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**INDUSTRIAL
ACTION REPORT**
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR



IAR 2023



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employment & labour

Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

▲ **2023**
**INDUSTRIAL
ACTION REPORT**
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR

PUBLISHER

Department of Employment and Labour
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Private Bag X117
Pretoria, 0001

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**EDITING, LAYOUT AND DESIGN, PHOTOGRAPHY AND
DISTRIBUTION**

Subdirectorates of Media Production
Design Studio
Directorate of Communication, Department of
Employment and Labour

RP

194/2024

ISBN:

978-1-77997-105-0



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ABBREVIATIONS

| | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--|
| ABC | Amanzi Bargaining Council | DETAWU | Democratised Transport Logistics and Allied Workers' Union |
| AFADWU | Agricultural Food and Allied Democratic Workers Union | DPSA | Department of Public Service and Administration |
| AMCU | Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union | DSD | Department of Social Development |
| ANC | African National Congress | EC | Eastern Cape |
| APSA | Academic & Professional Staff Association | ECCAWUSA | Entertainment, Catering, Commercial and Allied Workers Union of South Africa |
| ATM's | Automatic Teller Machines | EPWP | Expanded Public Works Programme |
| BAWUSA | Bawsi Agricultural Workers Union of South Africa | ERI | Eskom Rotex Industries |
| BCAW | Building Construction & Allied Workers Union | FAWU | Food and Allied Workers Union |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa | FOSAWU | Future of South African Workers Union |
| CCBSA | Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa | GGM | Greater Giyani Municipality |
| CCMA | Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration | GIWUSA | General Industries Workers Union of South Africa |
| CEPPWAWU | Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union | Haitu | Health Workers Indaba Trade Union |
| COGTA | Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs | HOSPERSA | Health and Other Services Personnel Trade Union of South Africa |
| COJ | City of Johannesburg | ICASA | Independent Communications Authority of South Africa |
| Covid-19 | Coronavirus-2019 | ILAWU | Independent Liberation and Allied Workers Union |
| CPI | Consumer Price Index | ILO | International Labour Organization |
| CWU | Communication Workers Union | IMATU | Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union |
| DEL | Department of Employment and Labour | IPTS | Integrated Public Transport System |
| DEMAWUSA | Democratic Municipal and Allied Workers Union of South Africa | KSD | King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality |
| DENOSA | Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa | KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |



| | |
|--------|---|
| LMIS | Labour Market Information and Statistics |
| LRA | Labour Relations Act |
| MRBPS | Medium Term Budget Policy Statement |
| NABC | National Association of Bargaining Council |
| NAPSAW | National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NEET | Not in Employment, Education or Training |
| NEHAWU | National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union |
| NTM | National Transport Movement |
| NULAW | National Union of Leather and Allied Workers |
| NUM | National Union of Mineworkers |
| NUMSA | National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa |
| NWU | NASA Workers Union |
| PAWUSA | Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa |
| PPRA | Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority |
| PSA | Public Servants Association |
| PSCBC | Public Service Co-Ordinating Bargaining Council |
| PSWU | The Private Sector Workers Union |
| PTWU | Professional Transport Workers' Union |
| PWUSA | Progressive Workers Union of South Africa |
| PWV | Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vereeniging |
| Q | Quarter |
| QLFS | Quarterly Labour Force Survey |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| R | Rand |
| RBCT | Richards Bay Coal Terminal |
| SACCWU | South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union |
| SACTWU | South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union |
| SACU | South African Communication Union |
| SADTU | South African Democratic Teachers Union |
| SAFCOL | South African Forestry Company Limited |
| SALGA | South African Local Government Association |
| SAMWU | South African Municipal Workers' Union |
| SANC | South African Nursing Council |
| SANRAL | South African National Roads Agency |
| SATAWU | South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union |
| SEIFSA | Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa |
| SIC | Standard International Classification |
| SMU | Sefako Makgatho University |
| SOCRAWU | Security Officers Civil Rights and Allied Workers Union |
| SRSA | Sumitomo Rubber South Africa |
| TASWU | Transport and Services Workers Union |
| TAWUSA | Transport and Allied Workers Union of South Africa |
| TFGWU | Transport Freight and General Workers Union |
| TGI study | Target Group Index |
| UASA | United Association of South Africa |
| UNTU | The United National Transport Union |





PHOTO:
Lowvelder | M Boshoff



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With every project, it is essential to acknowledge the valuable contribution and support received from various individuals and organizations involved. The act of acknowledgement not only shows gratitude but also recognizes the collaborative effort behind the project's success. With that in mind, the Labour Market Information and Statistics would like to acknowledge and thank the Acting Deputy Director-General of the Labour Policy and Industrial Relations (LP&IR) Branch together with the team for their contributions towards the realization of the department's mandate of monitoring the labour disputes in the South African labour market.

The Department would also like to acknowledge the support of employers and employers' associations in the country who voluntarily submitted the LRA 9.2 forms after end of strikes in their workplaces. Their continuous commitment to report the strikes information to the Department is incredible in making a positive impact as mandated by the Labour Relations Act of 1995 (LRA). Similarly, the Department is also grateful to the various media coverage institutions and family and friends for reporting strike incidents that has facilitated the strike data collection to reporting of such incidents. The information collected and analyzed enabled us to provide valuable inputs necessary for addressing work conflicts between workers and employers during wage negotiations.

Finally, the Department extends its appreciation to each LMIS official's unique expertise and dedication to overcome challenges that came with the collecting and completion of this report. Thus, we remain indebted to the LMIS team's efforts and collaborative spirit.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The right of employees to unionize and bargain collectively for higher wages and better working conditions is a cornerstone of South Africa's democracy. It is a right enforced by the right to strike as entrenched by the Constitution and most importantly in the Labour Relations Act (LRA). Strikes are crucial, however, not only from industrial point of view but also from social and economic point of views as they leave an impact on the businesses, labour and employees. This is associated to priority three of the ruling party Manifesto that tackle the high cost of living in particular for workers. The African National Congress (ANC) commits to continue the war on poverty by providing comprehensive social security and basic services and addressing the impact of rising prices on households.

This 2023 Industrial Action report highlights the progress that the Department has made in measuring the labour disputes in the South African labour market. While the analysis can be expanded over 30 years, it is comparatively presented in this report over five years' period (2019 - 2023). Unfortunately, strikes increased in 2023 as workers and business faced extremely difficult time due to high inflation and interest rates pressure that resulted in high costs of fuel, food and other essentials.

Wage increment as a reason why workers went on strikes reflect the call on the cost of financial sustainability and ability to be able to maintain livelihoods. Load shedding, on the other hand, continued to be a major challenge where most companies could not make continuous profit to keep up with workers salary demands. As of 2023, an individual living in South Africa with less than R1 058 per month was considered poor. Furthermore, individuals having R760 a month available for food were living below the poverty line according to South African National Standards¹. Likewise, the South Africa's unemployment rate has risen to record highs and for most of those who've managed to keep their jobs or find new jobs over the years of businesses closing down, salaries have remained unchanged.

During salary and incentive negotiation seasons, both parties had to tackle the question of what constitutes fair compensation in light of the prevailing situation in the country. As much as employers would want to keep pace with inflation, the pressure becomes high and varied while margins remain compressed.

Key highlights of the Industrial Action Report in 2023:

- Between 2022 and 2023, strike estimates show an increase of 11.1%. The number of workplace dispute increased to 97 strike incidents in 2023 from 87 strike incidents in 2022. More strikes recorded over the 2023 occurred during the last quarter (October-December) of the year due to the economic challenges in the labour market. This was an increase of 9 percentage point in the number of strikes compared to the same quarter of 2022.
- While the number of strike increases between 2022 to 2023, the number of participants (directly or indirectly) dropped as per the information drawn from the LRA 9.2 forms. Less than 70 000 (68 523) workers embarked on strikes during the twelve (12) months of 2023 compared to 153 527 employees who were involved in strikes in 2022. In this context, more than 68 000 of employees involved in work stoppages had spent more than 2.4 million working days on the streets demanding wage increments and better working conditions from the employers.
- Of the strike recorded in 2023, strikes were mostly dominant at company level (60%), followed by stay-away (19.5%) and strike lockouts (16%) by employers.
- By industry, the community and manufacturing industries continued to report more strikes over the past five years. The community industry recorded the majority of strikes (48.8%) with an increase of 4.4% from 2022 followed by an increase of 15.4% strikes in the manufacturing industry in 2023. Overall, the DEL strikes database shows that all industries except the utility industry were hit with strike activities in 2023.
- Looking at the reason why workers embarked on work stoppages, most workers who participated in strikes had reported that the demand for wage, bonus and other compensation benefits was the main reason to participate in work stoppages. A large number of unhappy employees (94.5%) in 2023 lost their time of work to demonstrate mainly for higher wages. Many employees became frustrated by the technique of delayed and unpaid salaries and that has given unionized employees a greater reason to strike as the last resort.

¹ National poverty line in South Africa 2023, Published by Natalie Cowling, October 10, 2023





- Associated with the total 97 strike actions recorded in 2023, workers lost R163 millions to wages. This is 87% below R 1.2 billion of wages lost from 87 strike actions in 2022. The demand for wage, bonus and other compensation benefits remained the main reason why employees participated in work stoppages as most workers are cash-strapped and cannot meet their basic needs. Workers in the trade industry lost 32.5% in wages although with lesser strike incidents as compared to the community industry with more strikes and lost 9% of wages in 2023. Interestingly, during the strikes in the trade industry, the employers opted to use replacement labour to cover up for the time loss in operations.
- The bracket of disputes resolved internally with the employers remained unchanged between 2022 and 2023. As presented by the employers, the proportion of workplace disputes that was resolved in the workplace recorded the highest 74% in 2023 and 87.4% in 2022. Matters resolved externally through the CCMA fell from 3.4% to 2% while those resolved through the bargaining councils also declined from 4.6% to 2% from 2022 and 2023.
- Between the public and private sector, the estimates illustrate that the public sector was highly affected at 76.9% (1 903 795 working days lost) against the private sector at 23.03% (564 522 working days lost). In the public sector, the community industry recorded 79% of working days in 2023%.
- Drawn from the DEL strikes statistics, 52% of strikes were reportedly un-procedural in 2023 down from 53% of un-procedural strikes in the previous year. This translates a decrease of 1 percentage point over the two-year period. Higher levels un-procedural strike activities were reported from the community and mining industries. On a positive note, the DEL strikes database has recorded an increase of 4% in the number of procedural strikes in 2023.
- Data on the duration of the strikes results that the majority of work stoppages (67%) were reasonably short, lasting 1-10 days. This is a similar pattern where 63% of work stoppages lasted for 1-10 days in 2022. The information presented by the employers demonstrate that where it was unnecessary for negotiations to prolong, employers and unions were able to conclude the negotiations in a shorter period.
- Membership on trade unions proportions reflected a shift where (SAMWU), the largest trade union in municipalities, water boards and allied services (7.7%) dominated the streets to demand wage increments and other workplace related matters. Data presented in 2022 indicated that two of the major trade unions, AMCU had the majority 29.8% and NUM (25.1%) of employees participating in strike action over wage demands and better working conditions. There is a serious concern where 35.5% of workers who participated in workplaces disputes but not unionized in 2023.
- According to the data sourced from the Labour Research Service, the median wage settlement was almost equal for all industries in 2023 with the average wage settlement of 7% in 2023 compared to 6.2% in 2022. The mining industry who settled for 6% in 2022 settled for 8% above the average of 7% wage settlements in 2023.
- Lastly, wage settled with strike activities across affected industries reveal that the exercise to resolve wage demand was not easy to complete. Despite the median wage settlement of 7% average, the results presented by the employers reveal that union representatives had to settle for below initial wage demand. Even though most employee representatives have settled for way below initial wage demands, employers from the mining industry settled for closed to the employer's offer in 2023.

THE IMPACT OF 2023 STRIKE INCIDENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

The year started with many uncertainties in 2023. The triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment continued to rise in South Africa due to the unfavourable economic conditions. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report in January 2024, the country has been handi-capped by rolling power cuts, snarled logistics at its ports and railways that reflect a year of inadequate investment and poor management.

Concerns also remained about the elevated level of inflation as it had a strong impact on the distribution of real income, as many businesses were unable to increase the income in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Inflation was relatively high in the first five months of 2023 (January –May), with the headline rate consistently above 6.0%. Although the level of inflation eased below this level for the remaining seven months of the year, the price of electricity and several food items have increased with some even doubling over inflation increases.

On the other hand, the South African Reserve Bank has however reiterated that consistent interest rate hikes have been the primary mechanism of managing both domestic and foreign inflationary pressures that are taking their toll on consumers across the country. All these factors had affected the strike patterns that shows relatively less effective policy interventions on managing the labour disputes in the country.



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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two years, many South Africans were troubled by the high inflation rate that left many households indebted. The impact of high interest rates has also affected employees and employers negatively with serious economic strain. The recent spike in inflation underscores South Africa's economic challenges with food and fuel prices playing a pivotal role in the everyday struggles of its citizens. With increased inflation rates, the burden of servicing their debt has become even heavier, inevitably affecting the standard of living, particularly for those who are already struggling. On the other hand, the impact of load shedding continued to lead to loss of productivity, increased cost of doing business and a decline in foreign investment. It has also led to an increase in unemployment, a decrease in household income and a rise in inflation.

In addressing the challenges faced by the citizens of the South African, Labour Relations Act purpose is to “advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratization of the workplace. However commonly, so a strike² is considered the last weapon in the organized labour for settling industrial disputes when all other options for amicable settlement of an industrial dispute have been exhausted and negotiations with the employer have failed.

The Labour Market Information and Statistics (LMIS) Directorate within the Labour Policy and International Relations plays a critical role in the collection, analysis and dissemination of this Annual Industrial Actions Report in line with the strategic goal of monitoring the impact of labour legislations in the Department of Employment and Labour.

As the country struggles to recover economically, this annual report is set to assess the level of labour disputes in the South African economy and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the labour dispute activities over the past five years (i.e. 2019 – 2023). The report provides a comparative analysis of the labour disputes in the country to inform policy makers about the changes and gaps for possible policy interventions in achieving the national targets of the National Development Plan (NDP) to uplift the workers living conditions. To this extend, changes in various indicators including the number of work stoppages, working days and hours lost, duration of strikes and worker's wage lost are analysed and presented over a five-year period. Following this, this 2023 Industrial Action Report is structured as follows: **Chapter One** examines the key indicators based on the number of work stoppages in the South African labour market. The **Chapter Two** of the report focuses on the two-year comparisons of strike activities between 2022 and 2023 with particular focus on different industries, strike duration, employment size of the establishments and the measurement of trade union trade union involvement in work stoppages. **Chapter Three** of the report outlines the analysis on the median wage settled by industry and further examines different ways in which wage settlements agreements between the employers and union organizations were conducted. Lastly, the Annexure profiles strike details breakdown for a closer look on how the disputes were identified, monitored, captured and submitted by the employer to DEL from January to December of 2023.

2 Strikes may arise from a number of reasons, though principally in response to economic conditions meant to improve wages and benefits or labour practices intended to improve working conditions while other strikes may be called for political reasons.



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Independent Newspapers | Tumi Pakkies



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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF STRIKE
INCIDENTS IN THE
SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR
MARKET, 2019-2023





CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF STRIKE INCIDENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR MARKET, 2019-2023

The decision to call a strike does not come easily because unions and workers risk the loss of income that impact on the worker's family and community at large. Workers also risk the permanent loss of jobs especially when replacement workers are hired from elsewhere to continue with company operations during the strike. Currently, the South African economy remained under strain given challenging domestic business conditions of electricity power crisis and high inflation rate that constituted one key reason for high wage demands. On the other hand the economy is also not growing fast enough overtime. The real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)³ measured by production, increased by 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2023, following a decrease of 0.2% in the third quarter of 2023.

The number of work stoppages were relatively higher compared to the previous year, although most of the strikes took shorter period to be resolved. With the strikes recorded over the 2023, more strikes were recorded during the last quarter (October-December) of the year. There was an increase of 9 percentage point in the number of strikes compared to the same quarter of 2022. In this context, the overall percentage of employees involved in the 2023 strike activities accounted to 4.4% below the 8.1% of employees who actively participated in work stoppages in 2022.

South Africa experienced a higher number of industrial action incidents in some industries in the 2023 calendar year. The DEL strike database shows that the community and manufacturing industries continued to report more strikes over the past five years (2019-2023). Of the total 97 strikes recorded in 2023, about 48.4% of work stoppages were from the community industry, in particular those from the municipal sector while the manufacturing amounted to 12% of strike activities. The strikes for better wages and working conditions by thousands of Public Service Administration (PSA), local government employees (in the Community industry) took place at various cities where unions demanded a wage increase above 10%.

