

Impala Platinum starts voluntary job cuts at SA mines

By [Felix Njini](#)

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Impala Platinum said it was offering voluntary job cuts to workers at some of the world's deepest platinum mining shafts in South Africa in a bid to cut costs as prices for the metal fall.



Image source: Mariana Ivanovska – [123RF.com](#)

The Johannesburg-based platinum miner started the process at its head office last month, and is now extending the exit packages to its sprawling Rustenburg mining complex in North West province, company spokesperson Johan Theron told *Reuters*.

He declined to say how many jobs the company expects to cut and how much money it plans to save through the process.

"We are obviously doing everything to reduce costs," Theron said. "Labour is a big cost component so you always start with labour by offering voluntary separation packages."

Platinum prices are down 14% so far this year, with analysts and traders lowering their 2024 forecasts due to weak auto

production and concerns about a global economic slowdown, a recent Reuters poll showed.

Platinum and palladium are primarily used by automakers, which embed them in engine exhausts to reduce emissions. Platinum is also used in other industries and for investment. Palladium prices are nearly 40% lower so far this year.



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Impala rival Sibanye Stillwater said last month it plans to cut more than 4,000 jobs and close some of its old platinum mining shafts that are running out of commercially viable ore. Anglo American said in October it is weighing job cuts at its head offices in South Africa and across the globe in a bid to save costs.

South African platinum mining shafts are among the world's deepest, oldest and most expensive to operate. Impala's Rustenburg mines are "scrapping by for now" and further action could be taken if prices remain low, Theron said.

"The shafts are not making money, but they are not losing money either, they are just getting by," Theron said. Impala is also weighing postponing planned spending at some expansion projects at its Zimplats and Mimosa units in Zimbabwe as well as Two Rivers and Marula mines in South Africa.

"We are in a process to reset the organisation for a lower price environment," Theron said. "If all the initiatives don't take you to a point where you can survive, you have to do more."

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