

■ LABOUR



SAMWU members at the Civic Centre demand the city employ contract workers on a permanent basis. | TSHEGO LEPULE

City's contract workers want benefits

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CONTRACTED Law Enforcement officers working for the City of Cape Town are demanding permanent jobs so they can qualify for the benefits their colleagues receive for performing the same duties.

Approximately 150 members belonging to the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) marched to the Cape Town Civic Centre yesterday demanding they be absorbed into the system and earn a better wage.

The group claims the Department of Law Enforcement is understaffed and is taking on more contract workers from the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) and paying them low salaries while working with no benefits in the same dangerous areas as their counterparts.

A 32-year-old officer employed through the EPWP said: "I started off as an auxiliary officer in 2016 with no salary before I signed my first contract in 2017, which was for six months.

After that, I was unemployed for a while before being called back with another year-long contract," she said.

"It is not fair how we are treated differently from the others when we do

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It's not fair how we are treated differently from others when we do the same jobs in dangerous areas

the same jobs in the same dangerous areas, while they have benefits and job security and we don't.

"I get R3 200 every fortnight, but we put our lives in danger, patrol buses and carrying guns, exposed to danger. We want them to stop this EPWP and employ people permanently," she said.

Samwu's Michael Khumalo said they were willing to fight the city on their demands as continued talks over their concerns had not been successful.

"This is going to be a mountain to climb because they have pushed us too far and to a point where we have nothing else to lose when we fight.

"They have introduced new shift systems which show just how understaffed they are and they are allowing people to work overtime, but are not willing to pay them, stating that they have exceeded their 40 hours," he said.

The union also claims its members were being made to perform duties that fall outside their mandate.

Khumalo said the city must employ the EPWP workers because training the workers in law enforcement and how to handle guns created criminals once those people were unemployed.

Director for Safety and Security, Richard Bosman said the city would respond to the protester's demands on Friday.