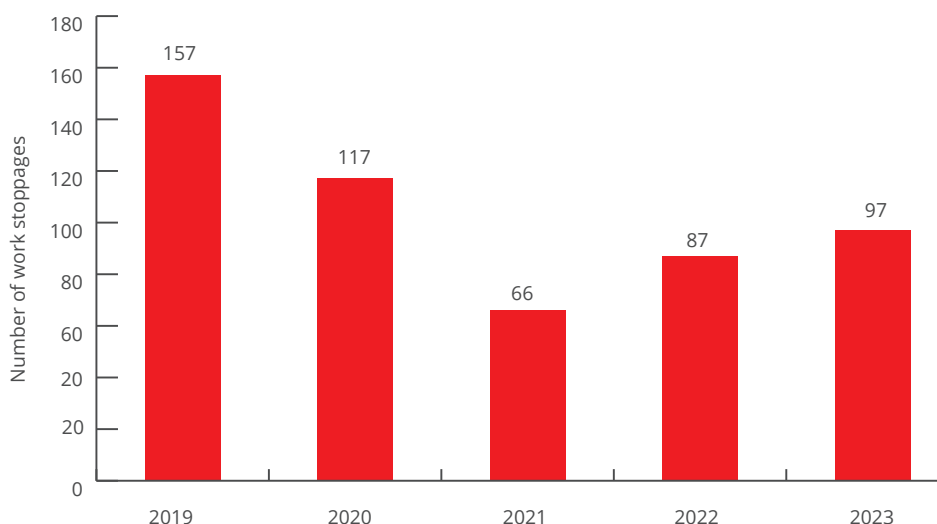
The loss of productivity in the labour market remains a worrying factor for many industries. Employers affected by strike action has reported that more than R163.9 million of wages lost in 2023. The demand for wage, bonus and other compensation benefits remained the main reason why employees participated in work stoppages as most workers are cash-strapped and cannot meet their basic needs. Worryingly, the slow growth in the economy, inflation rate hikes and the impact of load-shedding were amongst the main reason why employers were unable to keep up with the unions and employee wage demands.

In general, the South African public sector was largely affected with strikes activities as compared to the private sector in 2023. The public sector was worst hit with a high number of working days lost that accounted for 76.9% (1 903 795 working days lost) against the private sector at 23.03% (564 522 working days lost). Of the total 2 450 317 working days lost in South Africa, 79% (1 935 845) of working days were lost from the community industry. The primary reason provided for the increase in the number of workdays lost due to strikes was the demand of wage increments and other workplace related matters.

³ Unless otherwise specified, growth rates are quarter-on-quarter, seasonally adjusted. All growth rates are calculated on the basis of series at constant prices.



FIGURE 1: TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF WORK STOPPAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2019 - 2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

The year 2023 has seen an upswing in strikes emanating from economic challenges that needed urgent consideration and negotiation by both unions and employers. **Figure 1** illustrates that the South African labour market recorded 97 work stoppages involving more than 68 000 workers from January to December 2023. This is 11.1% higher than the 87 strikes recorded in 2022. The increase was mostly noticeable in the mining, agriculture and community industries. A number of factors appears to have made the 2023 strikes rate to rise, many of them tied to the economic challenges faced in the labour market. Strikes have been increasing for the past few years, coinciding with a tight job market that arose during the pandemic and inflation rate hikes. Every year, it is projected to observe a moderate workplace conflicts and high productivity rates, however, the economic challenges that the country is facing has shown some limitations in achieving high productivity and investment rates. Looking at the past five years, **Figure 1** shows a moderate workplace conflict in 2021 with 66 strikes as compared to 2019 with 157 strikes. Between 2021 and 2023, an increase of 47% of strikes was recorded that could indicate how impossible it was to maintain the level of stability at the workplace in 2021 than in 2023. Many trade union organizations demonstrated against wage increment and better working conditions with strikes carried out in many industries, including the community, manufacturing and mining industries.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEE’S PARTICIPATION IN WORK STOPPAGE BY INDUSTRY⁴, 2023

| Industry | Number of workforce 2023* | Employees involved 2023 | Percentage distribution of employees involved per industry |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Agriculture | 8 771 | 5 494 | 62.6 |
| Mining | 32 696 | 12 179 | 37.2 |
| Manufacturing | 13 840 | 3 297 | 23.8 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 852 | 415 | 48.7 |
| Trade | 14 650 | 5 615 | 38.3 |
| Transport | 2 022 | 1 608 | 79.5 |
| Finance | 115 | 45 | 39.1 |
| Community | 1 465 608 | 39 870 | 2.7 |
| Total | 1 538 554 | 68 523 | 4.4 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023 *the statistics as reported by employers using the LRA 9.2 forms

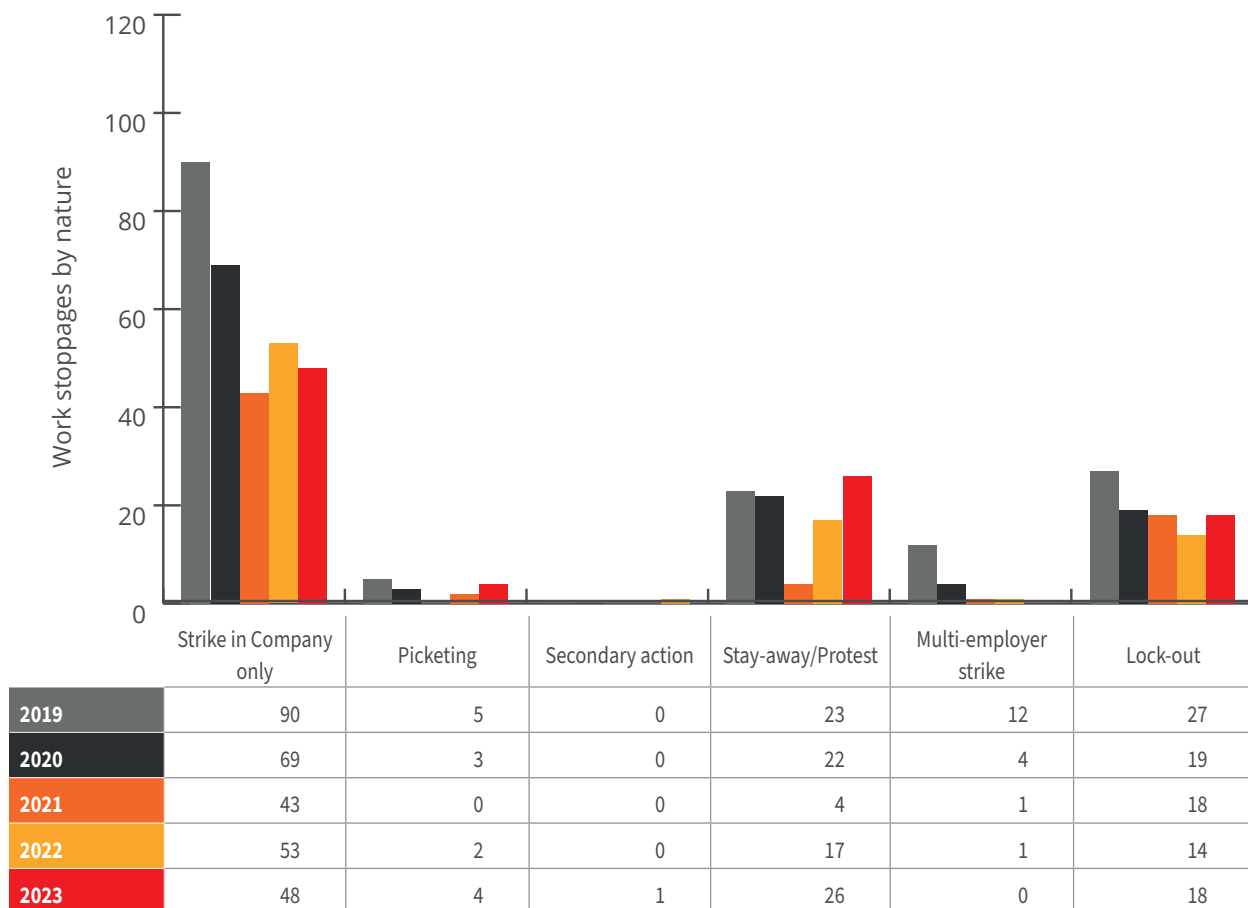
4 As per the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).



The information drawn from the LRA 9.2 forms is indicating the total number of workforce and the number of employees participating in strike per industry. In 2023, the proportion of employees that participated in strike was higher in the transport industry at 79.5% and lower in the community industry at 2.7%, as shown in **Table 1**. Overall, of those companies that reported work stoppages to the Department, only 4.4% of employees were embarked in the strikes that took place in 2023. This represents a decrease of 3.7 percentage point from the previous year.

Although industries like the community and mining reported high number of workforce in 2023, the level of worker participation rate in strike activities were lower. While thousands of workers have participated in strike activities, other facilities remained under normal operations because some workers decided not to participate on strikes with the assumption that strikes could come at a high cost where “no work no pay” principles were applicable.

FIGURE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES BY THEIR NATURE, 2019 - 2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

In **Figure 2**, the trend in the distribution of work stoppages by their nature is illustrating that strikes continued to emanate mostly in company only, stay away and lockouts over the years. The information reported from the employers is indicating that about 49% of the strikes reportedly came from company only while the stay away strikes were at 26.8% and lockouts at 18% in 2023. In a year of seemingly never-ending strikes, a group of employees from the community industry has taken to stay away from work at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University in Ga-Rankuwa, Tshwane over salary increases. Most workers, who include academics, cleaners, gardeners and security personnel, affiliated to the Academic and Professional Staff Association (APSA), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union and the South African Parastatal and Tertiary Institutions Union downed tools after a deadlock in wage negotiations.



TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DAYS LOST BY PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF DISPUTES, 2019-2023

| Principal cause | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Wages, bonus and other compensation benefits | 1 986 636 | 624 960 | 522 529 | 3 152 216 | 2 316 639 |
| Working conditions | 221 475 | 18 700 | 27 071 | 39 919 | 31 261 |
| Disciplinary matters | 3 437 | 1 320 | 11 386 | 1 140 | 520 |
| Grievances | 98 913 | 82 123 | 22 860 | 5 866 | 43 139 |
| Socio-economic and political conditions | 117 477 | 6 979 | 19 799 | 3 028 | 369 |
| Secondary actions | 1 250 | 33 068 | 0 | 18 396 | 388 |
| Retrenchment/redundancy | 890 | 130 | 16 112 | 0 | 7 849 |
| Refusal to bargain | 119 | 2 573 | 6 546 | 25 053 | 26 |
| Trade union recognition | 38 195 | 2 428 | 8 449 | 7 800 | 10 660 |
| Other reasons | 27 486 | 11 664 | 62 094 | 90 219 | 39 466 |
| Total | 2 495 878 | 783 945 | 696 846 | 3 343 637 | 2 450 317 |

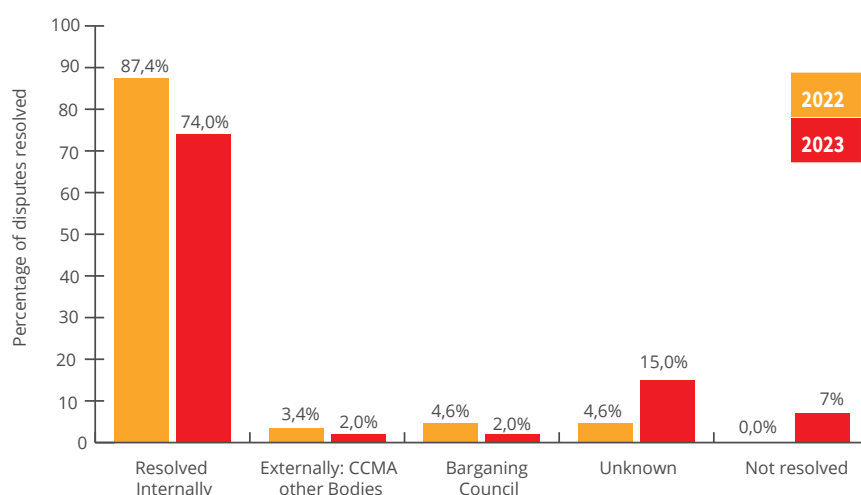
Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

Strikes arise from a number of reasons, though principally in response to economic conditions meant to improve wages and benefits or labour related matters to improve the living conditions of the workers. The trend in **Table 2** confirms that over the five-year period, most workers who participated in strikes had reported that the demand for wage, bonus and other compensation benefits was the main reason to participate in work stoppages. Even though the South African economic growth had relatively performed, workers and the unions continued to march to the streets to call for more wages that would enable them to meet the rising cost of food, electricity and other basic services. Moreover, rising interest rates, high inflation and cost of living have resulted in many homeowners defaulting on their monthly bond repayments, with some being forced to sell their properties to reduce expenses.

Drawn from **Table 1** above, a large number of unhappy employees (94.5%) in 2023 lost their time of work to demonstrate mainly for higher wages. Tight labour market challenges also drove them to ask for higher salaries and other benefits as inflation claimed more money from their pockets.

The demand for better working conditions, grievances and other work related reasons (4.6%) also resulted in the cause for participation to labour disputes over the same period.

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOW DISPUTES WERE RESOLVED, 2022 - 2023



Source: DDepartment of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023

The bracket of disputes resolved internally remained unchanged over the two-year period. As presented in **Figure 3**, the proportion of workplace disputes resolved in the workplace were recorded the highest 74% in 2023 and 87.4% in 2022. The results show a decrease in the proportion of workplace disputes resolved internally without the involvement of external parties' interventions. This is 13.4% lower than 87.4% of cases resolved with the employer in 2022. A decline is also shown in disputes where external bodies were called to assist in resolving workplace disputes. Matters resolved externally through the CCMA decreased from 3.4% to 2% while those resolved through the bargaining councils declined from 4.6% to 2% between 2022 and 2023. In return, 7% of the disputed strike incidents remained unresolved where workers resorted to return to work.

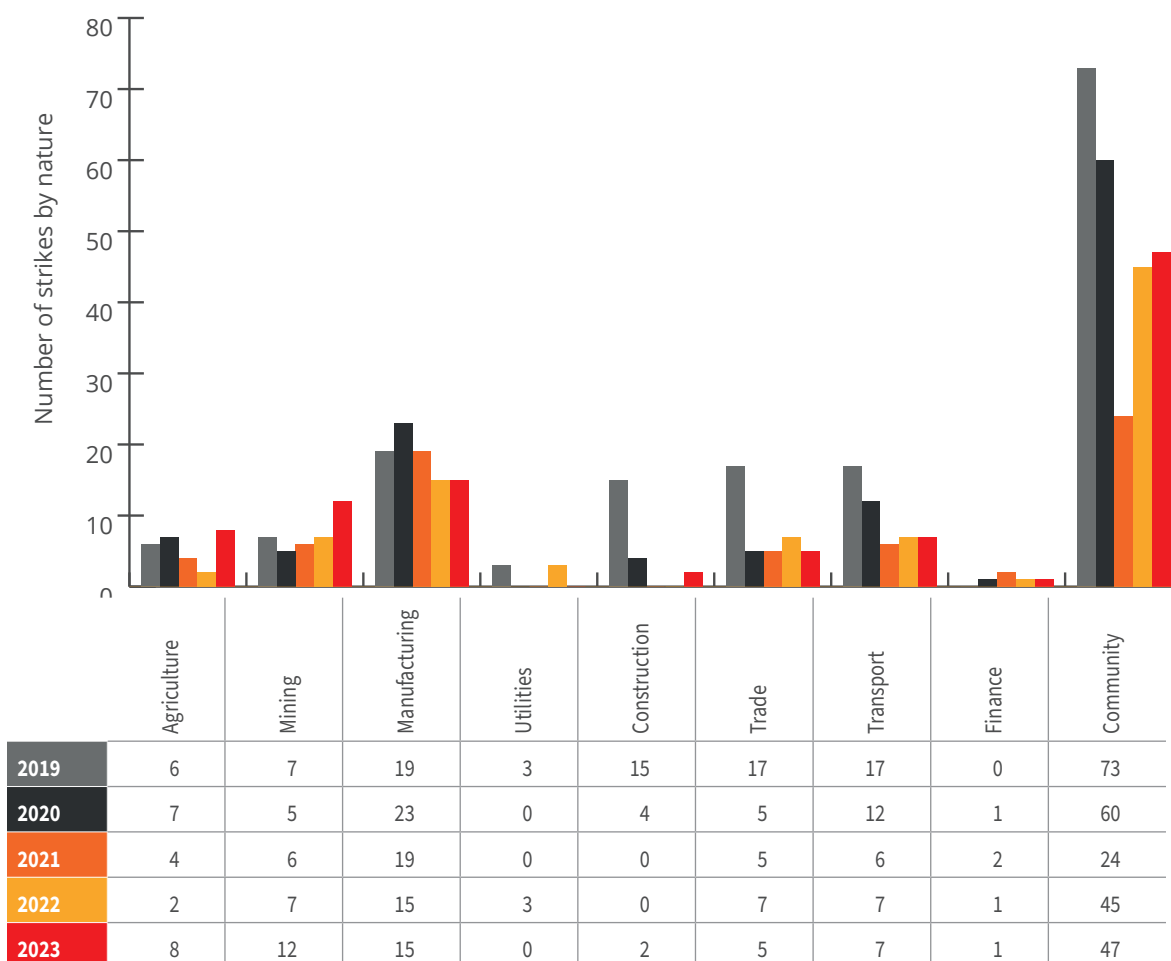
TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF HOW ANNUAL SALARY INCREMENTS WERE NEGOTIATED IN SOUTH AFRICA

| | Oct-Dec 2022 | Jan-March 2023 | Apr-June 2023 | July-Sep 2023 | Oct-Dec 2023 | Year on Year change (%) |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Individual and employer | 1 132 000 | 1 068 000 | 980 000 | 1 154 000 | 1 224 000 | 8.1 |
| Union and employer | 3 001 000 | 2 944 000 | 2 887 000 | 2 802 000 | 2 735 000 | -8.9 |
| Bargaining council | 1 186 000 | 1 324 000 | 1 360 000 | 1 396 000 | 1 360 000 | 14.7 |
| Employer only | 7 276 000 | 7 294 000 | 7 68 4000 | 8 145 000 | 7 896 000 | 8.5 |
| No regular increments | 698 000 | 785 000 | 668 000 | 764 000 | 790 000 | 13.2 |
| Unspecified | 64 000 | 54 000 | 77 000 | 46 000 | 79 000 | 23.4 |

Source: Statistics South Africa, QLFS, quarter 4 of 2023

According to the Quarterly Labour Force results (QLFS)⁵, it is noted that employers, as shown in **Table 3** mostly determined annual salary increments for their workers. In every quarter of 2023, a large number of employees had reported that their salary increments were negotiated and settled by the employers as they were the immediate role players in their work contract⁶. This was followed by negotiations settled between the union and employer at the workplace. On a year on year basis, the Bargaining councils has made a stride to intervene between the employers and unions to resolve workplace annual salary increment disputes as reported by the workers in 2023.

FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES BY INDUSTRY, 2019 - 2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of workplace disputes by industry over the past five years. Strikes were predominantly reported in the manufacturing, mining and community industries. The community industry kept its place as the most affected industry with a large number of employees that are

⁵ Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Four Survey, Quarter 4 of 2017, p- 70

⁶ Similarly, the information reported on the LRA 9.2 forms depicts that 74% of employers have resolved annual salary increments internally with employees only.

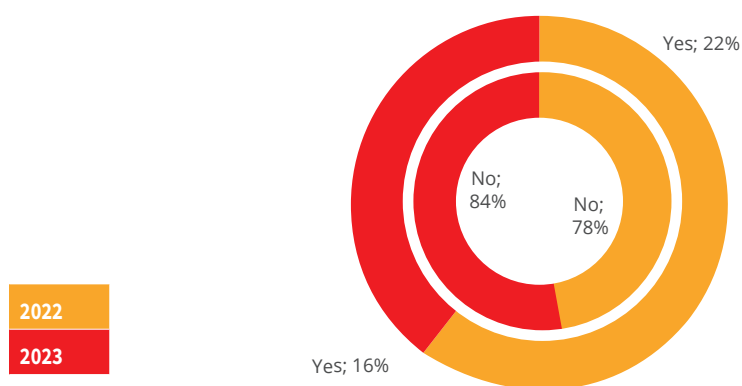


unionised as compared to utilities industry. The highest-profile strikes in 2023 recorded in the community industry's local authority was the City of Tshwane where close to 22 000 staff members affiliated to the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) downed tools for more than three (3) months over unpaid salary increments. The impasse to implement worker's salary increases left the city's services crippled and chaotic where services such as waste collection, repairs of water leaks, power outages and bus operations were put on hold. The strike also affected clinic services where patient has to return home without receiving treatment.

The second major strikes (15.4%) were recorded in the manufacturing industry where 136 989 working days were lost to demand higher wages and better working conditions. This high level of consistent strike incidents over the years in these two industries is alarming and brings a level of concern to the South African labour market. Additional strike activities came from the agriculture and the mining industries, exacerbated in the inability to keep up with the low income, unfair treatment by the employers and trade union recognition.

Over the two years, data recorded from the employers shows an increase in the number of work stoppages from the agriculture (300%) and the mining (71%) industries.

FIGURE 5: PERCENTANGE DISTRIBUTION OF REPLACEMENT LABOUR USED DURING THE STRIKES, 2022-2023

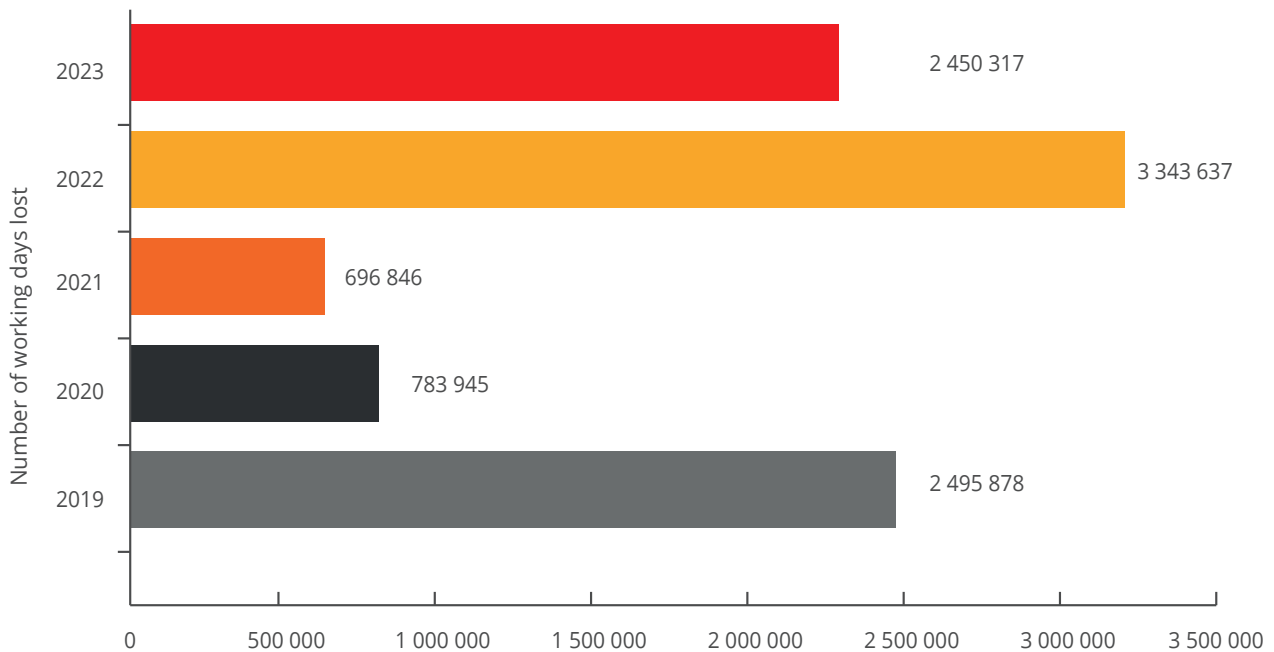


Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022 - 2023

While the Labour Relations Act of 1995 (LRA) protects workers with the rights to strike for better wages and working conditions, striking workers can potentially be replaced at their workplace. The distribution of whether or not replacement labour was used during the strike activities is therefore presented in **Figure 5**.

The LRA 9.2 forms asked employers if replacement of labour was used during workplace disputes, the results in this figures shows that only 16% of employers reported that they used replacement during the period of strike and lockouts while 84% of employers reported they never replaced labour during the strikes period in 2023. Employers who predominantly used replacement labour were from the trade (21%) and mining (7%) industries whose workers downed tools over salary increases in 2023. In the trade industry, companies that used replacement of labour were from the wholesale and retails e.g. Massmart companies while in the mining industry who used replacement labour of workers were from the metal ores, except gold and uranium. It was reported that due to the ongoing strike, Massmart had to use temporary employees to keep the stores open and running for business.

FIGURE 6: TRENDS IN WORKING DAYS LOST⁷ IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2019-2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

Working days lost is another important decent work indicators as it characterises the level of productivity lost in the company due to several reasons. The implications are that companies will lose an amount of profits that limit their investment expansion. It is always acceptable that companies have sustainable productivity level that could enhance job opportunities. Interestingly, the strike data estimates show high increase in working days lost in 2022 than any other years over the past 5 years. It was lowest in 2021 at 696 848 working days lost as shown in **Figure 6** above.

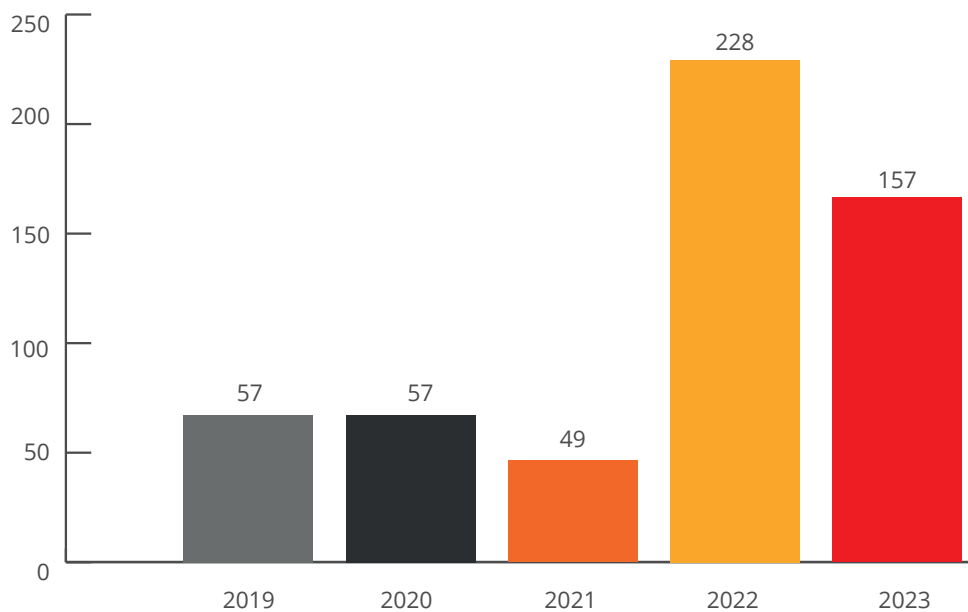
Furthermore, the results presented in **Figure 6** are an indication that unpaid and delayed salaries, grievances and other workplace related matters have lead workers to spend most of their time of work to the streets in 2022 than in 2023. More than 68 000 of employees involved in work stoppages have spent more than 2.4 million working days (only 68 523 employees involved from 97 strikes) on the streets in 2023 as compared with 3.3 million working days lost (153 527 employees involved in 87 strikes) in 2022.

The working days lost have declined by 26.7% in the current year compared to the previous year. The decline in the working days lost in 2023 was as a result of less employees involved in strike activities and less time spend on the street to petition the demands against the employers.

7 The working days lost due to strike implies the total number of workers involved directly in the strikes or lockouts multiplies by the length of work stoppage. These are of little use purposes of international comparisons. The number of days not worked per 1 000 employees will be the best estimate for such international comparison.



FIGURE 7: WORKING DAYS LOST PER 1 000⁸ EMPLOYEES (TIME-LOSS RATIO) DUE TO STRIKES, 2019 - 2023



Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database 2019 - 2023

For international comparison purpose, the International Labour Organization's guidelines indicate that the time lost ratio due to strikes is the most useful indicator to use. In this context, **Figure 7** illustrates the working days lost per 1 000 employees over the last 5 years. Low time-loss ratio due to strikes were estimated from 2019 to 2021 as compared to the last two years (2022 and 2023). In 2023, the South African average time-loss ratio of 157 was lower than in the United Kingdom at an average 221⁹. However, South Africa was relatively strike prone at 228 in 2022 than in the United Kingdom at an average of 210. In Germany, 6.4 working days per 1 000 employees were lost due to strikes on average in 2022¹⁰. In Australia, 99.3 working days were lost per 1 000 employees in 2023¹¹.

Furthermore, Figure 7 shows that there were 157 working days lost per 1 000 employees from 2 450 317 working days lost and 68 523 employees involved in 2023 as compared to 228 working days lost per 1 000 employees from 3 334 637 working days lost and 153 527 employees involved in 2022.

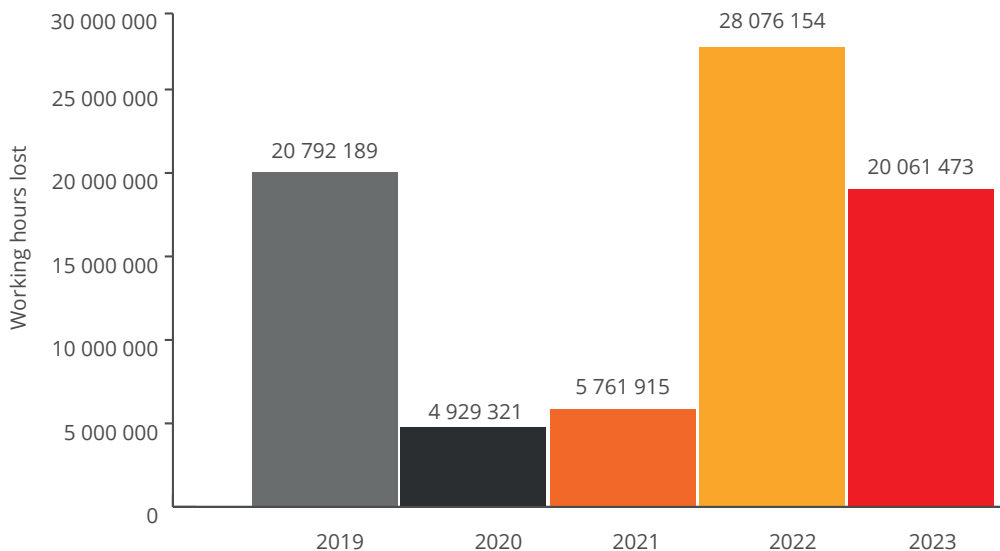
⁸ This indicator allows for international comparison in strike activity where data is available. For international comparison, the ratio distinguishes which country is "strike-prone" when compared to another country.

⁹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1350908/uk-industrial-action-working-days-lost/>

¹⁰ https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Labour/Labour-Market/Quality-Employment/Dimension5/5_2 Working Days Lost Through Strikes Lockouts.html

¹¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/industrial-disputes-australia/latest-release>

FIGURE 8: TRENDS IN WORKING HOURS LOST IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2019 - 2023

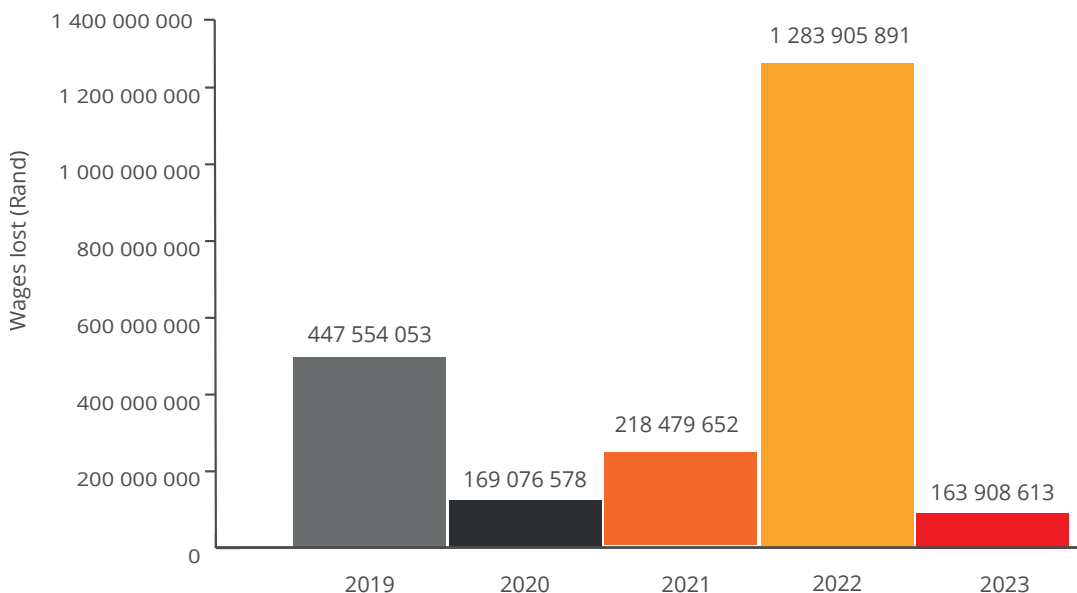


Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database 2019 - 2023

The LRA indicates 8 hours of working day that could total to 40 working hours per week. Employers had to indicate how many hours lost due to strike incidents in their companies. This indicator is closely related to working days lost that impacts on company profits over time. **Figure 8** shows that the number of working hours lost has decreased by 28.5% in 2023 from the previous year. This is a similar trend observed in the working days lost over the same period.

Even though many strike incidents were reported in 2023, the number of work hours and days lost on the streets did not harshly affect the production line in many establishments where replacement of labour was considered. According to DEL strike data, most 67% of strikes lasted for not more than 10 working days in 2023.

