

SAB strike ends as Fawu accepts wage offer

The Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) has accepted a 7% wage offer from South African Breweries (SAB), bringing an end to more than a month of strike action characterised by violence and intimidation.



Mauricio Leyva says SAB will build closer ties with Fawu. Image: SABMiller

SAB said that the settlement was reached with Fawu members on Monday (4 November) with the union agreeing to a 7% increase including performance-related pay, backdated to 1 July.

Fawu members at SAB's beer division downed tools at the end of September, demanding a 9% increase. The union had rejected SAB's offer, maintaining it translated into an effective 4.2% increase, as the rest of the offer was in the form of a performance-based bonus.

Fawu president Atwell Nazo said the union had accepted the offer as the strike had gone on for too long. "SAB refused to move from its offer," he said.

He said Fawu members would meet with SAB management to sign the agreement.

Marred by violence

The strike was marred by violence and intimidation, including the firebombing of SAB employees' homes. SAB turned to the courts on multiple occasions to compel the union to abide by picketing rules.

Fawu has maintained it did not encourage intimidation and says it implemented measures to reduce the threat of violence during demonstrations.

SAB said that it continued to be one of the highest-paying employers in the consumer goods sector, with the wage deal increasing the monthly pay for shift workers by R1,196 to R18,283.

The company had maintained that less than a third of its employees participated in the strike, with SAB's managing Mauricio Levy saying: "I was proud of the resilience of the majority of our employees during this difficult period who worked together to ensure the impact on our operations was minimised.

"However, there are no winners during a strike, which has taken a toll on everyone," he added.

He said SAB would now work to normalise operations and develop its relationship with the union.

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