
Publication: THE NEW AGE
Title: Phalaborwa mine suspends operations amid strike intimidation claims
Publish date: 15 May 2017

Phalaborwa mine suspends operations amid strike intimidation claims

MONTSHO MATLALA

THE wage strike by workers at copper producer Palabora Mining Company in Phalaborwa entered its 13th day yesterday, leaving operations at a virtual standstill.

Company spokesperson Lydia Radebe said even though the strike was

legal and protected with Amcu having agreed to peaceful action, the company had in the past week noted a significant increase in acts of intimidation of non-striking workers and contractors exiting and entering the mine premises.

"Acts such as burning tyres and blocking roads entering and exiting the mine have become a daily part

of intimidation tactics by striking employees.

"These include an incident wherein more than 200 employees including executive management were held hostage inside the mine from afternoon until the following morning," Radebe said.

"As part of the steps to protect non-

striking employees, the management has advised non-striking employees to stay at home until further notice."

But striking workers denied acts of intimidation and called on management to accede to their demands to bring the labour dispute to an end.

Workers affiliated to Amcu downed tools on May 3 demanding among oth-

ers a 12% wage hike for 2017, 11% for 2018 and 10% for 2019 as well as housing and other work related benefits.

This was after wage negotiations with organised labour including NUM, which started in March, deadlocked when the employer offered 8% for 2017 and a 7% increase for 2018 and 2019. NUM is not involved in the strike.

Radebe said mine management was continuously engaging with Amcu leadership in an attempt to resolve the dispute amicably.

Police spokesperson Lt-Moatshe Ngoepe yesterday said no one was arrested for the alleged acts of intimidation accompanying the strike.

montshom@thenewage.co.za

• • • • •