



Publication: Daily News - Main
Title: Cosatu claims victory for workers
Publish date: 04 Nov 2022
Page: 4

Reach: 23508
AVE: R 15940.85
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REINSTATEMENT

Cosatu claims victory for workers

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COSATU and its affiliate the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) in KwaZulu-Natal have claimed a victory following the reinstatement of 121 Ugu District Municipality workers dismissed two years ago.

In a statement issued by the workers' federation provincial secretary Edwin Mkhize, the union said it was elated and heartened by another successful development that saw the reinstatement of the workers.

The union said the workers returned to their workstations on Tuesday and received their 12 months' back pay.

"We have always argued that this matter could have been better handled by those in authority, so we are excited that our campaign for their reinstatement has now yielded positive outcomes," said Mkhize.

"These workers were dismissed

around March 2020 after they objected to the unfair dismissal of their union shop stewards. They argued their leaders were being victimised for speaking out against alleged maladministration and corruption in the council.

"Since then, the federation working with its affiliated trade union Samwu has been at the forefront of the efforts to ensure their reinstatement."

Cosatu thanked the provincial leadership of the SACP for being a reliable ally in the "fight for justice for these workers". It also commended the Lower South Coast region of the ANC for providing support to workers.

The 36-year-old workers' federation vowed to continue to work with its affiliated unions to improve its service to its members and create workplaces where workers' rights are respected.

It also urged members to prioritise service delivery to the poor communities that rely on them for their survival.

This is the second victory for

Cosatu and Samwu after they successfully fought for the reinstatement of 223 workers in Newcastle Local Municipality who were fired while the municipality was under the then-mayor Dr Ntuthuko Mahlaba.

The workers were fired after invading the meeting of the council that was being addressed by the Mahlaba.

At the meeting, tempers flared and Mahlaba was escorted by his bodyguards after a scuffle broke out between him and the workers.

Assisted by the union, workers took the matter to court and won. Mahlaba had maintained that workers were dismissed fairly which angered Cosatu and the workers.

It seems workers hadn't forgiven him for what he did, because during the Cosatu march last month, he was prevented from speaking and booed.

Mahlaba is now Human Settlements and Public Works MEC. He is also the ANC provincial treasurer.