

'March won't stop services'

SANDI KWON HOO
CHIEF REPORTER

SOL PLAATJE Municipality said services would not be disrupted despite the SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) announcing that it would be joining the Cosatu march against job losses tomorrow.

Samwu and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) stated yesterday that they would also take part in the march in Kimberley, where state employees, the private sector, civil society, youths and mineworkers have all been invited to take part.

The spokesperson for Sol Plaatje Municipality, Sello Matsie, said the municipal offices would be open as normal tomorrow.

"We will be at work and services, including refuse collection, will continue. We have not received notice of any intention to strike," said Matsie yesterday.

Cosatu provincial secretary Orapeleng Moraladi last week estimated that up to 2 000 people would be taking part in the march.

"We are more than ready for the big march. This is a protected strike and we have satisfied all the necessary requirements."

Moraladi said that schooling would also be interrupted as members of the SA Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) would also be joining the march.

The march will start from the Kemo Hotel at 9am and proceed to the Department of Labour, the Premier's Office, the Metlife towers, the Department of Mineral Resources, the SABC, Kimberley Ekapa Mining Joint Venture, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) house and AfriSam.

Samwu secretariat Simon Mathe said the union fully supported the march that will form part of Cosatu's national strike tomorrow.

"Samwu will be joining the



JOIN IN: Samwu will be joining the Cosatu march in Kimberley tomorrow, where an estimated 2 000 people are expected to take part in the march against job losses.

Picture: **Danie van der Lith**

strike to fight against corruption in municipalities, retrenchments, the VAT increase and the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, as well as the absorption of all Expanded Public Works Programme workers.

"We urge members in all municipalities, their entities and water boards to show up in their numbers. As it is a protected national strike, no employee will be disciplined or dismissed for participating in the strike action. We further urge workers to report any employer who discourages or intimidates workers from participating in the strike action," said Mathe.

NUM media officer Liphert Chilwane also encouraged union members in the mining, energy and construction sectors to march against job losses.

"In the mining sector alone, around 40 000 workers have been retrenched. Mines are closing operations on a daily basis. The government must immediately intervene in the mining sector to save workers from mine owners

who leave workers high and dry after using them to rake in profits while forcing them to work in horrible and unsafe conditions."

Chilwane believes that splitting Eskom into three entities would result in 92 000 job losses in the energy and coal sector.

"During the job summit held in October last year, government committed to create 275 000 jobs annually. However, the real unemployment rate is 38 percent, with close to 10 million people struggling to get jobs and over 17 million on welfare."