothing has changed. SA Steel Mills was established in post-apartheid South Africa. Its management including its CEO, who is a man of Indian descent, Mr. Sachin Ahuja, is a beneficiary of the governments Affirmative Action and triple B-E-E polices, but under his leadership, Apartheid is alive and well in the workplace.

- It was only under Apartheid, where workers were fired for embarking on a strike and yet, at SA Steel mills, 165 workers have been unfairly fired for participating in a lawfully protected strike.
- Under Apartheid, unions had no legal status but they were allowed to exist. Therefore workers were denied the right to trade union representation in the workplace, and yet, at SA Steel Mills, workers have no right to be represented by NUMSA shopstewards. This is why our members issued a strike notice in April, the dispute was over the demand to be represented by NUMSA shopstewards.
- SA Steel Mills is a very dangerous place to work where Occupational Health and Safety laws are routinely broken. Again, this is another characteristic of an apartheid workplace, because under that system, there were no Occupational Health and Safety laws to protect workers, and workers were injured and even died at work. Unfortunately, this is also the case at SA Steel Mills, workers are not safe.

We condemn the brutal management of SA Steel Mills which has shamelessly benefitted from the sacrifices made by the working class to free this country when it fought against Apartheid, only for them to adopt the same racist, inhumane attitude as Hendrik Verwoerd or PW Botha!

The CEO must be ashamed of himself for undermining workers' rights and brutally exploiting them. Just last week four workers were hospitalized after being shot, unprovoked, by rubber bullets by private security. The private security officers implicated in this have been arrested and they appeared in court on charges of attempted murder on Friday the 24th of May. We have heard unconfirmed reports that the weapons they used were unlicensed firearms and we demand that the police must investigate this matter further. NUMSA wants to know if the weapons used by private security are licenced or not. If not, then they must be jailed, and also the private security bosses must be imprisoned for issuing unlicensed firearms.

NUMSA is demanding the following:

1. We demand the immediate re-instatement of all 165 workers who were unfairly dismissed for participating in the protected strike of April 16.
2. NUMSA shopstewards must be granted full recognition and full rights so they can defend workers in the workplace.

3. We demand that SA Steel Mills must comply with the OHS Act because it has a notorious reputation for creating unsafe working conditions. They must guarantee safety in the workplace.
4. We demand that SA Steel Mills pays the full engineering rate, which starts at R59,10 for the lowest paid worker. SA Steel Mills is running away from paying the minimum rate. Its application to be exempt from paying was rejected by the Metals Engineering Industries Bargaining Council, (MEIBC) exemption committee. It is falsely claiming that the majority of workers are represented by a cowardly union called FOSAWU, when the facts are that NUMSA is the majority union. Through FOSAWU it is trying to impose its own much lower rate to exploit workers. We condemn FOSAWU for working with the bosses to ensure that workers are paid peanuts and are exploited!

SA Steel Mills management did not show up to receive the memorandum, they requested that we email it to them. This is not surprising, they are exceedingly arrogant. (What has been stated above is the memorandum of demands).

The strike has completely shut down production at SA Steel Mills since the 22nd of May. It is at a complete standstill. We want to correct the false narrative peddled by the bosses in the media, that the strike has been interdicted, that is not true. The company tried to apply for another interim interdict this week, and they abandoned their application at the labour court, and asked for the court to delete the request from their application. We have the court transcript as proof of this. Unfortunately, the judge issued an erroneous court order reflecting that an interim interdict had been granted, when it had not been granted. NUMSA will be at the Labour court on Friday to request that the court correct the order.

SA Steel Mills has lost twice in court, and the last time they lost, the judge reprimanded them for misleading the court. They have a reputation for spreading propaganda and journalists must remember that.

We thank our members for uniting behind their demands and for uniting behind NUMSA. We will continue to defend them and to fight for their rights.

Issued by Kabelo Ramokhathali
NUMSA Regional Secretary Sedibeng
0834615918

For more information, please contact:
Phakamile Hlubi-Majola
NUMSA National Spokesperson
0833767725
phakamileh@numsa.org.za

NUMSA Head Office number: 0116891700
NUMSA YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsUlgwplI34&t=31s>
NUMSA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NumsaSocial>
NUMSA Twitter account: [@Numsa_Media](https://twitter.com/Numsa_Media)
NUMSA Website: <https://numsa.org.za/>