

Members heed strike call /and respond to Minister Baloyi's threat to sign off agreement

SADTU would like to report a resounding success on the first day of an indefinite strike as more than 90% of our members heeded the call for a complete shutdown of schools. SADTU's National Executive Committee announced on Tuesday that the Union would embark on a full-blown strike until the Government met its wage demands.

SADTU members, together with all members of Public Service unions met, held branch and regional mass meetings to unfold the programme of action. Marches and pickets were also held in various branches and regions.

Most of the marches and pickets were peaceful except in KwaZulu Natal where our members were shot with rubber bullets at Ezakheni branch and their cars stoned in EThekweni on Tuesday. We want to put it categorically clear that the Union policy denounces violence and intimidation. We cannot condone any form of violence from any quarter. Our action is about legitimate and genuine demands and we shall pursue our resolve in a peaceful manner.

In the Eastern Cape, the turnout was 70% due to the fact that most members are in remote areas and could not get the message sooner. However, the leadership managed to reach most areas by end of day yesterday we hope for a 100% support for the strike today.

All provinces have determined their central meeting places and picket lines for today and other days to come.

Threatening

SADTU has condemned the manner in which Public Service Minister Richard Baloyi chose to address the wage impasse issue by threatening to sign off the agreement unilaterally. The government's decision to declare policy is a threat to future negotiations and cannot go unchallenged. This decision is reactionary and provocative and we can only warn that this approach will harden attitudes of our members. We call upon the government to stop this bullying tactic and respond to the demands of the workers. Government cannot afford not to accede to the legitimate demands of the public service workers.

When one part of the working class wins, we all win

The World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) has expressed support for the Union's wage demands. The statement of support sent by the WFTU Secretariat reads: "The WFTU has been informed about the full scale indefinite strike over wages beginning with a total shut down on 18 August 2010 carried out by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). We can understand that in this period it is very significant that workers with the leadership of their Union organize a strong struggle and they struggle for their rights. The WFTU believes that the struggle of the Union is very important for the workers of Africa and we also believe that it is a fair struggle. We support the strike of the workers and their demands. We call for the expression of solidarity. When one part of the working class wins, then we all win."

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