

Numsa speaks out on NUM label as 'enemy within'

NATASHA MARRIAN

Political Editor

THE National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) has been characterised as the "enemy within" by a fellow Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) affiliate, with allegations that it "hijacked" federation campaigns and worked with rival unions, according to submissions to facilitators tasked with ironing out internal differences.

Numsa is Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi's strongest backer in the federation's internal battle, which appears to be aimed at removing the long-standing leader.

Facilitators Charles Nupen and Petrus Mashishi are leading a process to iron out the political, ide-

ological, organisational and administrative issues plaguing Cosatu. The process has been secretive, largely kept behind closed doors, with submissions kept under wraps. Numsa has circulated its submission to its structures and has called on other affiliates to do the same.

According to Numsa's submission, an allegation by a rival Cosatu affiliate, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), is that there is an "enemy within", that Numsa has been "hijacking Cosatu campaigns" such as the one against an electricity tariff hike of 16% earlier this year.

The NUM is aligned to Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini, and is seen as an anti-Vavi union, although its rivalry with Numsa runs deeper, with the two unions competing to be Cosatu's largest affiliate.

"Such a characterisation is tantamount to a call to expel Numsa from the federation," Numsa said in response to the allegation.

"Either this is a piece of reckless rhetoric, in which case a full and comradely apology would be in order, or it is a serious political characterisation. In that case NUM must substantiate the characterisation and, logically, call for Numsa's expulsion," Numsa said.

It has been accused of being "locked in a faction" with Mr Vavi, making it impossible to discipline the union. Another allegation contained in the submission is that Mr Vavi intervenes in "problematic ways", for example he had apparently supported former South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu) president Ephraim Mphahlele although he was planning a breakaway from the union. Numsa was also accused of working with the NUM's rival, the Association of

Mineworkers and Construction Union, a claim that it denied. Numsa was also accused of funding the National Transport Union, a breakaway from Satawu.

Further allegations against Numsa include that it is poaching members from the NUM, particularly at Eskom's Medupi power station construction site, which has been plagued by labour unrest, contributing delays to it coming on stream in six months. Numsa says it has discussed the matter with Eskom workers, who refuse to leave the union to join the NUM. "They have always refused," Numsa said.

"As a working-class organisation we believe more than others that workers are independent human beings who must be respected. We cannot move them from one organ-

isation to another against their will as though they were animals being moved from one farm to another."

The NUM has long taken issue with Numsa for organising members at Eskom, appealing to Cosatu to intervene. However, a bilateral meeting to discuss the issue scheduled for June 24 was postponed.

Numsa is also puzzled by the insistence that it return members to the NUM when there was a standing Cosatu resolution for the two unions to merge. Both unions chose not to comment yesterday, saying the submission was part of an internal process. During a media briefing after a meeting of its leaders, Numsa called on Cosatu to abandon the internal process, saying it was clearly aimed at one person, Mr Vavi.

marriann@bdfm.co.za

NUM member stabbed at rally in Marikana

Kingdom Mabuza

A GROUP of National Union of Mineworkers members were attacked and one of them stabbed in the neck yesterday during the union's rally at a stadium in Marikana, North West.

The members were assaulted outside the Wonderkop Stadium, where NUM was on a campaign to recruit members after losing its majority union status to the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) at Lonmin.

Outside the stadium, several groups of men clad in blankets stood and watched the activities.

The injured man, who was taken to hospital by an ambulance, was saved by police who were patrolling the area.

Cosatu North West general secretary Solly Phetoe told the rally that all alliance partners – ANC, SACP and Cosatu – should force Lonmin management to reopen offices for NUM.

NUM was evicted from their offices last week after the union failed to recruit enough members to justify their status as a majority union in the mine.

“We must organise a march against Lonmin to force it to open NUM offices. We were able to defeat apartheid in the past and we will defeat the enemy (Amcu),” said Phetoe.

He said the ANC should consider disciplining its members who were working with Amcu to destabilise NUM. The deputy chairman of the ANC Rustenburg region, Buti Makhongela said the party should

not fold its arms while NUM was being attacked.

“Once you attack NUM you are attacking the ANC and we will not fold our arms. We must rise with all we have and defend NUM.”

NUM's chief negotiator at Lonmin, Eric Geilitshana said despite presenting evidence of intimidation and fraudulent membership by Amcu, Lonmin went ahead to recognise them as the majority union.

DUDU DUBE

Parties who withdrew should return

commission process. The SAHRC has a constitutional mandate to monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic." spokesperson Isaac Mangena said.
dudud@thenewage.co.za

THE Marikana Commission of Inquiry will today reveal if parties which have pulled out, will return to the table after major setbacks pending a legal battle between the miners and the president last week.

The commission's spokesperson, Tshepo Mahlangu, said all parties that withdrew from the proceedings last week, including families of the deceased, the Legal Resources Centre and the min-

ers union Amcu, will be asked to return to the proceedings. "They had withdrawn pending the court's decision. Now we all know what the judgment was so we expect them to come back."

On Thursday, the North Gauteng High Court dismissed the application for state funding by about 300 Lonmin mineworkers

who were injured and arrested during the police shooting that left 34 of their colleagues dead during a wage strike almost a year ago.

The miners wanted the state to pay their lawyer Adv Dali Mpofu and his team on their behalf.

Although judge Takalani Raoliga ruled that legal aid for the Commission of Inquiry was not

certain, he granted the miners certification to lodge a class action against the president, so they will now take the matter forward to the Constitutional Court.

As of yesterday, none of the parties that withdrew were clear on whether they would return to the proceedings or not.

Amcu leader Joseph Mathun-

jwa said his legal team would be at the commission this morning but a decision on whether to return to the commission would be taken during the course of the day.

The LRC's Khumbulani Mpofu said their position will be determined by their clients, the Benchmarks Foundation and the family

of killed miner Papi Ledingwane.

Despite the court judgment, the SA Human Rights Commission has urged the government to make funds available to the injured and arrested parties to enable their continued participation in the commission.

"In the meantime, the SAHRC remains a participant in the

Cosatu's NUM rally sees some hurt

LUYOLO MKENTANE AND
OMPHEMETSE MOLOPYANE

A MAN sustained head injuries when he was attacked with two other men on their way to a National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) rally at Wonderkop stadium in Marikana yesterday.

Andrew Nkomo from Segwaelane village suffered head injuries when he was attacked with a knobkerrie by a group.

Nkomo, who is not an employee of Lonmin but was wearing an NUM T-shirt, was rushed to the mine hospital. Franse Allislift, who was pelted with stones by the group, managed to escape.

"I don't know what happened. All I saw were few people approaching us. They did not say anything, they just attacked us. Andrew could not run and was beaten with a knobkerrie," Allislift said.

Police spokesperson Col Masiza said they would patrol the area on a 24-hour basis until the situation returned to normal.

Amcu general secretary Jeff Mphahlele said they had no information about the incident.

Speaking at the rally, Cosatu North West secretary Solly Phetoe called on Lonmin to open NUM's offices "with immediate effect".

"We will make sure NUM goes nowhere.

We are here to stay. We want to reclaim

our integrity as a labour federation," he said.

NUM was replaced by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction (Amcu) as the majority union at Lonmin during last year's violent strike in which 44 people were killed.

NUM, which moved out of its Lonmin offices last week, has referred its derecognition

to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and the matter is set to be heard on July 30. Phetoe said the fight for control of the mines was not about worker interests.

"It is about people occupying political space in 2014."

In a veiled reference to a Workers and Socialist Party activist, Liv Shange, Phetoe said: "Capitalism is using people from Sweden to say NUM is not in power. We're in power."

Shange, a Swede married to a South African, was blamed by the ANC for being behind last year's strikes.

news@thenewage.co.za