FIGURE 9: WAGES LOST¹² DUE TO WORK STOPPAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2019-2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019-2023

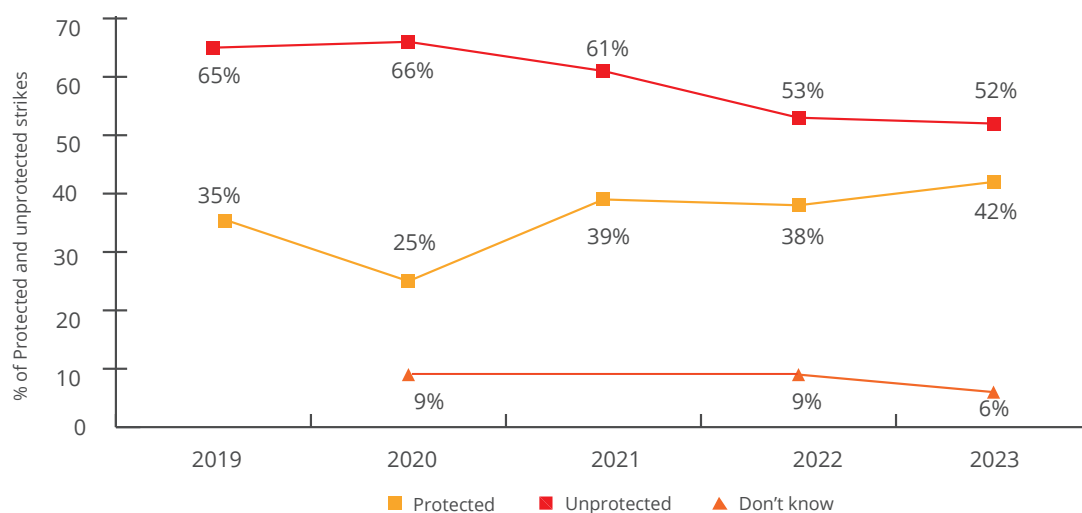
The most acceptable interpretation in **Figure 9** is to look at the impact of strike having side-effects in the family as well as in the community when workers accept to forgo their salary based on the principle on “no work no pay”. It is understood that members of family and community will probably sustain their

¹² There is a need for a case study to gather data from a number of companies that were affected by the strike activity in order to estimate the cost of strike to company. This can be a case study for the Research unit in the future.



living conditions if money circulate in the areas. This is very appealing when worker’s lost wages for a common wage adjustment demand to improve their living conditions in the presence of high inflationary pressure and interest rates in the country. While information on the economic cost is not detailed in this report, **Figure 9** provides estimates based on information reported by employers on worker’s wage lost at a given period. In 2023, more than R 163 million worker’s wages were lost due to 97 strike actions. This translates to 87% below R 1.28 billion of wages lost from 87 strike actions in 2022. Besides employers sympathized with worker’s frustration and the pressure of higher wage demand. Notwithstanding that, industries that were mostly affected with high number of participants in labour disputes they have largely reported worker’s wages lost as the workers kept fighting for similar reasons of fair and better wages as the cost of living, rising food cost and energy prices continue to affect them.

FIGURE 10: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROTECTED AND UNPROTECTED STRIKES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2019-2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

Not all strikes complied with the labour laws in the country. Strike statistics as drawn from the LRS 9.2 forms indicate less than half of companies reported strike incidents were less compliant with the laws. This trend is observed in the last 5 years. As illustrated in **Figure 10**, 52% of strikes in 2023 were non-protected (un-procedural) strikes against 53% of strikes processed in the previous year. This translates to a decrease of 1 percentage point over time. Un-protected strikes are often discouraged by legislations because they might result to violence, loss of employment, call for discipline or strain the relationship between employers and employees. About 6% of employers did not responded to the question if the strike was protected or unprotected in 2023, it was 9% in 2022. One of the unprotected strikes was recorded in the community industry’s where Tshwane local municipality unprotected strike action triggered by the city’s failure to implement the final year of a three-year wage agreement, citing their financial constraints. The city promptly imposed a “no-work-no-pay” policy and went on to apply for exemption from the wage agreement from the South African Local Bargaining Council, which was ultimately dismissed.

Underground illegal protest movements have become frequent in the mining sector causing concern and disruption to the mining industry. In one instance more than 440 miners at Gold One mine in Springs (the Gauteng province) allegedly staged in an illegal underground sit-in protest over better wages and recognition rights between the mine management and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union.

Even though the number of un-procedural strikes remained high, the DEL strikes database has recorded an increase in the number of procedural strikes in 2023. Over the past two years, the figure indicates an increase of 4% in the number of protected strikes from 2022 to 2023.



PHOTO:
Lowvelder | M Boshoff



▲ 2023
**INDUSTRIAL
ACTION REPORT**



CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE KEY
CHARACTERISTICS OF
THE LABOUR DISPUTES,
2022 AND 2023



CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOUR DISPUTES, 2022 AND 2023

Along with what has been describe above, a comparative analysis over the last two years is presented to dissuade the state labour disputes in the South African labour market. This analysis is conducted using additional disaggregation on key relevant indicators as dictated by International Labour Organizations as such the changes in the number of work days lost, work hours lost, wages lost per industry etc.

Prior to this comparative analysis, it is highlighted that public servants in the department of public service and administration embarked on a week-long strike organised by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union in February 2023. The strike affected South Africa's biggest hospitals that were tarnished by acts of violence and intimidation, the barricading of hospital entrances, the prevention of oxygen deliveries and the obstruction of urgent and necessary medical services to patients.

Fast forward to the end of July 2023, thousands of City of Tshwane employees affiliated with the South African Municipal Workers' Union embarked on un-protected strike action triggered by the city's failure to implement the final year of a three-year wage agreement, citing their financial constraints. The city promptly imposed a "no-work-no-pay" policy and went on to apply for exemption from the wage agreement from the South African Local Bargaining Council, which was ultimately dismissed. When the dust had settled, the city had dismissed at least 123 employees for misconduct perpetrated during the strike and for failing to return to work despite the ultimatums issued to them.



2.1. INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES AND WAGES LOST BY INDUSTRY, 2022 - 2023

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES AND WAGES LOST BY INDUSTRY, 2022 – 2023

| Industry* | No. of work stoppages 2022 | Worker's wage lost (Total 2022 (Rand's)) | No. of work stoppages 2023 | Worker's wage lost (Total 2023 (Rand's)) |
|---------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Agriculture | 2 | 2 229 486 | 8 | 13 826 631 |
| Mining | 7 | 1 018 444 218 | 12 | 40 520 060 |
| Manufacturing | 15 | 109 024 078 | 15 | 36 582 251 |
| Utilities | 3 | 14 877 553 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 043 491 |
| Trade | 7 | 10 501 221 | 5 | 53 322 083 |
| Transport | 7 | 86 087 232 | 7 | 3 418 029 |
| Finance | 1 | 37 983 763 | 1 | 0 |
| Community | 45 | 4 758 340 | 47 | 15 196 068 |
| Total | 87 | 1 283 905 891 | 97 | 163 908 613 |

*Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022-2023*Note that the Standard International Classification (SIC) was used (excluding the Private household sector).*

Table 4 reflects on how workers were financially affected when they have participated on strike by industries in 2023 compared to 2022. Workers in the trade industry lost 32.5% in wages although with lesser strike incidents as compared to the community industry with more strikes and lost only 9% of wages in 2023. Retail sales in the trade industry continued to decline for consecutive month with data from Stats South Africa pointing to the sector being under continued pressure as households suffer the ills of high interest rates and a generally challenging economy. The mining industry as one of the largest employers in the country is the industry that could be creating wealth and driving the economy fast but it is probably impacted with a loss in production as a result of work stoppages. The mining industry with 12% of strikes has reported the loss of about 24.7% of wages over labour disputes in 2023. Nearly 22.3% of R163.9 million of wages was lost in the manufacturing industry where 15.4% of strikes were recorded from the manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel in 2023.

2.2. INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DAYS LOST, 2022 - 2023

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DAYS LOST BY INDUSTRY, 2022 - 2023

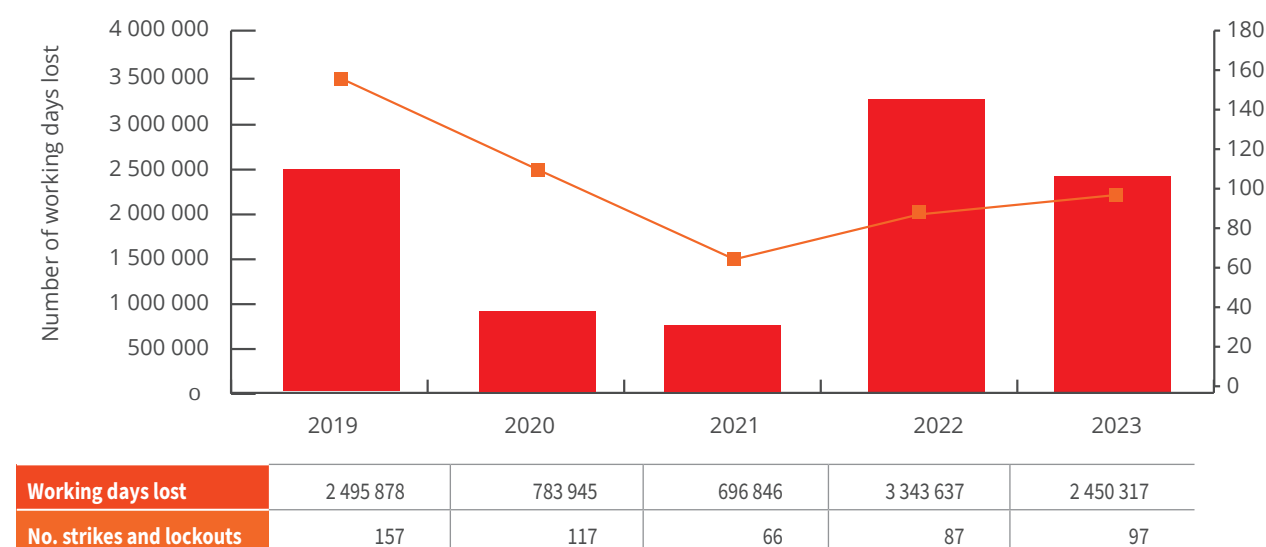
| Industry | Working days lost | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | 2022 | 2023 | % change |
| Agriculture | 40 632 | 56 428 | 38.9 |
| Mining | 2 120 713 | 133 081 | -93.7 |
| Manufacturing | 303 930 | 136 896 | -54.9 |
| Utilities | 32 979 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Construction | 0 | 5 355 | 0.0 |
| Trade | 89 765 | 160 690 | 79.0 |
| Transport | 274 230 | 20 447 | -92.5 |
| Finance | 207 707 | 1 575 | -99.2 |
| Community | 273 681 | 1 935 845 | 607.3 |
| Total | 3 343 637 | 2 450 317 | -26.7 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022-2023

Looking at **Table 5**, the results reflect the changes in the working days lost by industry between 2022 and 2023. Overall, the total number of working days lost decreased by almost 27% between 2022 and 2023. Nonetheless, the South African labour market was subjected to a high working days in the third and fourth quarters of 2023 emanating from the community, manufacturing and mining industries. Table 5 further presents that community industry lost 79% of working days due to strikes while trade industry lost 5.5% and mining lost 5.4% of working days over the same period.

The vast majority of the strikes in the mining industry came at the time when the mining industry was strained by the domestic and global economic fallout with mineral sales falling by more than 13% in the first ten months of 2023 due to the electricity and logistics crises that have hit mining companies hard. The trade industry who recorded the second largest number of work stoppages lost 6.5% of working days lost in 2023 after Massmart workers affiliated to labour union, South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) embarked on a 10-day national strike over salary increment.

FIGURE 11: TREND IN THE WORKING DAYS LOST AND NUMBER OF STRIKES, 2019 - 2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019-2023

Figure 11 illustrates the trend in the number of days lost and strike incidents over the last 5 years. While there is existence of volatility in the number of strikes, it appears that the two strike indicators are closely correlated over time. A better explanation could suggest that working days lost is a function of number of participants and strike duration. When the number of strike incidents dropped in 2021, the number of working days lost has also dropped.



Interestingly, while thousands of workers have participated in strike in 2023, some workers decided not to participate on strikes with the assumption that strikes could come at a high cost where “no work no pay” principles was applicable. For example, the community industry with the highest workforce of 1.4 million recorded only 2.7% participation rate in strike activities.

2.3. INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING HOURS LOST, 2022-2023

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING HOURS LOST BY INDUSTRY, 2022 - 2023

| Industry* | Working hours lost | | |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | 2022 | 2023 | % change |
| Agriculture | 336 888 | 421 470 | 25.1 |
| Mining | 17 667 327 | 1 325 164 | -92.4 |
| Manufacturing | 2 903 282 | 1 212 137 | -58.2 |
| Utilities | 377 504 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 0 | 48 143 | 0 |
| Trade | 740 968 | 1 291 506 | 74.2 |
| Transport | 2 184 137 | 165 029 | -92.4 |
| Finance | 1 869 363 | 12 600 | -99.3 |
| Community | 1 996 685 | 15 585 424 | 680.5 |
| Total | 28 076 154 | 20 061 473 | -28.5 |

*Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database; 2022 - 2023*Note: The Private household sector is excluded because of zero work stoppages was recorded.*

The distribution of working hours lost due to strikes by industry is shown in **Table 6** above. As with the total number of working days lost, the total number of working hours lost has decreased. It indicates that out of 2.4 million working days lost in 2023, about 20 million working hours were lost due to work stoppages. The decrease in the working hours lost was because of fewer employees who participated in strikes activities and fewer days spend on the streets to petition their demands against some employers. Similar to working days lost, the community, trade and mining industries recorded the highest working hours lost in 2023. On the other hand, the trade industry followed by the agriculture industry recorded an annual increase of 74.2 and 25.1% of working hours lost over the two-year period.

2.4. WORKING DAYS LOST PER 1 000 EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRY, 2022 - 2023

TABLE 7: TIME-LOSS RATIO¹³ BY INDUSTRY, 2022 - 2023

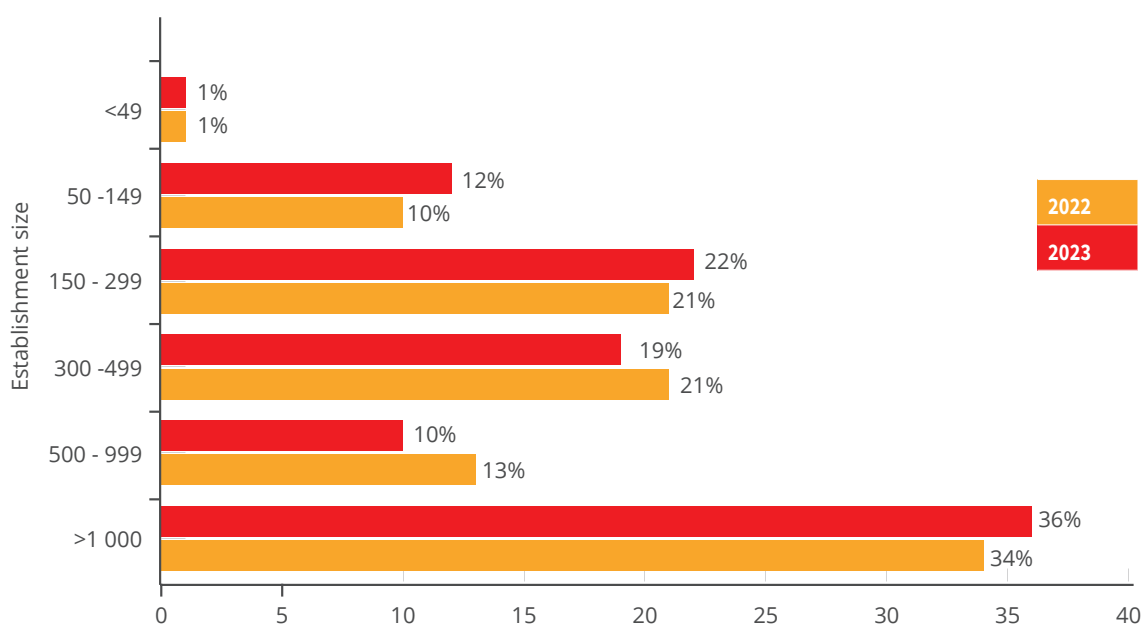
| Industry | Time-loss ratio | | Total number of workers* | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| | 2022 | 2022 | 2023 | 2023 |
| Agriculture | 47.2 | 860 000 | 61.3 | 920 000 |
| Mining | 4 864.0 | 436 000 | 298.4 | 446 000 |
| Manufacturing | 183.5 | 1 656 000 | 90.8 | 1 507 000 |
| Utilities | 266.0 | 124 000 | 0.0 | 123 000 |
| Construction | 0.0 | 1 212 000 | 4.1 | 1 322 000 |
| Trade | 28.1 | 3 197 000 | 47.8 | 3 362 000 |
| Transport | 279.0 | 983 000 | 20.0 | 1 023 000 |
| Finance | 83.6 | 2 484 000 | 0.5 | 2 964 000 |
| Community | 73.4 | 3 727 000 | 494.7 | 3 913 000 |

Source: : Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics Database. Note: * Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Survey, quarter 4 of 2023 Total employment by industry (excl. Private household's industry)

In **Table 7**, the time-loss ratio of working days lost per 1 000 workers are presented by industry. It is noticeable that the community and mining industries were mostly prone to industrial disputes in 2023. The community lost 494.7 days per 1 000 employees from 15 585 424 working days lost while the mining industry recorded 298.4 lost days per 1 000 employees from 136 896 working days lost in 2023. Meanwhile, the finance industry was the least affected by the working days lost per 1 000 employees because of only one strike that involved 45 employees who lost 1 575 working days lost during the same period.

