

# Public servants protest against minister's 'hostile' budget

**Ron Sibiya**

Public servants took to the streets of Pretoria on Wednesday to protest, among others, against what they called “a hostile budget” delivered by finance minister Tito Mboweni in parliament on the day.

“The minister had delivered the worst budget in years,” said National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers (Nupsaw) national organiser Solly Malema.

“He has put the final nail in the working class’ coffin today.”

The march was part of a general strike called by the South African Federation of Trade Unions (Saftu) in the city on Wednesday.

Speaking to *Record* during the march, Malema said that as an Saftu affiliate they were preparing themselves to fight back against “hostile measures imposed on the working class, the poor and the unemployed”.

“The minister has already cut the budget for the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), which helps workers address their challenges with unscrupulous employers.”



Public servants protest in Pretoria on Wednesday.

He said, as a result, the CCMA now has a huge backlog of unresolved matters because they reportedly could not hire temporary commissioners to deal with it.

Malema said they were fighting against the minister’s freezing public servants’ salary increment for three years.

He said the government were denying

public servants salary increments while allowing Eskom to increase electricity tariffs by 15%.

He questioned the “logic” behind forcing residents to pay higher electricity prices while the government refused to increase public servants’ salaries.

Protesters demanded the government stopped implementing its “hostile” budget and instead create jobs.

“We want an economy that will allow the majority of people in the country to participate.”

He said the government should remember that unemployment affects the fiscus because the higher the unemployment, the less revenue the state can collect.

They also demanded the Gauteng infrastructure and development department reinstate 5 000 Expanded Public Works Programme workers who were dismissed during the lockdown.

Demands also included a R12 500 minimum wage for all workers and free public education.

The protest ended at the Department of Health building and not at the Presidency as originally planned.