

Tensions mount as Nehawu strike intensifies

By  Katja Hamilton

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Members of The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union are continuing with Day 3 of their nationwide strike - a move that has seen hospital services nationwide severely disrupted.



Source: iStock. Police cleared burning tyres at Tshepong Hospital in Klerksdorp on Tuesday (7 March 2023) as Nehawu members picketed outside the hospital.

The Nehawu members are demanding a 10% wage increase.

The strike kicked off on Monday (6 March 2023), despite a ruling by the Labour court in Johannesburg which interdicted the action, and further dismissed Nehawu's appeal.

Despite the ruling, many health workers were blocked from entering government hospitals, and healthcare services were ground to a halt, although in the Free State intensive care units remained operational as were the emergency units in Mpumalanga

In the [Western Cape](#) armed private guards assisted police in escorting doctors one at a time into Khayelitsha. Ambulances were also barred from entering and exiting the hospital premises until the police intervened.

“ On duty nursing staff at Michael Mapongwana Clinic in Khayelitsha have been forced to join the striking Nehawu members. [#NEHAWUStrikeUpdate](#) [#NehawuStrike](#) pic.twitter.com/GdKZ0pkxEH— EWN Reporter (@ewnreporter) [March 8, 2023](#) ”

In the Northern Cape protesters on Tuesday reportedly tried to set Robert Sobukwe Hospital in Kimberley alight on Tuesday, but failed.

Acting Minister of Public Service and Administration Thulas Nxesi strongly condemned the strike.

The Minister said the principle of 'no work no pay' applies.

Mike Shingange, president of Nehawu, said the union remains resolute that no amount of court intimidation by the government would deter members from this cause. "We are fighting for public servants, defending collective bargaining and rights of workers. We shall not retreat; no surrender."

Mamiki Lekhoana-Kgaile, the Nehawu provincial deputy chairperson said Nehawu was not budging on their request for a 10% wage increase and that the national strike would continue indefinitely until their demands are met.

“ Gauteng Provincial Legislature employees are just asking for their 13th cheque. [@News24](#) [@SABCNews](#) . Our executives can cut out the expensive trips and pay the employees their basic conditions of employment benefit. Day 2 of Nehawu strike [@NEHAWU](#) [#Loadshedding](#) [#HouseOfTheDragon](#) # [pic.twitter.com/rV6qhd3a3T](#)— bubbles (@buhle0502) [October 18, 2022](#) ”

Lekhoana-Kgaile said the Nehawu members are also asking for a R2,500 housing allowance.

"As public servants we can't afford to buy houses because our members are paid so little."

But for now she said the national government "is not interested in engaging with [Nehawu] management".

Nehawu is disgruntled with government's 2% wage hike offer on the table, she said.

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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