2.5. WORK STOPPAGES BY EMPLOYMENT SIZE OF ESTABLISHMENTS, 2022 - 2023

FIGURE 12: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES BY EMPLOYMENT SIZE, 2022 - 2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022-2023

Figure 12 above shows the work stoppages by the size of establishment which is defined on the basis of the number of employees. It is noticeable that all establishments, regardless of their sizes, were affected one way or another by labour disputes in 2023. The largest establishments with more than

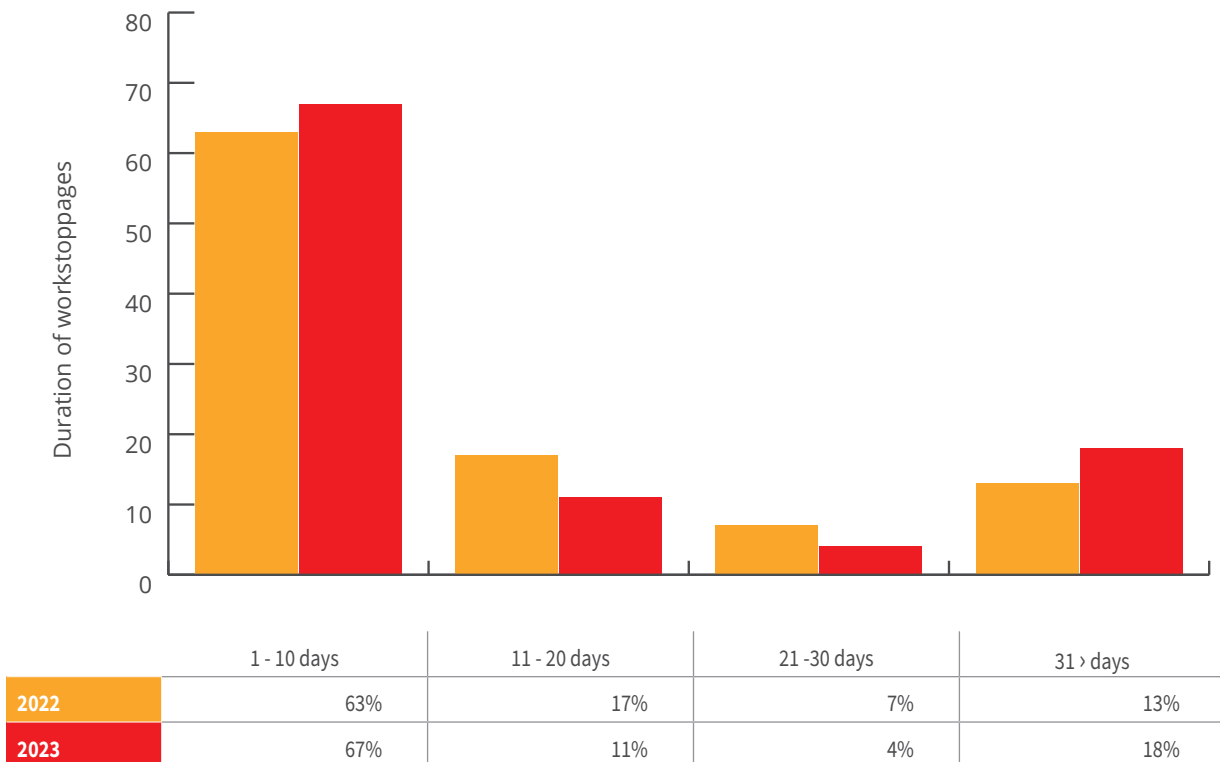
¹³ This is the measure which best reconciles the number of days lost due to industrial action with the varying sizes of the countries' employed population and provides a reasonable basis for international comparisons. In this report, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter four of 2020, were used regarding the total number of employees by industry.



1 000 employees were mostly affected by the strikes in 2023. From the 97 work stoppages in 2023, 34% were in the establishments with more than 1 000 employees, a 1 percentage point decrease from 36% in 2022 where 87 work stoppages were recorded. Establishments with employees less or equal than 149 employees recorded fewer participation in strikes activities at 11% in 2023 compared to 13% in 2022. In general, it is noted that the effect of the strike in larger enterprise is dire to the whole economy especially to small business. The loss of production and of customers is usually the first consequence of a strike that is directly felt by smaller businesses (less than 50 employees) than the large corporates with more than 1 000 employees.

2.6. DURATION OF WORK STOPPAGES, 2022-2023

FIGURE 13: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES BY DURATION, 2022-2023



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database 2022-2023

Strike data drawn from LRA 9.2 form allows to estimate the average duration of strikes within the workplaces at a given period. While it was also unnecessary for negotiations to prolong, employers and unions were able to conclude the negotiations in a shorter period. The results in **Figure 13** shows that the majority of work stoppages (67%) were reasonably short, lasting on average between 1-10 days. This is a similar pattern where 63% of work stoppages lasted on average between 1-10 days in 2022. There were reasonably higher percentages of work stoppages that lasted for longer than 31 days (18%) compared to 13% of strikes that lasted for longer than 31 days in 2022. Lengthy strike has a negative effect on economic growth and increases the risk of low investment opportunities in the country.

2.7. TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN WORK STOPPAGES, 2023

TABLE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF WORK DAYS LOST BY TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP INVOLVED, 2022 – 2023

| Union | Employees involved per trade union in 2022 | Days lost per trade union in 2022 | % | Employees involved per union in every strike in 2023 | Days lost per trade unions in 2023 | % |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------|--|------------------------------------|-------------|
| AFADWU | 34 | 408 | 0.01 | 281 | 13 577 | 0.55 |
| AMCU | 35 273 | 996 211 | 29.79 | 315 | 10 014 | 0.41 |
| CEPPWAWU | 438 | 15 690 | 0.47 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DEMAWUSA | 190 | 1 140 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FAWU | 315 | 2 261 | 0.07 | 882 | 7 767 | 0.32 |
| GIWUSA | 1 868 | 14 747 | 0.44 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HOSPERSA | 318 | 2 343 | 0.07 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| IMATU | 0 | 0 | 0.03 | 444 | 6 970 | 0.28 |
| NASA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 66 | 5 016 | 0.2 |
| NASAWU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 79 | 7 110 | 0.29 |
| NEHAWU | 8 985 | 228 171 | 6.82 | 6 281 | 49 153 | 2.01 |
| NTM | 92 | 4 950 | 0.15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| None reported | 8 971 | 75 027 | 2.24 | 11 667 | 951 322 | 38.8 |
| NONE UNION MEMBERS | 42 836 | 82 418 | 2.46 | 18 059 | 872 182 | 35.5 |
| NUM | 13 713 | 838 634 | 25.08 | 569 | 5 008 | 0.2 |
| NUMSA | 7 194 | 113 948 | 3.41 | 3 347 | 84 761 | 3.46 |
| NUFBSAW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 562 | 30 910 | 1.26 |
| NUFBWSAW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 115 | 50 175 | 2.05 |
| NUPSAW | 351 | 2 346 | 0.07 | 600 | 1 800 | 0.07 |
| NWU | 500 | 24 000 | 0.72 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PSA | 1 723 | 77 259 | 2.31 | 53 | 272 | 0.01 |
| PWUSA | 474 | 9 480 | 0.28 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SACCAWU | 7 801 | 57 639 | 1.72 | 4 683 | 147 087 | 6 |
| SAEWA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 946 | 0.04 |
| SAICWU | 1 129 | 24 659 | 0.74 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SAMWU | 2 176 | 6 011 | 0.18 | 18 729 | 187 760 | 7.66 |
| SAPTU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 176 | 2 816 | 0.11 |
| SATAWU | 8 032 | 93 675 | 2.8 | 479 | 15 579 | 0.64 |
| SOLIDARITY | 58 | 754 | 0.02 | 49 | 90 | 0 |
| UASA | 911 | 3 644 | 0.11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| UNTU | 10 145 | 121 740 | 3.64 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022 - 2023;

*Note: Not all LRA 9.2 forms provided accurate estimates in terms of number of employees involved per union membership names. Follow ups were made with employers but limited responses were received by the time of writing the report. Thus, readers must take the “not reported figures” with caution.



Table 8 above depicts working days lost as a result of work stoppages by trade unions membership in 2022 and 2023. Membership on trade unions proportions reflects a shift where South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU), the largest trade union in municipalities, water boards and allied services with 7.7% dominated the streets to demand wage increments and other working conditions related matters. Amongst others, this was as a result of the City of Tshwane official strike that went on strike that impacted the services of the City during the months of July and November 2023 where workers were striking over the city's failure to implement the final year of a three-year wage agreement. Unlike in 2022, NUM and NUMSA both represented the majority of employees who participated in strike activities.

Drawn from the 2023 strike records, 35.5% of workers who participated in workplace disputes were not unionized. The National Association of Bargaining Councils (NABC) in its Annual General Meeting on 23 September 2023 raised concerns that the decline in union membership is seen as a significant issue within the labour movement given that trade unions traditionally has played a crucial role in advocating for workers' rights, fair wages and safe conditions of service through the collective bargaining process.

PHOTO:
Citizen | Neil Mcartney





PHOTO:
Timeslive | Antonio Muchave



▲ 2023
**INDUSTRIAL
ACTION REPORT**



CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF
COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING IN WAGE
SETTLEMENTS, 2023

**6 MONTHS
FULLY PAID
MATERNITY
LEAVE**

**STOP
TERRORIZING
SHOP
WORKERS**

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CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN WAGE SETTLEMENTS, 2023

Section 27 of the Labour Relations Act allows for the forming of bargaining councils by employer organizations and trade unions for the purpose of seeking solutions to labour disputes, managing collective agreements and putting forward labour law and policy recommendations in addition to establishing relevant schemes. The council remains committed to assist in restoring the workplace disputes between employers, employees and labour unions. Moreover, improvement in the manner in which collective bargaining conducted is imperative, particularly in the face of a changing labour market. The ill effects of workplace disputes compel employees, employers and the labour unions to settle such disputes for the betterment and welfare of all the parties involved. From the bargaining councils, the structural workplace disputes in the South African labour market has displayed continuous workplace challenges that called for bargaining intervention across various industries. Many were affected by factors that contribute a lot in the country's economic downfall which impede the employers' ability to make favorable salary increment decisions in 2023.

Against this background, this chapter addresses matters on how wage settlements were concluded after the strikes ended in various industries. The distribution of final wage settlement in selected industries and wage settlements concluded without strike incidents are also elaborated on.



3.1. WAGE SETTLEMENTS CONCLUDED AFTER THE STRIKES ENDED IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES, 2022 - 2023

TABLE 9: MEDIAN¹⁴ WAGE SETTLEMENT IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES, 2022 - 2023

| Industry | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Agriculture | 6% | 7% |
| Construction | 6% | 7% |
| Mining | 6% | 8% |
| Manufacturing | 6% | 7% |
| Utilities | 5% | 7% |
| Finance | 6% | 7% |
| Transport | 8% | 7% |
| Trade | 6% | 7% |
| Community services | 7% | 7% |

Source: Labour Research Service, Wage settlements Trends, December 2022- 2023

The median wage settlement was almost equal for all industries in 2023 as shown in **Table 9**. The median wage sourced from the Labour Research Service shows that the average wage settlement rate was 7% in 2023 compared to 6.2% in 2022. It presents that the mining industry who settled for 6% in 2022 settled for 8% above the average 7% wage settlements in 2023. Meanwhile all other industries settled their agreements at the average margin of 7% in 2023. The average wage settlement rate is set to assist employees in managing their living expenses thereby facilitating a standard of living. Following the average salary increases, workers and their families are expected to better handle their living costs and additional expenses that has been challenging for most households.

¹⁴ The median is the number, which found in the middle of a range of numbers. For example: if the range of numbers is 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 then the median is 10.

PHOTO:
African News Agency | Oupa Mokoena



TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF FINAL WAGE SETTLEMENT IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, 2023

| Industry | Employer | Date/month Agreement | Initial demand | Employer offer | Settlement | Protected/ Unprotected |
|---------------|---|----------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|
| Agriculture | Daybreak Farm | 03-Jan-24 | 33% | 7% | 7% | Protected |
| | Golden | 13-Oct-23 | 9% | 5% | 5% | Protected |
| | Frontiers Citrus | | | | | |
| | Grain Fields Chickens | 13-Nov-23 | 8.5% | 6% | 6% | Protected |
| Community | African Nation Congress | 09-Oct-23 | 8.1% | 7.1% | 7.1% | Protected |
| | Department of Health (legal) | 14-Mar-23 | 7.5% | 3% | 3% | Protected |
| | Maropeng a Afrika Leisure (Pty) Ltd | 06-Oct-23 | 11% | 7.2% | 7% | Protected |
| | Productivity SA | 20-Nov-23 | 7.5% | 4% | 5% | Protected |
| | Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University | 30-Jun-23 | 7% | 5.7% | 5.7% | Protected |
| | Department of Public Service and Administration | 31-Mar-23 | 10% -12% | 7.5% | 7% | Protected |
| Finance | Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority | 17-Jul-23 | 6.5% | 5% | 5% | Protected |
| Manufacturing | PepsiCo – Clayville | 20-Oct-23 | 8% | 6% | 6% | Protected |
| Mining | Mafube Coal Mine | 16-Oct-23 | 8.5% | 7.5% | 7.5% | Protected |
| | Richards Bay Coal Terminal | 03-Nov-23 | 6.7% | 6% | 6% | Protected |
| Transport | ICASA | 05-Oct-23 | 12% | 4.4% | 5% | Protected |
| Trade | MAKRO | 08-Jun-23 | 12% | 5% | 5% | Protected |
| | FRESHMARK (PTY) LTD | 20-Jan-23 | 24% | 8% | 8% | Protected |

Source: : Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023

Both the employers and unions have one only objective during wage negotiations, to reach a successful agreement that meets satisfaction of all parties. Unfortunately, the results in **Table 10** indicate that it was not the case to reach a peaceful wage negotiation agreement between the employers and unions. Union representatives across affected industries had to settle for below initial wage demand against the employer's offer. The inflationary pressure and red tape are some of the barriers standing in the way of South Africans getting higher salaries.

The BankservAfrica data confirms that ongoing economic challenges have hampered companies' ability to pay inflation-related salary increases in 2023. Significant increases in the operating cost environment, partly due to the impact of load shedding as well as global factors have taken a toll on companies' profits. For the year, average real take-home pay dropped by 4.7% compared to 2022 suggesting significant ongoing erosion in the purchasing power of salary earners¹⁵. During the Public Service and Administration wage negotiations the Minister of Finance in his budget vote speech February 2023 stated that "an unbudgeted wage settlement would require very significant trade-offs in government spending because the wage bill is a significant cost driver". Even though most employee representatives have settled for way below initial wage demands, employers from the mining industry settled for closed to the employer's offer in 2023. The Richards Bay Coal Terminal has agreed to a 6% wage increase from their initial wage demand of 6.5% wage demand across the board.

15 BankservAfrica, Take-Home Pay Index, 31 January 2024



3.2. WAGE SETTLEMENTS CONCLUDED WITHOUT STRIKE INCIDENTS, 2023

Hereunder are the examples of wage agreements settled and negotiated with the union leadership, employers and labour organisation in order to avoid strike actions in the workplace. This demonstrates that all parties remained committed towards finding an amicable solution and worked together in the lines for the defence of workers' rights.

