

Port workers strike deadline looms

Workers at railways and ports will know by Friday whether they can join an ongoing strike by truck drivers, the SA Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu) said.



Satawu spokesman Vincent Masoga said on Monday that the union gave a seven-day notice to strike at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration last Friday.

The CCMA has until Friday to decide whether to give permission to Satawu to expand the strike to port and rail workers.

Masoga said the union was continuing to plan protests and pickets amongst truck drivers, in co-ordination with other unions.

He said the union would continue to negotiate with employers, with the next meeting to discuss truck drivers' salary demands being scheduled for Tuesday.

Satawu has been asking for a 12% wage increase but was prepared to negotiate a compromise if the employers, including the Road Freight Employers' Association (RFEA), were willing to also compromise.

"We're prepared to even take 10% but the guys are not budging at all," Masoga said.

The unions involved in the truck drivers' strike said action continued on Saturday but they were hopeful an agreement would be reached during negotiations this week.

"We are positive that we might find a solution because there is a lot at stake," the Motor Transport Workers' Union's (MTWU) Dirk White said.

"This strike is not about political play - people can lose their jobs."

The unions involved are Satawu, the Professional Transport and Allied Workers' Union SA (PTAWU), the Transport and Allied Workers' Union of SA and MTWU.

Satawu spokesman Vincent Masoga said the strike was continuing and they had received a notice of negotiations.

"We will always be hopeful," he said.

"More importantly, we are hopeful that the employers will play ball this time around."

PTAWU's Pancho Ndevu agreed with the other unions and said they would remain hopeful for the workers.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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