



## **NUMSA's memorandum of Demands to the IDC regarding SA Steel Mills 7 June 2024**

Members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) from the Sedibeng region are here to formally report to the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) of the inhumane and barbaric treatment of workers, SA Steel Mills. SA Steel Mills (SASM) 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. SASM has violated the constitutional right to strike by dismissing workers for participating in a strike. It also refuses to allow NUMSA, the majority union to defend and represent workers. This is what used to happen under Apartheid, and the owners of SASM who are beneficiaries of this post-apartheid dispensation, which workers fought for, cannot justify their backward behaviour.

We are demanding that the IDC must review its decision to fund Alfeco Holdings, which is trading as SA Steel Mills. (Alfeco Holdings bought SA Steel Mills recently and it is under new management).

NUMSA held a picket at the offices of SA Steel Mills on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May and we made the following demands:

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 Occupational Health and Safety 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, which was negotiated at the Metals Engineering Industries Bargaining Council, (MEIBC) exemption committee. It is falsely claiming that the majority of workers are represented by a 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.

It is also important that the IDC is aware of the following information:

1. SASM has ignored a Labour court order that declared the strike of the 16<sup>th</sup> of April a lawful and protected strike.
2. SASM has ignored a court order specifically barring them from disciplining, and then dismissing workers who participated in the strike of the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, because it was a lawful and protected strike. SA Steel Mills has since dismissed 165 workers who participated in that strike.

3. SASM has a terrible reputation for flouting basic health and safety laws and the result is that many workers have lost fingers, and even their lives because SASM does not take health and safety seriously.
4. SASM has deliberately misled the media and members of the SAPS, by falsely claiming that the strike was interdicted, when it was not. This resulted in two NUMSA members being arrested on Monday, only for them to be later released, because the union was able to defend them and prove, that they had been wrongfully arrested.
5. Four people were hospitalized after the private security hired by the company, shot at our members with rubber bullets when they were picketing at the gates of the company. Two of the security guards have been arrested and charged with attempted murder. SA Steel Mills continuously makes false claims that NUMSA members are violent, and yet it has not provided a shred of evidence to prove this. Meanwhile, NUMSA has a track record of evidence with the police and with the courts proving that SASM is brutal towards workers.

It is important that the IDC is aware of the suffering that workers are enduring at SASM. The IDC is a shareholder by virtue of the generous funding it has set aside for the entity. That funding was raised through taxpayer monies, and workers of SASM, as taxpayers, have contributed to that funding, therefore it cannot be, that workers whose blood sweat and tears contributed to its existence, are now being abused by the management of the company!

SASM is large steel company that competes with companies like ArcelorMittal South Africa (AMSA), Macsteel and Scaw metals to name just a few. It is refusing to respect centralized bargaining and it is a member of the bargaining chamber of the Metals Engineering Industries Bargaining Council (MEIBC). It refuses to pay workers according to the Main Agreement signed in engineering. It applied for exemption, but its application was rejected because it can afford to pay. IDC must be aware of this because they must know they are dealing with an unscrupulous, untrustworthy management.

Our demand is very simple:

1. We demand that the IDC must review the funding it has given to SA Steel Mills.
2. We demand that any plans for further funding must be stopped with immediate effect, until SA Steel Mills implements the court orders and, re-instates all the workers who were unlawfully dismissed. They were fired as an act of defiance against the Labour Court, after it had specifically blocked them from disciplining and dismissing workers.
3. We are also demanding that SA Steel Mills must adhere to the MEIBC and pay workers the minimum rate in Engineering.

**We are giving the IDC 5 (five) business days to respond to our demands.**

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