3.2.1. AVERTED STRIKE INCIDENTS

- The South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) along with parties in the Amanzi Bargaining Council (ABC) managed to avert a strike and concluded salary and wage negotiations for employees in the water sector on 3 August 2023. The agreement, which is effective from 1 July 2023, included the following:
 - o A single year agreement;
 - o A 7% across the board salary increase for all employees within the bargaining scope;
 - o R3 500 housing allowance for all employees;
 - o 5 days long service leave for each 5 years of service;
 - o Determination of the bargaining unit that shall include all employees on who are on C5 and below, or an equivalent level;
 - o That all Water Boards should conduct a benchmarking exercise within three months of signing this agreement.
- On 14 July, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) had signed a collective agreement averting a strike against Eskom Rotek Industries (ERI), a subsidiary of Eskom. The subsidiary was established to provide construction, maintenance and transportation services in support of Eskom operations.
- The agreement was broken down in the following way:
 - » They agreed to a three-year agreement starting from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026;
 - » Wages and housing would be increased by 7% for each year of the agreement and workers would receive a once off taxable gratuity payment of R10 000 for the first year and second year.
- South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) workers reached an above-inflation wage agreement with the company on 7 July 2023. The workers, some of them affiliated with the Democratized Transport Logistics and Allied Workers Union were locked in wage negotiations with the employer for weeks demanding a 13% salary increase. The parties have then settled on a 7.5% pay hike for 2023, with an 8.5% increase for 2024 and subsidy of 50% to the medical aid with effect from 1st April 2023.
- The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) had reached a wage agreement with the Gautrain management as part of the Bombela Operating Company. After the union demanded 8% and the employer offered 5.25%. The wage agreement was reached on 6 July 2023 and was effective from 1st July 2023 to 30 June 2024. The wage agreement entailed:
 - » 8% of wage increment;
 - » A one-year agreement valid from 1st of July 2023 to 30th June 2024;
 - » 10% of increase in housing allowance;
 - » 5% of increase in transport allowance to increase;
 - » Night shift allowance to increase by R35 per hour;
 - » Medical Aid contribution of the employers should be 55% and the employees contribute 45%;
 - » Key Performance Information (KPI) bonus to increase R500;
 - » No retrenchment for the period of the agreement.
- On 8 May 2023, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and Solidarity unions signed a multi-term wage agreement with ArcelorMittal SA that would result in employees receiving increases of 6.5% wage increase effective from 1 April to 31 March 2026. NUMSA initially demanded a one-year 15% pay increase across the board, while Solidarity kicked off negotiations with a 10% demand against the employer's opening offer of 6%. The pay deal would mean that workers got increases of 6.5% in the first year, followed by another 6.5% hike in the second year, and an inflation-related increase capped at 6.5% in the final year. All allowances would increase by 6.5% for year one; by CPI for year two (but capped at 6.5%) and by 6.5% for year three.
- The COSATU-affiliated Southern African Clothing & Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) was pleased to announce that thousands of its members in the leather tanning sector South Africa will receive a 7.25% wage increase with effect from 1 July 2023. This follows the settlement to amend the wage agreement for the sector after both parties averted a strike on 1 June 2023.
- The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) managed to sign a 7% pay hike deal for its members in the bus passenger sector after lengthy negotiations. On 14 April 2023, bus operators and SATAWU representatives signed the deal proposed by SA Road Passenger Bargaining Council

with the agreement that was effective from 1 April to 31 March 2024. Initially, the unions were demanding a 9% wage increase from the employers' offer of 6%.

- On 11 October 2023, The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) Pretoria, Witwatersrand, and Vereeniging (PWW) Gold One Modder East Mine region averted a strike and signed a three-year wage agreement on behalf of its members. The agreement, which would be in effect from 1 January 2024 to 1 January 2026, would apply to all underground, gold processing plant and surface employees in the A and B categories. For the first year of the agreement, all employees would receive wage increases of R1 000. All employees whose basic salary is below R10 000 after the increase would receive a salary adjustment and would earn a basic salary of R10 000 a month. For the second year, all employees would receive an increase of 6.5% and those whose basic salary was below R11 500 a month would earn a basic salary of R11 500. For the third year, all employees would receive an increase of 5% and those whose basic salary is below R13 000 a month will earn a basic salary of R13 000. Rock-drill operators would receive a minimum wage of R13 800. Meanwhile the living out allowance would be increased by 5% in year one, 6.5% in year two and 5% in year three.
- De Beers has signed an agreement with South Africa's National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) that avoided a threatened strike at the Venetia deposit on the 3 November 2023. The deal provided workers at the South African mine with a wage increase of 7% in 2023 and 6% hike in each subsequent years until 30 April 2028. Workers would also be able to participate in the Employee Share Ownership. The signed deal came after the union was demanding a wage increase of 9%, while De Beers was offering 6% wage increase.
- Sibanye-Stillwater was pleased to advise that it had concluded a five-year wage agreement with all representative unions, comprising the AMCU and the NUM on the 6 November 2023. The agreement was inflation-linked, with category 4-8 employees receiving an increase of a minimum of 6% in each of the five-years of the agreement. The Miners, artisans and officials received an increase of 6% in each year of the five-year agreement. The estimated average increase in the total wage bill, including all benefits over the five-year period was approximately 6.4% per annum.
- The United National Transport Union (UNTU) and South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu) averted a strike and signed a wage agreement with the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa for a 5% increase. On 3 December 2023, the unions reached consensus after lengthy negotiations on a wage agreement for the 2023/2024 financial year. The increment was effective across the board for all PRASA employees from 1 April 2023. The state-owned entity and the unions agreed that the 5% increment would be included in the December 2023 salaries, without any retrenchments for the period of agreement. PRASA was committed to paying outstanding salaries owed to employees for the period April in six equal instalments from January to June 2024.

• 3.2.1. ABANDONED STRIKE INCIDENTS

- In the case of abandoned strike incidents the FAWU members at Safcol's Mpumalanga operations downed tools from 20 to 29 September 2023 demanding a pay rise of 8%. Their other demands included a standby allowance of R150 per standby, acting and danger allowances of R100, a sleep-out allowance of R135 and medical aid subsidy. Workers abandoned the strike and returned to work without an agreement with the employer.
- Members associated with BCAWU at the MTO Forestry (PTY LTD) went on strike from 14 July to 18 August 2023 demanding 16.5% against the employer's offer of 12.5%. With no agreement reached with the employer, workers decided to return to work.
- The City of Tshwane's SAMWU members abandoned a strike after the various sittings with the municipality management deadlocked. Members went on strike demanding 3.5% salary increase from 24 July to 10 November 2023 while the employer was offering 0% salary increases. This led workers to abandon the strike.



PHOTO:
Beeld |Dean Vivier





CONCLUSION

The strike trend information captured in this departmental industrial action report provides an overview regarding the degree of labour disputes in 2023. The strike statistics appear useful and relevant to gauge worker's conflict and living conditions against an on-going economic crisis in the country. For some, especially those who experienced loss of value to an income, work stoppages can bring with it mental or financial anxiety and stress.

In 2023, the strike analysis reflects that the South African labour market was still faced with higher wage demands from workers because of economic related factors such as high inflation and interest rate hikes, increasing costs of food and petrol etc. that have intensified economic pressures on household salaries.

According to the DEL strikes database, the South African labour market has experienced an increase in the labour disputes between 2002 and 2023. The number of work stoppages rose by 11% in 2023 as compared to the previous year. The strikes occurred when working people withhold their labour to bargain for better pay and conditions. Pay disputes have been the most common cause of strikes in the years for which we have comparable data. Work stoppages were predominantly in the public sector where most workers strike emanated from the community industry. Working days lost were, however, lower during the period in review but recorded higher in quarters three and four in 2023. In total, 2 450 million working days were lost between January and December 2023; of these, over ninety (96%) came from workers in the community, trade, manufacturing and mining industries.

The collective intervention of the bargaining councils between the employers and the unions played a significant role in managing the workplace disputes by reducing the duration of the strikes on the average between 1-10 days. The report further showed that more strikes in 2023 were protected compared to unprotected strikes in 2022. Even though, the demand for wage increment was the main reason for employees to embark on labour disputes, the economic impact of wages lost was fairly below at 87% as compared to the previous year.

Key points for policy considerations:

- The willingness of unions to sustain action, however, looks set to be determined by the economic and political issues which, in the short-term, is still uncertain. In an attempt to reduce the high level of workplace disputes, the DEL recommends the early start of renegotiating new wage agreements to avoid delays and to find amicable solutions before the lapse of the wage agreement period.

Limitations of the strikes data coverage

- Inaccurate reporting of strike information for recording continues to be a challenge. This affected our data analysis system and processing of the strike information for the final report. Some small businesses find it challenging to disclose e.g. the salaries that not paid to workers on strike because they believe the information is confidential.
- Data coverage: Certain organisations are reluctant to complete the LRA 9.2 strike forms out of a simple concern that their organization would be made public.



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PHOTO:
Citizen | Neil McCartney



▲ 2023
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ACTION REPORT**



THE SILENCE ON
10 BILLION NAIRES
FINDINGS BY THE
AUDITOR GENERAL
IS TOO LOUD



ANNEXURES

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A

PROFILE OF WORK STOPPAGES, 2023

A detailed breakdown of strike activities that occurred and monitored in the Department of Employment and Labour's media monitoring data system in the last twelve months of 2023 is presented below. The Labour Market Information and Statistics (LMIS) team monitored, collected and recorded strike activities daily through direct and indirect contact with the affected employers and other employer associations. **(January - December 2023)**

JANUARY 2023

- On January 2023, over 80 workers at the LFC Milling Company, in Wesselsbron Free State ended a strike that went on from June 2021. Racism, lack of equality and salary increment are some of the critical issues raised. **Source: SABC News, 6 January 2023**
- Angry Emfuleni Local Municipality in Gauteng workers trashed council chamber over non-payment of January salaries. The Municipality attributed the problem to its accounts having been attached by Eskom in a court action over a huge electricity debt of R1.3 billion. The notice was sent to the employees hours before they would have received their first salaries for 2023. **Source: IOL 24 January 2023**
- More than 8 000 disgruntled workers affiliated to the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCWU), downed tools at Makro stores across the country demanding wage increases and changes to terms and conditions of employment. The union was demanding a 12 percent salary increase, with a R8 000 minimum wage while Makro has offered a 4.5 percent wage increase. **Source: SABCNews, 28 January 2023.**

FEBRUARY 2023

- The South African Municipal Workers Union had to withdraw its workers at Thebelihle Local Municipality in the Northern Cape until their January salaries are paid. Allegedly, the municipality that covers areas such as Hopetown, Orania and Strydenburg was on autopilot and without executive leadership that has resulted in limited-service delivery and more worryingly, the non-payment of workers' salaries for the month of January 2023. The non-payment of salaries emanated after the Municipal Manager, who is the accounting officer of the municipality tendered his resignation. **Source DFA, 2 February 2023**
- Outsourced guards at the Ekurhuleni municipality protested outside the municipal premises after the City of Ekurhuleni has failed to commit to honor outstanding pay to close to 1 000-security employees working for companies contracted to the City, the Private Sector Workers Union (PSWU). **Source: Ground UP, 6 February 2023**
- Some Distell workers in Stellenbosch picketed outside the Adam TAS production site in Stellenbosch on Monday 6 February demanding the company to recognize their union Solidarity. The striking workers included warehouse workers, machine operators, order pickers, and cellar staff, among others. Distell is South Africa's largest alcohol producer, with brands such as Klipdrift, Savanna, J.C Le Roux and Hunters. In a statement, Distell spokesperson said to GroundUp, "While we respect the union's right to strike, we do not believe the strike is warranted nor does it have merit". According to the source, bargaining rights were awarded to unions with a minimum of 20 percent member representation at the national level. **Source: GroundUp, 8 February 2023**



MARCH 2023

- The Tip Trans Cape Company came to a standstill after its truck drivers refused to work because of a long-term dispute between them and their employers. Situated in Malmesbury Road, Klipheuwel, the company saw no movement on 1 March as its staff members chanted outside, carrying placards with messages that says “Injury on duty must be paid”. Representing the workers, the general secretary of Transport Freight and General Workers Union (TFGWU), highlighted that they were embarking on a peaceful strike that demanded co-operation from the employers to sit at the table with the employees and listen to their grievances. Among other things, the drivers have issues with the cameras installed in the trucks. **Source: IOL News, 1 March 2023**
- Msunduzi Municipality threatened to implement the principle of “no work, no pay” to all waste management striking workers who earlier on Tuesday, 2 March, embarked on an unprotected strike in the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal to demonstrate their demands against Msunduzi Municipality. Reasons for strike was over promotion opportunities. **Source: The South African, 2 March 2023**
- More than one hundred Rea Vaya buses resumed operations on Tuesday morning following a bus drivers’ strike on Monday 6 March over unpaid February salaries. **Source: sowetan.co.za, 7 March 2023**
- Small groups of Nehawu members protested outside the Charlotte Maxeke Academic hospital from 6 March 2023 over wage dispute with the government. It was alleged that four people have died amid ongoing protests by members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (Nehawu). **Source: News24, 9 March 2023**
- Striking Villiersdorp farmworkers took to the streets in protest against Agri Western Cape’s star farmer, whom they accuse of ill-treatment and paying poor wages. Represented by the independent union Bawsi Agricultural Workers Union of SA (Bawusa), they claimed that the owner of High Noon Farm at Villiersdorp, who was recently named Agri Western Cape’s young farmer of the year “treats farm workers like animals”. The unions’ spokesperson reported that while they met the farm’s management during the strike action on 9 March, no solutions were reached regarding the 5 percent wage increase that was implemented in August last year. **Source IOL, 10 March 2023**
- Over 200 security personnel working for the Chippa Academy security company, a service provider tasked to safeguard PRASA facilities in Cape Town, have downed tools over non-payment of salaries for two months. In December 2022, the workers reportedly approached the media over unpaid November salaries. Security workers from the Chippa Academy have a responsibility to maintain order at various train station platforms such as the Cape Town and to guard against rampant cable theft. The stations include Koelberg House, Woodstock, Esplanade, Century, Monte Vista, Ysterplaat, Oosteerze and Maitland. **Source: SabcNews 14 March 2023**
- National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) members marched to Comair offices in Kempton Park on 15 March over pay cuts and staff retrenchments. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has demanded the immediate reinstatement of all 100 workers dismissed employees following failed negotiations with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) in March. **Source: The Citizen, 15 March 2023**
- The ongoing strike by employees of Westfalia Fruit Estates in Politsi has resulted with a staff member being shot on 23 March. Allegedly, the employer made salary deductions and salary slip alterations ahead of audit. A member of the security company deployed at the facility resorted to using live ammunition at the protesters who claim that they are peaceful and not provoking anyone. **Source: Twitter, 23 March 2023**
- Health workers belonging to the Workers Indaba Trade Union (Haitu) marched to the Gauteng Department of Health offices to demand full-time employment instead of contract work. The Independent Liberation and Allied Workers Union (ILAWU) joined workers on strike as they marched and delivered their memorandum of demands to the Gauteng Department of Health. **Source: The Star, 28 March 2023**
- The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (Samwu) and workers downed tools against the uThukela District Municipality in Durban after talks with the municipal management and the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) failed. Workers downed tools on March 22, saying that the municipality had violated an agreement signed with the union that ended strike action in late December last year. **Source: IOL News, 29 March 2023**
- Workers attached to the company sub-contracted by Eskom embarked on a legal strike on Friday morning 31 March after wage increase talks collapsed with the owners of the company. One of the affected employees who wished to remain anonymous told Capricorn FM News that they had several meetings with the company owner and even went to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration for intervention, but nothing changed. **Source: Capricorn FM, 31 March 2023.**

APRIL 2023

- Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA) grappled with strike action initiated by the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) at its tyre manufacturing plant in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal on Tuesday, 25 April resulting in a complete halt to operations and production at the facility. The strike by NUMSA workers emanated from various issues, including an ongoing disciplinary process involving NUMSA-affiliated employees and reduced working hours from a 6-day working week to a 5-day working week. **Source: Newcastillian News, 26 April 2023**
- Employees of the Greater Giyani Municipality (GGM) staged a sit-in on Thursday, 20 April concerning their privacy and adequate working gear. **Source: Letaba Herald, 29 April 2023.**

MAY 2023

- Almost 100 former nurses at Jubilee District Hospital in Hammanskraal staged on a protest calling on the Gauteng Department of Health to employ them permanently. Originally contracted in July 2020 to deal with the Covid 19 pandemic, their employment contracts were periodically renewed but terminated at the end of March 2023. **Source: GroundUp, 25 May 2023**
- The water project was interrupted as Mhlathuze Water contractors downed tools on 26 May. The workers have alleged that the 'ill-treatment' of locally based employees has been the issue to the point where some workers were subjected to 'insults and threats. **Source: Zululand observer, 26 May 2023**
- About 2 000 disgruntled Makro employees marched towards the US Embassy on Sandton Drive on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 May to protest against Walmart and its South African subsidiary, demanding fair wages and the reinstatement of sacked Makro staff. Workers sought the immediate reinstatement of over 400 Saccawu members who were wrongfully dismissed for participating in a lawful strike and a wage increase of 12 percent. **Source: The Citizen, 27 May 2023.**

