

## Two pending strikes against Massmart group

The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) on Monday, 6 July 2009, said that after negotiations with the management of Makro deadlocked, it was preparing for industrial action.

"After an exhaustive process of negotiations with an intransigent Makro management, to resolve issues of wage increases, medical aid and job security agreement, the parties deadlocked and Saccawu was granted a certificate to embark on protected industrial action in pursuance of their demands," the union said.

The union said that for years now Makro was "living it large" with massive profits, and workers believed it was time to be appropriately rewarded for their contribution to the growth of the company.

Saccawu members' demands include an across-the-board increase of R460 per month or 8.5%, whichever was greater, the conclusion of job security agreements in the current round of negotiations to put an end to, or at least minimise the use of labour brokers and employment contracts to exploit workers; and non-discriminatory medical aid contributions.

"After deadlocking in May 2009 and numerous attempts to resolve the dispute through meetings with the company and at the CCMA, Saccawu decided to go ahead with mobilising its members," said SACCAWU.

Saccawu said it was currently consulting its membership in preparation for mass action.

This will include marches, pickets and full blown strike as well as appealing to other Saccawu members, Cosatu and its affiliates, SACP, ANC, Sanco and customers to support the Saccawu members at Makro, it said.

"Despite huge profits made over the last number of years, Makro now refuses to grant workers reasonable increases.

"It wants to introduce a discriminatory approach towards medical aid schemes and benefits in an attempt to coerce workers to join a medical aid of the company's choice," the union said.

"Further, the company refuses to conclude a job security agreement which will protect workers' jobs, ensure decent work, challenge labour broking and end outsourcing, provide for childcare, elimination of work on commemorative public holidays and provision of safe and reliable transport in the event of changing trading hours.

"This is to ensure job security and job retention as opposed to massive use of unprotected exploited labour brokers supplied workers."

Saccawu said workers were currently engaged in meetings and discussions to plan the coming industrial action.

In a separate case, the union said that more than 400 workers at about six branches of Mass Discounters had been illegally locked out by management while still in dispute about an attempted unilateral restructuring and changes in employment contracts.

After the Labour Court had ruled in favour of the union - although the ruling was not signed by the judge - the company went ahead to impose these new conditions on workers, and where workers refused to accept this attitude from management many were en masse illegally locked out, the union said.

"Some of these workers have been outside the gates of their workplaces for six weeks.

"At the same time the bosses show their double standards as they do not require from the scab labour provided by labour brokers the same conditions they attempt imposing on our members.

"This is either an expression of union-bashing by the company or vindictive immature and short-sightedness on the side of management," said Saccawu.

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