



Publication: Sunday World - Main
Title: Ndlovu to face Nehawu over court-protected HOD
Publish date: 20 Jul 2025
Page: 10

Reach: 22300
AVE: R 175709.60
Author: By Tshwarelo eseng Mogakane

Ndlovu to face Nehawu over court-protected HOD

Union says Morolo's axing remains its key demand

By **Tshwarelo eseng Mogakane**

Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu is gearing up for a tense meeting with leaders of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) on Wednesday, as pressure mounts to fire public works head of department (HOD) Charles Morolo, who returned to office under the protection of a court interdict.

Morolo vanished from work earlier this year after weeks of protest action outside his office. But in May, he hit back, securing a temporary interdict from the Mbombela High Court that effectively banned Nehawu from protesting for his removal, intimidating staff or interfering with departmental operations.

Police were authorised to arrest protesters and deploy public order policing if necessary.

While that legal win brought Morolo back to his desk, it has failed to extinguish the political wildfire around him.



Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu is due to meet a Nehawu delegation this week to address a number of issues. / Facebook

Nehawu Mpumalanga provincial secretary Welcome Mnisi told *Sunday World* the premier can expect tough questions over the unresolved crisis in their meeting.

"We're meeting the premier this Wednesday to assess how far the government has come in addressing our long-standing demands," Mnisi said. "We've handed over memoranda dat-

ing back to August 2023, and again in May this year. We want answers and action."

Morolo has long been in Nehawu's cross-hairs, with the union accusing him of presiding over a dysfunctional department marked by nepotism, mismanagement and a culture of impunity. Things escalated in March, when Nehawu accused him of shielding a senior official, which

a forensic investigation implicated in a failure to disclose conflicts of interest.

"Our latest memorandum, submitted just last week, dealt with broader issues, but yes, the HOD's removal remains one of our key demands. The working relationship between him and the union has broken down."

He said the union's 12th provincial congress in June didn't mince words, but reaffirmed the decision to push for Morolo's removal, and that's the message Nehawu's leadership will deliver to Ndlovu.

As political tensions mount, Nehawu is also frustrated by what it describes as police inertia. Mnisi revealed that two criminal complaints – intimidation and assault – were laid against Morolo, but nothing has moved. "Those cases are crawling," he said. "We're now taking it up with the Nelspruit police station commander and the acting provincial commissioner. We won't just sit back and wait."

Internally, the department is also under scrutiny. Mnisi said the union expects an internal investigation, sanctioned by the MEC, to be concluded and made

public. "Dragging it out helps no one," he said.

Despite the storm, Nehawu has cautiously welcomed Ndlovu's recent sacking of culture, sport and recreation HOD Godfrey Ntombela, who remains accused of forging the extension of his own employment contract.

Nehawu also welcome Ndlovu's cabinet reshuffle and intends to use the opportunity to escalate unresolved matters across all departments.

"But make no mistake, we'll be meeting every newly appointed MEC to table the challenges our members are facing. We're not letting anything slide."

Morolo has remained silent, but court papers filed in May painted a picture of a department crippled by protest action and threats of violence.

The court ruled that the conduct of some protestors posed a risk to the department's ability to function and issued the interdict as an urgent measure.

With the legal battle set to resume on August 15, when the court will decide whether to make the order permanent, Wednesday's meeting has become a high-stakes political test.