JUNE 2023

- Worker's disputes at the ailing Integrated Public Transport System (IPTS) brought bus services to a halt on Wednesday, 31 May. The wildcat strike came less than 24 hours after angry commuters stormed the Cleary Park depot over two routes that were suspended. **Source: Daily Dispatch 1 June 2023**
- DEFENSOR security guards stationed at the Kimberley Mental Health Hospital in Kimberley embarked on a go-slow because of outstanding salary payments. The security guards were notified on 30 May that they would be paid a portion of their salaries on 31 May and the balance by 9 June, as the company was in an "unfortunate situation". **Source: DFA, 1 June 2023**
- Nehawu members at the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) have downed tools after the organisation failed to meet their salary demands. The members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) started their strike on Monday, 29 May. The strike followed a deadlock on the cost-of-living protracted salary increase negotiations, where the organisation offered a 5 percent increase, while workers demanded 6.5 percent. **Source: Daily Sun, 2 June 2023**
- The South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) in the Free State embarked on unpaid salaries strike demand and warned Mohokare Local Municipality employees will not return to work until their salaries were paid. The municipality reportedly issued a notice stating that workers were unlikely to receive their salaries for May and June due to financial challenges. **Source: Sabc News, 2 June 2023**
- Teaching and learning halted at Estralita Special School, one of the 12 severe intellectual disability school in Mashishing, Mpumalanga on 2 June. This is amid workers affiliated to the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) downed tools following allegations of mismanagement and nepotism against the principal. The principal was also accused of failing to take action against a worker labelled a racist. **Source: Sabc News, 2 June 2023**
- The embattled Emfuleni Local Municipality in the south of Johannesburg continued to be in the news for all the wrong reasons after employees in the south of Johannesburg embarked on sporadic protest actions demanding their delayed salary payments for the month of May. Striking workers barricaded several roads leading to the municipality offices with rocks and burning tires. **Source: The Citizen, 5 June 2023**
- On 6 June, the City of Tshwane suspended bus operations due to a strike action by workers affiliated to municipal worker's union SAMWU. Workers went on strike over salary increases and overtime. Affected commuters were advised to make alternative travel arrangements. **Source: Sabc News, 6 June 2023**
- Workers at the Sefako Makgatho University (SMU) downed tools on Thursday 8 June following a breakdown in the wage negotiations that have been going on for the past three months. The workers on strike included academics, cleaners, gardeners and security personnel affiliated with unions the Academic and Professional Staff Association (APSA), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union and the SA Parastatal and Tertiary Institutions Union. Workers were demanding a 7 percent salary increase, while the university was not budging on its 5.7 percent wage increase offer. **Source: News24, 8 June 2023**
- The South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) in the King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) Local Municipality embarked on a full-blown strike after municipal bosses failed to address their grievances. The warning was issued during a SAMWU march to KSD and ANC regional offices on 14 June where the union raised several grievances including an unsafe working environment, end to outsourcing, favouritism and end of exploitation to Expanded



Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants and students. The union further demanded that workers must be paid R15 000 monthly locomotion allowance that is enjoyed by senior managers. **Source: Mthata Express, 22 June 2023**

- Justice department employees administering the Guardian Fund in the Pietermaritzburg master of the court's office have embarked on a go-slow amid accusations that some of the workers played a role in the disappearance of millions of rands from the fund. **Source: The Citizen, 23 June 2023**
- Frimax Foods workers picketed outside the company's factory in Verulam, Durban on Tuesday, 27 June. Workers in Verulam took the company to the CCMA for what they say was "unfair dismissal, discrimination, mistreatment and withholding some of their salaries". **Source: GroundUp, 27 June 2023.**

JULY 2023

- Staff at the Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital in Kwa-Mashu downed tools on Monday 3 July over unpleasant working conditions. Nurses, general staff and security accused management of neglect to staff. Nurses also reported lack of accommodation and staff demotions. **Source eNCA, 3 July 2023**
- On 6 July, Cosatu and its affiliates embarked on a nationwide strike demanding the government to take action on the state of the economy, load shedding, poor governance and the bad living standards of workers. In the Western Cape, about 500 Cosatu members marched to the provincial legislature and then to Parliament, where they handed over a memorandum of their grievances. Workers said they wanted the government to take their concerns about violent crime on the Cape Flats, corruption, job losses, unemployment, and high interest rates and tariffs, seriously. In Durban, hundreds of Cosatu members marched from King Dinizulu Park to the eThekweni city hall. **Source: News24, 6 July 2023**
- On 8 July, Mafube Local Municipality employees embarked on a total shutdown of the premises over delayed June salaries. Employees cried foul that they sometimes go for months without pay even though they would still continue to report for duty as expected. Employees drafted a memorandum through the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) stating that they would no longer tolerate late payments of salaries, quoting Section 32 (3) of Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, which emphasises that salary payments should not be paid later than seven working days. **Source: Sunday World, 8 July 2023**
- Scores of government-subsidised North West Transport Investment workers marched to the Department of Transport in Pretoria to protest over outstanding four months' salaries. The march was led by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu) to seek intervention from Transport Minister to find solutions and rescue North West Transport Investment. **Source: IOL News, 10 July 2023**
- Numsa members at Hulamin downed tools and participated in a strike outside the aluminum products company on Monday 10 July over grievances they say they have been trying to solve since 2014. The employees picketed and sang outside the different entrances to the company over issues with their medical aid subsidisation and retirement fund benefits. **Source: GroundUp, 11 July 2023**
- Security guards at the RK Khan Hospital in Chatsworth, Durban have lost their jobs after participating in an unprotected strike. Workers were amongst the 174 workers employed by Mafoko Security to guard the hospital, Stanger Provincial Hospital and Murchison Hospital. On Tuesday 11 July, the workers told GroundUp that they went on strike after the company did not pay their June salaries. They said their attempts to get satisfactory answers from the company were futile. **Source: GroundUp, 12 July 2023**
- MTO George Sawmill employees launched a protest action on Friday 14 July when about 50 workers with placards gathered at the entrance of the business premises in the George industrial area over salary increment issues. **Source: George News, 17 July 2023**
- There was a disruption of services at the Johannesburg Water's Ennerdale Depot after employees downed tools out of fear from two vehicle hijacks. The incidents happened while employees were on duty in Ennerdale, the south of Johannesburg. This resulted in staff members embarking on a sit-in strike over safety and security concerns. **Source: IOL News, 20 July 2023**
- A group of about 120 SAMWU members departed from Thembaletu on Thursday 27 July and slowly walked down Nelson Mandela Boulevard municipality where they handed over a memorandum of grievances to the Director of Community Services. The memorandum contains grievances and issues regarding Covid-19 compensation payouts, restructuring within the municipality, discrepancies and irregularities and other human resource related matters. **Source: George Herald, 27 July 2023**
- Employees at the Helen Bishop Orthopaedic Aftercare Home in Kimberley were left high and dry on 26 July after they could not get answers from management regarding the non-payment of salaries. According to the workers, they have not received salaries for the past five months. They however later found out that the problem was not with the management at the hospital, but rather with the management of the facility of the hospital. **Source: DFA, 28 July 2023.**

AUGUST 2023

- A group of about 120 protesters, all dressed in red slowly made their way down Nelson Mandela Boulevard to George Municipality asking to see the departure of Municipal Manager from George Municipality. According to local Samwu officials, the strike stemmed from outstanding issues with the municipality of which some date back as far back as 2018. Amongst the issues were management's attitude of ignoring workers' rights and displaying a sense of undermining Samwu as a nationally recognized trade union with equal organisational rights. **Source: George Herald, 3 August 2023**



- Numsa members embark on strike at Ekapa Mine in Kimberley on 7 August, threatening to choke supplies of parts to make new cars and accessories in Johannesburg. Workers went on strike to demand a wage increase of 17 percent and a 1-year wage agreement, housing allowances and an increase in medical aid. **Source: Sabc News, 7 August 2023**
- The National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) handed over a memorandum of demand to the Gauteng Provincial Legislature Speaker on 8 August emanating from looming retrenchments. Allegedly, the union was accusing the legislature of failing to consult them on issues affecting workers such as restructuring and non-implementation of collective agreements. **Source: Zimoja, 9 August 2023**
- On Wednesday 26 July, staff members at Vermont Old Age Home halted work operations to protest over delayed salary payments against The Department of Social Development (DSD). The delays in payment of salaries were due to administrative problems that arose after the previous board of the centre failed to hand over the finance matters to the newly elected board. **Source: Knysna-Plett Herald, 10 August 2023**
- Lubricant and grease manufacturer Blendcor employees based in the Durban Harbour went on a rotational strike in June that has resulted in a lockout. Staff handed over a memorandum of demand on Thursday, 10 August calling the lockout by the management of the company unlawful. According to the worker's memorandum, they embarked on a walk of peace following a lockout imposed "unprovoked". **Source: Daily News, 11 August 2023**
- Some maintenance workers at Umhlanga School have accused management of failing to keep promises made to long-serving staff members. Workers represented by the Educators Union of South Africa held a picket, highlighting grievances around salaries and working conditions at Reddam House. **Source: IOL News, 14 August 2023**
- Municipal workers affiliated to the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) in Tshwane embarked on strike on 22 July to demonstrate their dissatisfaction over the zero (0) percent wage and salary increase for 2023/24. **Source: Pretoria News: 23 July 2023.**

SEPTEMBER 2023

- On 7 September, hundreds of Samwu members at Matjhabeng Municipality marched in Welkom to hand over a memorandum of demands. Some municipal workers complained of exploitation and work under unbearable conditions. Workers were also demanding for the resignation of the Executive Mayor, allegations of nepotism, harassment and exploitation. **Source: SabcNews, 7 September 2023**
- Samwu shop stewards from Msunduzi Municipality marched on Thursday 7 September asking the corporate services general manager to address their work related concerns. Samwu had concerns about how employee relations officials are conducting employee related cases at the Municipality. It was alleged that some employee relations staff have not been carrying out their roles and responsibilities in line with their core functions and the South African Bargaining Council Collective Agreement. **Source: The Citizen, 8 September 2023**
- On 19 September, News24 reported that an ambulance had to park on the side of the road at the Hillbrow Community Health Centre as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers from several clinics around Johannesburg, barricaded the entrance to the facility. The disgruntled workers including cleaners, admin clerks, caretakers and data capturers went on strike after the hospital informed them that their contract will not be renewed. **Source: News24, 20 September 2023**
- BL Premium members of the Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) embarked on a wage strike at South African Forestry Company Limited (Safcol) in support of demand for above-inflation increases. Safcol, SA is the third largest state-owned enterprise, involved in the forestry industry with operations in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal and in the Manica and Sofala provinces of Mozambique. Fawu members downed tools on 20 September demanding a pay rise of 8 percent, a standby allowance of R150, acting and danger allowances of R100, a sleep-out allowance of R135 and medical aid subsidised by the employer. **Source: Business Live, 21 September 2023**
- The Nehawu members at the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) went on strike from Wednesday 25 September after failing to reach an agreement over wage increases. The strike came after negotiations for the 2023/24 salary increases collapsed at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) earlier in the month. Reportedly, Icasa has unilaterally implemented the paltry 4.4 percent increment against the union's 8 percent wage demand. **Source: LIVE, 26 September 2023**
- Employees at Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT) entered their third week of strike action as the Association of Mine Workers and Construction Union (AMCU) continue with demands for salary and allowance increases. According to the AMCU KwaZulu-Natal coastal regional secretary, employees rejected the proposed offer and continued to demand their salary increases of 7 percent as well as allowances for housing and standby and shift allowances. **Source: Zululand observer, 29 September 2023.**



OCTOBER 2023

- On Thursday 28 and Friday 29 September, commuters of the Rea Vaya in the City of Johannesburg were forced to find alternative transportation as bus drivers did not report for duty. This was because of labour disputes between the drivers and the two companies contracted to operate the bus system. **Source: Eye Witness News, 1 October 2023**
- On Wednesday 4 October, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) contract workers in the Pietermaritzburg region gathered for a second day at the Department of Transport's head office where they submitted a memorandum because they wanted permanent employment from the Department of Transport. Police were present at the scene as they tried to prevent the EPWP members from entering the department's premise throwing stones at police and security staff. **Source: The Citizen, 5 October 2023**
- Close to 200 Simba factory workers downed tools over "unfair" transport allowance deductions. Striking workers picketed inside the gates of the company's premises in Isando because security would not let them out to protest. **Source: GroundUp, 5 October 2023**
- Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) employees in Devland downed tools and went on a protest against "poor working conditions". It is alleged emotions went high as workers sang songs of liberation demanding the company to hear their grievances. According to employees, they work six days a week without any shift rotational patterns, making the night shift workers (10pm - 06am) receive even more strenuous working conditions. **Source: Soweto Urban, 5 October 2023**
- On Thursday 5 October, workers from the troubled Zastron-based Mohokare Local Municipality in the Free State were up in arms demanding their unpaid salaries from the cash-strapped municipality. Angry protesters burned tyres in front of the municipal offices against the non-payment of the September salaries. It is alleged Mohokare has become the third Free State municipality to issue workers with notices of late payments after the Welkom-based Matjhabeng and Theunissen-based Masilonyana did the same in the recent months. **Source: OFM News, 5 October 2023**
- Subsequent to the deadlocked wage negotiations, members of the Agricultural Food And Allied Democratic Workers Union (AFADWU) embarked on a strike action at unit5, Tile Crescent, Gauteng Industrial Estate, Gauteng Industrial Estate, Clayville sub unit 1 666. Pioneer Foods Clayville issues in dispute were the following:
 - » Salary demand of 8% from the employer's offer of 6%
 - » Equal pay for same-value job
 - » A 100 percent medical aid subsidy for the whole family
 - » Increase of the bargaining scope
 - » Policies that apply to all individuals
 - » Position discretion because only certain individuals are allowed to act on positions
 - » 7. Overtime calculation at the admin rate
 - » The night shift transport allocation
 - » Leave days' calculation at 1.5 for a single day taken. **Source: Cosatu News: 10 October 2023**
- Marite Bushbuckridge shut down over 50 schools on Thursday 12 October as teachers took to the streets to protest against the high crime rate around the school. The teachers supported by their unions handed over a memorandum of grievances to the Marite education circuit and demanded that the matters be addressed over the next 24 hours or else they would not go back to work. **Source: Scrola Africa, 12 October 2023**
- Members of the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) went on a strike after six of their members were placed on special leave for disrupting a council meeting at the Oudtshoorn Municipality in September 2023. The disgruntled members reportedly stormed the council chambers, preventing councillors from leaving the hall until their grievances were heard. In the memorandum, Samwu secretary reported that the council was "blatantly undermining the selection and recruitment policy of the municipality" **Source: Cape Times, 18 October 2023**
- National Union Mine workers have resorted to protest against Mafube Coal Mine after various attempts to engage management failed. Workers have tabled their work related demands to the employer however, they have not come to a satisfactory conclusion. **Source: SabcNews, 23 October 2023.**

NOVEMBER 2023

- Rea Vaya bus driver's commuters in the City of Johannesburg stranded as they embarked on an unprotected strike action. Bus drivers downed tools over delayed salaries wherein the City of Johannesburg (COJ) has failed to pay the bus operating companies PioTrans and Letsamaiso. **Source: The Star, 9 November 2023**
- Members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) gathered outside the Sylvania Metals offices in Constantia Park, Johannesburg, on Tuesday 14 November to protest against the company's way of handling a sexual harassment case. The union alleged that a manager at the company sexually harassed a woman employee and that the company has failed to take appropriate action against the manager. In its memorandum of demands, Numsa called for the immediate suspension of the operations manager, pending an independent investigation. **Source: City Press, 14 November 2023**
- On 15 November, labour unrest involving a sit-in underground erupted at the Blyvoor Gauteng gold mine in the West Rand near Carletonville. The union involved reported that their main grievance came after they were denied the right to join the NUM membership. **Source: Daily Maverick, 15 November 2023**
- Members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) downed tools at Productivity South Africa's offices in Midrand, Durban and Cape Town on 13 November 2023. The decision by Nehawu to embark on a strike action follows a series of salary negotiations with the union for the 2023/24 financial year. Nehawu demanded 9.5 percent, which includes a 2 percent salary increase linked to financial performance in the 2022/23 financial year from the employer's affordable 4 percent salary increase for employees falling within the bargaining unit (salary levels 12 and below). **Source: ILO News, 16 November 2023.**

DECEMBER 2023

- About 250 members of the National Union of Mineworkers staged an illegal sit-in underground at Wesizwe Platinum, refusing to return to the surface at the company's Bakubung Platinum Mine outside Rustenburg on Wednesday, 6 December. Members staged a sit in demanding the company to begin the wage negotiations that should have happened long time ago. The workers were also demanding the company to stop the recruitment for top management positions advertised. **Source: News24, 7 December 2023**
- On 8 December, the Congress of Trade Unions (COSATU) in KwaZulu-Natal supported the protected industrial action by the Federation's affiliated union, the Agriculture Food & Allied Democratic Workers Union (AFADWU), against Rainbow Chicken Limited. The strike was a demonstration against the undermining of labour rights, collective bargaining and freedom of choice in affording every employee the right to representation and union membership of choice. **Source: COSATU KwaZulu-Natal, 8 December 2023.**



ANNEXURE B

DATA APPENDIX

The following supplementary tables contain data not included in the main report:

TABLE B.1: DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STOPPAGES AND WAGES LOST BY PROVINCE¹⁶, OF 2019 - 2023

| Province | Work stoppages | | | | | Wages lost (Rand's) | | | Wages lost Total (R) | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Gauteng | 79 | 43 | 60 | 50 | 35 | 373 680 759 | 116 092 102 | 86 378 633 | 913 467 431 | 13 826 631 |
| Western Cape | 22 | 21 | 18 | 9 | 15 | 15 719 424 | 1 753 120 | 30 116 880 | 5 130 914 | 40 520 060 |
| Mpumalanga | 16 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 1 294 752 | 18 704 728 | 1 479 685 | 34 112 379 | 36 582 251 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 19 | 18 | 27 | 12 | 16 | 7 377 225 | 5 220 958 | 19 985 044 | 18 630 070 | 0 |
| Eastern Cape | 16 | 37 | 15 | 20 | 4 | 29 571 188 | 6 160 952 | 28 121 057 | 2 668 569 | 1 043 491 |
| Limpopo | 16 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 17 883 972 | 7 428 996 | 350 000 | 285 301 737 | 53 322 083 |
| North West | 6 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 1 226 259 | 11 882 878 | 36 969 646 | 23 862 699 | 3 418 029 |
| Northern Cape | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 669 999 | 440 | 13 334 146 | 732 092 | 0 |
| Free State | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 130 475 | 1 832 404 | 1 744 561 | 0 | 15 196 068 |
| Total | 182 | 153 | 135 | 113 | 101 | 447 554 053 | 169 076 578 | 218 479 652 | 1 283 905 891 | 163 908 613 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

TABLE B. 2: DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED BY INDUSTRY, 2019 - 2023

| Industry (SIC) | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Agriculture | 4 763 | 1 576 | 1 386 | 4 186 | 5 494 |
| Mining | 14 092 | 8 587 | 43 513 | 73 040 | 12 179 |
| Manufacturing | 7 738 | 17 542 | 28 164 | 11 579 | 3 297 |
| Utilities | 412 | 0 | 0 | 2 763 | 0 |
| Construction | 2 483 | 452 | 0 | 0 | 415 |
| Trade | 4 914 | 461 | 4 565 | 12 057 | 5 615 |
| Transport | 6 577 | 2 234 | 879 | 24 063 | 1 608 |
| Finance | 0 | 235 | 166 | 3 919 | 45 |
| Community | 102 596 | 70 625 | 11 626 | 21 920 | 39 870 |
| Total | 143 575 | 101 712 | 90 299 | 153 527 | 68 523 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2019 - 2023

¹⁶ The total number of work stoppages differs from the total of strikes at the national level. This is due to national work stoppages that may affect a number of branches or establishments in the nine provinces, being counted as one in the national but according to workplaces affected in several provinces being counted more than once.

