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Author: Thakasani Khumalo

SALARY DEMANDS

Interdict halts Nehawu's wage strike, union vows to fight on

THAKASANI KHUMALO
thakasani.khumalo@inl.co.za

THE Labour Court on Monday dismissed an appeal by the KwaZulu-Natal National Education, Health, and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), interdicting a strike that had taken place at the Pinetown Magistrate's court, the Department of Water, and Public Works both in Durban and at Ngwelezana Hospital in uMhlatuze.

According to reports, the Labour Court on Monday found that the interdict is still enforceable, despite the

union's moves to appeal it.

The court granted the minister and Department of Public Service and Administration leave to execute the interdict, saying that the strike would cause irreparable harm to the government and affect numerous public services including education, health, police, home affairs, social development and correctional services.

Nehawu had said that it had filed an application for leave to appeal the Labour Court ruling on Sunday.

KZN Nehawu general secretary Zola Saphetha said the Public Service

and Administration Department had offered a 4.7% wage increase, while workers were demanding between 10 and 12%.

"We will not entertain anything below 10%. We will continue to strike until all our demands are met," he said.

The union's provincial deputy secretary Ntokozo Nxumalo, said the Budget speech had not addressed the issue of public servants' wages which dates back from 2022.

"We have now put the ball in their court (government) and said we want 10% or we will continue shutting

down public facilities. We have shut down the Pinetown Court, Department of water, and Public Works both in Durban, also Ngwelezana Hospital in uMhlatuze. We will continue shutting down other places until the employer (government) is ready to negotiate our demands," said Nxumalo.

Cosatu KZN provincial secretary Edwin Mkhize said the federation supported Nehawu, adding that as the cost of living increased, so too must the wages of public servants.

"Our strike action is a way of demonstrating our dissatisfaction,

particularly with what the employer is offering.

"It cannot be correct that the government does not honour its workers with the 10% we are demanding and is only giving us 4%, we have been raising the issue of the cost of living as the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa) approved the Eskom tariff increase, petrol is increasing and wages should go up too," said Mkhize.

He added that workers were within their rights to continue protesting for as long as their demands were not met by the employer.

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