TABLE B.3: DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DAYS BY CAUSE OF WORKING CONDITIONS BY INDUSTRY, 2023

| Industry | Disciplinary | Grievances | Other Compensation | Other Reasons | Refusal | Retrenchment / Dismissals | Secondary strike | Socio-Economic | Trade Union | Wages | Working | Total |
|------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|---------------|----------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Agriculture | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| Mining | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| Manufacturing | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 15 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Trade | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Transport | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Finance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Community | 1 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 3 | 47 |
| Total | 1 | 17 | 15 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 32 | 5 | 97 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023



ANNEXURE C

TABLE C.1: NUMBER OF WORKERS INVOLVED, WORKING DAYS LOST AND WORKING HOURS LOST BY INDUSTRY/SECTOR, 2023

| Industry/Sector | Workers involved | Working days lost | Working hours lost |
|---|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Finance | 45 | 1 575 | 12 600 |
| Financial intermediation, except insurance and pension funding | 45 | 1 575 | 12 600 |
| Construction | 415 | 5 355 | 48 143 |
| Construction of civil engineering structures | 380 | 5 320 | 47 880 |
| Construction | 35 | 35 | 263 |
| Trade | 5 615 | 160 690 | 1 291 506 |
| Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motor cycles; repair of personal household goods | 2 864 | 30 954 | 247 378 |
| Wholesale and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motor cycles | 1 874 | 116 188 | 929 504 |
| Wholesale trade in food, beverages & tobacco | 877 | 13 548 | 114 624 |
| Manufacturing | 3 297 | 136 896 | 1 212 137 |
| Basic metals, fabricated metal products, machinery and equipment | 446 | 9 408 | 76 819 |
| Manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel | 1 657 | 38 787 | 456 240 |
| Food products, beverages and tobacco products | 360 | 76 191 | 578 998 |
| Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products | 834 | 12 510 | 100 080 |
| Community, social and personal services | 39 870 | 1 935 845 | 15 585 424 |
| Agriculture, hunting and related services | 389 | 1 556 | 12 448 |
| Collection, purification and distribution of water | 135 | 540 | 4 320 |
| Education | 1 305 | 22 723 | 181 822 |
| Health and social work | 781 | 3 151 | 25 208 |
| Hotels and restaurants | 85 | 595 | 4 760 |
| Local Authority | 28 039 | 1 749 885 | 13 993 480 |
| Other business activities | 25 | 150 | 1 200 |
| Other community, social and personal services activities | 141 | 166 | 1 578 |
| Post and telecommunications | 248 | 2 480 | 19 840 |
| Public administration and defense activities | 7 534 | 127 050 | 1 016 400 |
| Publishing, Printing & Reproduction of Recorded Media | 11 | 11 | 88 |
| Security Services | 1 177 | 27 538 | 324 280 |
| Mining and quarrying | 12 179 | 133 081 | 1 325 164 |
| Mining of coal and lignite | 582 | 4 710 | 56 145 |
| Mining of gold and uranium ore | 1 965 | 12 054 | 96 432 |
| Metal ores, except gold and uranium | 9 203 | 98 780 | 1 027 049 |
| Other mining and quarrying | 65 | 65 | 520 |
| Services activities incidental to mining of minerals | 364 | 17 472 | 145 018 |
| Transport, storage and communication | 1 608 | 20 447 | 165 029 |
| Passenger transport | 1 358 | 18 747 | 151 579 |
| Post and telecommunications | 200 | 1 400 | 11 200 |
| Public Transport | 50 | 300 | 2 250 |
| Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing | 5 494 | 56 428 | 421 470 |

| Industry/Sector | Workers involved | Working days lost | Working hours lost |
|--|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Agriculture, hunting and related services | 1 353 | 16 086 | 58 392 |
| Forestry, logging and related services | 379 | 3 032 | 27 288 |
| Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco products | 562 | 30 910 | 278 190 |
| Wholesale in agricultural raw material and livestock | 3 200 | 6 400 | 57 600 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022 - 2023

TABLE C.2: NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS LOST BY NATURE OF ORGANIZATION, 2022-2023

| | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Central Government General | 65 013 | 19 744 |
| Government Enterprise | 239 907 | 2 641 |
| Local Government General | 67 088 | 1 750 425 |
| Provincial Government General | 20 068 | 112 985 |
| Private Sector | 2 951 561 | 564 522 |
| Total | 3 343 637 | 2 450 317 |

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2022 - 2023



ANNEXURE D

TECHNICAL NOTES:

D1. METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY THE DEPARTMENT

The collection and analysis of industrial action statistics is guided by the guidelines and practices that have been developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The point of departure can be found in the ILO Resolution adopted by the Fourteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in January 1993, concerning statistics of strikes, lockouts and other action due to labour disputes. This resolution is accommodative rather than prescriptive in its approach. It states that; “Each country should aim at developing a comprehensive programme of statistics of strikes, lockouts and where relevant other action due to labour disputes in order to provide an adequate statistical base for the various users, taking into account the specific national needs and circumstances” (ILO Bulletin of Labour Statistics, 1993-2, Annex I, XI). The Department has been provided with a legislated instrument (LRA 9.2 Form) to collect data on labour disputes. The Labour Relations Act 66 Of 1995 section 205 (3) states that (a) An employer must keep a record of the prescribed details of any strike, lock-out or protest action involving its employees, (b) An employer must submit those records in the prescribed manner to the registrar.

D2. DEFINITIONS

Section 213 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 provides the following definitions:

A strike:

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, by persons who are or have been employed by the same employer or by different employers, for the purpose of remedying a grievance or resolving a dispute in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, and every reference to work in this definition includes overtime work, whether it is voluntary or compulsory (s 213).

A lockout:

The exclusion by an employer of workers from the employer’s workplace, for the purpose of compelling the workers to accept a demand in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, whether or not the employer breaches those workers’ contracts of employment in the course of or for the purpose of that exclusion.

A protest action:

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, for the purpose of promoting or defending the socio-economic interests of workers, but not for a purpose referred to in the definition of strike”.

Barker, F et al (1996) in “South African Labour Glossary” defined the following concepts as follows:

- **Picketing:**

Action by employees or other persons to publicize the existence of a labour dispute by patrolling or standing outside or near the location where the dispute is taking place, usually with placards indicating the nature of the dispute. The aim of picketing might simply be to communicate the grievance to the public or it might be to persuade other employees in that workplace not to work and to take their side in the dispute, to deter scab labour, to persuade or pressurize customers not to enter the workplace, to disrupt deliveries or drum up public support.

- **A secondary strike:**

This refers to a strike in support of a strike by other employees against their employer. The strikers have no issue with their employer, but that employer might be in a strong position (due to there being a close business relationship as either an important customer or supplier) to pressurise the employer who is in dispute.

- **Stay away action:**

This is an industrial action by a group of employees in the form of absenting themselves from work without permission in support of some socio-political or socio-economic issue, which does not relate to their employment situation.

Work stoppage:

A work stoppage is made up of a series of events, all relating to the same issue. Work stoppages have two characteristics, type and degree. The type of action is either a strike (action initiated by an employee), or a lockout (action initiated by an employer). The statutory definitions of strikes and lockouts are given in the Labour Relations Act, 1995.



Industrial action:

This is an action by unions, employees to pressurize the other party in the furtherance of an industrial dispute. It usually refers to strikes and lockouts but could also include picketing, product boycotts, sit-ins, go-slow strikes and other actions, which disrupt the production process.

Work hours:

It refers to those hours during which an employee is obliged to work.

D3. COVERAGE

Data collection attempts to cover the entire country, all economic activity and all sectors of the economy, legal and illegal industrial action. The system attempts to cover all industrial action due to labour disputes. The figures in this report are inclusive of all industrial actions, which come to the knowledge of the Department, and the methods taken to secure information practically preclude probability of omissions of a serious nature. This is a painstaking exercise, and it is believed that the statistics indicates the conditions of labour disputes in the country with “reasonable accuracy”. Since LRA 9.2 Form has been redesigned, the Department is now in a position to cover employees both directly and indirectly involved in industrial actions separately, that is, those who participate directly or indirectly by stopping work. Workers absent from their normal place of work at the time of a strike or stoppage, for reasons such as sick leave, vacation, business or personal reasons, whether authorised or unauthorized, are excluded from participation in industrial actions and are therefore not counted.

The LRA excludes independent contractors from the definition of employee. The LRA further excludes from the scope of coverage certain categories of workers, namely members of the National Defense Force, National Intelligence Agency and South African Secret Service. The coverage by the Department of industrial action, however, includes all of the above, provided they embarked on an industrial action in the period under consideration.

D4. STRIKE DATA COLLECTION

In addition to the legal obligation on employers to report industrial action, the Department has introduced an active media-monitoring programme that is enforcing the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 section 205 subsection (3) subparagraph (a) and (b) on employers to submit the strike information in the prescribed manner to the registrar. Through this system, media information on industrial action is used as a source of information to make contact with employers and to encourage compliance with reporting strike incidents. Telephone, emails, Sms, WhatsApp, and telefax tools were used as means of communication with the affected employers to ensure “a reasonably, accurate and large coverage” of all labour disputes in the country.

The cooperation that exists with the private sector employers had also speed up the process of strike data collection. After completing the LRA 9.2 form, most employers send it to the Head Office of the Department of Labour. Some employers will probably keep a blank form with them, which will proactively be completed when a strike arises in the company and they voluntarily forward it to the department in time.

After receiving the form either directly from the employer or from the provincial office, Head Office staff members will check and assess if the information provided is sufficient and correct. In case it is not, the Department of Labour staff within the LMIS unit will contact employers with the aim of getting missing information. From this process, the strike information is captured into a database specifically designed for monitoring industrial action in the country. The information includes workers who were directly and indirectly involved during the industrial action, excluding all those who were on leave.

This method of data collection and processing has consistently remained the same over time. The Department has to rely on the employers affected by labour disputes for detailed information on various indicators such as employment size, duration of strikes, reason given for striking, etc., which are required by 1995 Labour Relations Act. Some attempts are made to contact other parties involved in resolving the disputes. This information is also analyzed and reported. However, employers constitute a principal source of strikes data.



D5. CALCULATIONS

Working days lost

All calculations are made on the basis of information recorded on the LRA 9.2 Form. After capturing the data, the loss of working days is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the duration of the stoppage in days lost and adding the totals for all stoppages during the reference period. For example, if during the reference period there were one stoppage, involving 2 000 workers and lasting four days, working days lost would be computed as follows:

- 2 000 worker's x 4 days = 8 000 working days lost

Working hours lost

Working hours lost is the aggregate number of working hours lost stemming from all work stoppages during the reference period. The statistic is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the number of hours of the stoppage and summing the products thus obtained for all stoppages during the period. For example, if during the reference period there is one stoppage, involving 4 000 workers and lasting four hours and four days working hours lost would be computed as follows:

- 2 000 worker's x 4 hours lost x 4 days worked = 32 000 working hours lost

Estimated working time is computed by multiplying the employment for the period by the number of days typically worked by most employed workers during that period. In some cases, Saturdays (when customarily not worked), Sundays, and established holidays are excluded. It is also to determine the normal hours of work for groups of workers since LRA 9.2 Form provides for this. An average eight-hour day is used to represent the normal working day in the country.

Time- loss ratio (Working days lost per 1 000 employees)

- This is the number of working days lost per 1 000 employees due to strike. It is the standard method that has been used to convert working days lost into a strike rate that takes account of the size of total employment. This also enables comparisons to be made across industries and provinces that differ in employment size. For example, a country with 16 069 000 employees in December 2016 and loosing 946 323 working days will have a ratio of 58.9 arrived at as follows: $946\,323/16\,069\,000 \times 1\,000$

Measurements

The criterion used to identify a single strike and lockout is the Labour dispute in question. In line with the ILO recommendations, the Department of Labour denotes one industrial action as follows:

- A temporary work stoppage, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in one establishment at one time;
- Temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in several establishments at the same time;
- Temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in one establishment at different times, in which the period between stoppages is not more than two months; and
- Temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in several establishments at different times, in which the period between stoppages is not more than two months.

While attempts to satisfy the ILO requirements are made, the instrument of data collection (LRA 9.2 Form) remains as the point of departure, in order to meet the specific needs of the Department and the country.

**LRA FORM 9.2
LABOUR RELATIONS ACT, 1995**

READ THIS FIRST



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

An employer must keep a record of any strike, lock-out or protest action involving its employees.

WHO FILLS IN THIS FORM?

The employer/or relevant employer organisation.

WHERE DOES THIS FORM GO?

ENQUIRIES:

The Director-General,
Department of Employment and Labour
Private Bag X117
Pretoria
0001

Tel: (012) 309 4004
Fax: (012) 309 4406
E-mail: strikes@labour.gov.za

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

The employer must submit this form within seven days of the completion of the strike, lockout or protest action.

If a strike, lockout or protest action occurs in more than one workplace of single employer then a separate form must

RECORD OF STRIKE, LOCKOUT OR PROTEST ACTION

**RECORD OF DETAILS OF STRIKE, LOCKOUT OR PROTEST ACTION
TO BE KEPT BY EMPLOYER IN TERMS OF SECTION 205(3)(a)**

1. EMPLOYER DETAILS

Name:.....

Physical address:.....

Province:

Tel: Fax:

E-mail address:

Industry:

Sector/ Nature of business:

.....

2. EMPLOYEE DETAILS

2.1 Total number of workforce:

2.2 Working time (Please complete where applicable)

Number of ordinary hours worked per day/shift:

Number of ordinary days worked per day/shift

3. DETAILS OF THE ACTION

3.1 Nature of action

- Strike in company only
- Multi-employer strike
- Lockout
- Stay-away, protest action
- Secondary strike
- Picketing
- Other industrial action, please specify

.....

.....

please go to the next page →



If the action was a strike did the employer lockout the strikers? (defensive lockout)

Yes No

How was the industrial action resolved?

Was replacement labour used?

Was a replacement labour used? Yes No

3.2 Strike duration

Began: Ended:
(Date) (Time) (Date) (Time)

Duration in workdays (or hours if relevant)

3.3 Employees involved

Number of employees participating¹:

Number of female employees affected²:

Total work-hours lost:

Total wages not paid (in Rands):

3.4 Unions involved

| NAME OF TRADE UNION | NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED PER UNION |
|---------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Total | |



please go to the next page →

3.5 Compliance with the Act

Was the action in compliance with the Act? (e.g., procedural or un-procedural)

Yes

No

Don't know

If no, or don't know, please explain

3.6 Strike reasons

Provide reasons for the action:

Wages only (if the action was a wage strike, kindly indicate the following

Percentage demanded by union:

Percentage demanded by employer:

Percentage demanded by both parties:

Bonuses and other compensation

Disciplinary matters

Grievances

Retrenchments/Dismissals

Refusal to bargain

Socio-economic/political conditions

Secondary action from another dispute

Organisational rights

Working conditions

Any other reason, please specify

1: Workers directly involve are those who went on strike or were locked out as a result of a dispute.

2: Workers indirectly involve are those not working as a consequence of the initial stoppage of work because necessary supplies or orders are no longer available.

Name of employer (In full):

Signature of employer.....Date.....



NOTES



NOTES







RP194/2024
ISBN: 978-1-77997-105-0



employment & labour

Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA