

BUREAUCRATS ON STRIKE - Public Service Association getting mandates for a higher pay offer

Business Day (South Africa)

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Business Day Edition

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Byline: Luyolo Mkentane

Body

BUREAUCRATS ON STRIKE Public Service Association getting mandates for a higher pay offer

Political CorrespondentThe Public Service Association (PSA) is collecting mandates from its members after the State Information Technology Agency (Sita) improved its pay offer to striking workers by throwing in a one-off sweetener that will cost R25m to implement.

Talks deadlocked after Sita, which provides information and communication technology (ICT) services to local, provincial and national government departments and agencies, improved its pay offer to 5%, while the union stuck to its 7.5% demand.

Inflation as measured by the consumer price index accelerated to 5.4% annually in September, up from 4.8% in August. This led to PSA members embarking on a strike last week.

The strike was expected to culminate in a national march to the ministry of communications & digital technologies in Pretoria on Monday.

This industrial action has disrupted ICT services in several government departments including home affairs, and the SA National Defence Force, according to PSA chief negotiator Zamani Dladla.

Sita had threatened that it would implement unilaterally its final 5% offer to all employees on October 25.

The union said that such a move would create "long-lasting resentment, animosity and distrust among all parties involved".

Speaking to Business Day on Monday, Dladla said that "in a last-ditch effort to prevent any further industrial action, the employer has since presented its final 5% wage offer across the board, effective April 1, to be paid on October 25, and added a one-off ex gratia payment of R8,326.45 as a sweetener for each of the 3,103 Sita employees which will be paid on November 25".

"In addition, the PSA demanded the 'no work, no pay' principal not be implemented for all those employees who embarked on industrial action, and that R25m will be utilised as an ex gratia payment in respect of the salary negotiation for the 2023/24 financial year," said Dladla.

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"The employer indicated that it will consult with its principals and revert to the PSA on these additional demands ... The PSA will only accept the offer once the majority of members have provided a mandate to the PSA."

Diadla commended those who downed tools, saying "it was the efforts of these members that forced the employer to improve their offer". He said the PSA has been collecting mandates from members since Friday and the deadline was Tuesday. "It looks as if we are going to sign [accept the wage deal]."

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Members of the Public Servants Association protest to drive home their wage demand. Picture: NQUBEKO MBHELE

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Unionized county workers protest absence of talks

Tribune-Review (Greensburg, PA)

October 25, 2023 Wednesday

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Byline: by RICH CHOLODOFSKY

Body

Dozens of Westmoreland County unionized workers picketed Wednesday in front of the courthouse claiming negotiations on a new labor deal with the government's largest bargaining unit have stalled.

Officials with the Service Employees International Union Local 668 and Healthcare Pennsylvania accused county leaders of negotiating in bad faith.

"They called us back to the table, and then there was no offer. They came with a verbal proposal for health care, but there was no wage offer or offer about work conditions," said Wanda Smith, SEIU's business manager.

She said union negotiators walked out of labor talks Tuesday, and there are no plans to reconvene with county officials until mid-November.

The union represents more than 500 county employees, including 911 dispatchers, nurses and other staffers at Westmoreland Manor, Area Agency on Aging caseworkers, juvenile detention and probation officers, and some courthouse workers.

The SEIU's current four-year contract expires at the end of December. Smith said Wednesday's picketing was a message for commissioners to resume labor talks.

"We're seeking a living wage. I have members who work 6.5 hours a day and are on welfare. Instead of raising wages they have people working overtime," Smith said. "We're out here to let the commissioners know how upset we are. They are not bargaining in good faith."

The county commissioners, in a statement issued Wednesday, said talks with the union are expected to resume.

"While the county cannot discuss specifics of negotiations or personnel matters, rest assured that the county is looking forward to going back to the table and engaging in productive negotiations," the statement said. "It is the county's intent to reach an agreement that respects the important work that the SEIU members do for the county while respecting taxpayer dollars."

Wages are expected to be a sticking point.

Commissioners over the past year have increased pay for many county employees and instituted signing bonuses for existing and new staffers.

Unionized county workers protest absence of talks

Salaries tied to union employees have been limited to terms of the last labor contract signed in 2020 that called for 2% annual average raises in addition to bonus pay for nurses and telecommunication workers.

Meanwhile, annual raises for nonunion employees and elected officials totaled more than 13% over the past two years. Raises for elected officials were mandated through a county ordinance approved more than decades earlier and based on the Consumer Price Index. Raises for nonunion employees typically have mirrored raises given to elected officials.

Smith said the union will continue to picket.

"We're on this train, and we are not stopping until they bring us a full proposal," Smith said.

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So far, 6,000 doctors rejected overtime work - trade unions

So far, 6,000 doctors rejected overtime work - trade unions

CTK National News Wire

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Body

So far, 6,000 doctors rejected overtime work - trade unions

Prague, Oct 24 (CTK) - So far, some 6,000 of the roughly 13,000 doctors who serve in hospitals in Czechia have rejected overtime work, while nurses and other health care personnel are planning to join them, representatives of the young doctors group and the health and social care trade unions told reporters today.

They say there is a threat of the health care being reduced. They demand lowering the amount of overtime work and an increase in their basic salaries without overtime income.

According to the information system on average **wages**, the average gross monthly salary of specialist doctor in public and state-run facilities was 104,652 crowns in the first half of this year. However, total of 42 percent of this sum was made up of bonuses and money for overtime and standby duty. They worked an average of 20.4 overtime hours per month.

In private facilities, the doctors' average **pay** was 80,331 crowns, while bonuses and compensation accounted for 29 percent of the sum, and they had 8.1 overtime hours per month.

But according to trade unions and young doctors, the staff in hospitals work hundreds of overtime hours, and they talk about work on the verge of legality. Politicians say overtime work is voluntary. In reaction, doctors have started withdrawing from their overtime work agreements.

"I sincerely hope that there will be no overtime work refusal as of December 1. If we did not reach an agreement, it would really lead to reduction of care, at least planned treatments," Jan Prada, representative of the the Czech Medical Chamber (CLK)'s Young Doctors Section said. Not only young doctors, but also experienced ones are withdrawing from overtime work agreements, their average age is 38, he noted.

Dagmar Zitnikova, chairwoman of the Czech Health and Social Care Trade Union, said nurses and other health care workers were also considering joining the **protest** and rejecting overtime work.

The Young Doctors Section is **protesting** against the recently amended Labour Code that doubled the maximum possible number of voluntary overtime hours from the previous 416.

Representatives of the section and trade unionists discussed the changes to the Code with Labour and Social Affairs Minister Marian Jurecka (Christian Democrats,KDU-CSL) and Health Minister Vlastimil Valek (TOP 09).

By today, they should have received another draft of amendment to the Labour Code, which should change the situation. They have not received it yet.

So far, 6,000 doctors rejected overtime work - trade unions

In addition, they are demanding an increase in basic pay without overtime. They want to link it to the average pay in the country. They also propose that the balances from the health insurance companies' accounts be used for financing this.

According to the unions, the doctors' salary should be 1.5 to three times higher than the average national pay, at least 50 percent more than at present, for nurses, it should be up to twice the average wage. The government does not count with an increase in basic pay.

Valek said earlier that the decree on health service prices for next year allocated 6.8 billion crowns directly to the rise in the remuneration of medical staff in inpatient facilities, mainly in acute care hospitals. Protesters point to the rise in doctors' salaries in Slovakia.

The union warns that hospitals are short of up to 4,000 doctors and 5,000 nurses, which makes it difficult to maintain the normal amount of overtime work. In addition to changes to the Labour Code, Prada and trade unionists want to eliminate administrative burden for doctors, strengthen computerisation and attract people from outpatient facilities to hospitals thanks to a better remuneration.

(\$1 = 23.250 crowns)

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The bill for the pay gap in listed companies

CE Noticias Financieras English

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Body

The wage strikes that are shaking the U.S. automobile industry have some genuinely local features, but they are also a warning to navigators about the bill that can be generated by the excessive remuneration of top management. The protests by thousands of employees against the major carmakers, such as General Motors, Stellantis and Ford, are the response to a wage gap between top management and the workforce that has broken all proportions and extends far beyond the automobile industry. Since 1978, the salaries of workers in the 300 largest U.S. companies have barely grown by 18% in real terms, while those of top executives have grown by 1,460%, discounting the effect of inflation.

In Europe, and particularly in Spain, the difference between the salaries of workers and top executives is not comparable to the American gap, but it is not negligible either. According to CNMV data, the remuneration of executive directors, excluding extraordinary items, is equivalent to 31 times the average remuneration of the employees of listed companies, a difference that reaches 54 times in the case of Ibex companies and is reduced to 17 times in the case of other companies that are not part of the index. This imbalance has led some advisors to warn that the US phenomenon will sooner or later reach Europe, and that it may have consequences for the management of listed companies in the form of activism among investors, conflictive boards and rating downgrades by ESG agencies, which may condition the investment of certain funds in companies.

Although pay differentials in European listed companies are quantitatively smaller than in US companies, they may be equally unacceptable from a qualitative point of view. Shareholders' greater awareness of good governance and compliance with social criteria focuses not only on the amount of pay, but also on its objective justification. In this regard, the market is likely to increasingly penalize remuneration or bonuses that are not linked to objective metrics and performance, and investors will make their decisions subject to criteria of efficiency and salary balance. This risk will undoubtedly encourage companies to take care of this aspect of their governance, which should be defended not only for financial and image reasons, but also for reasons of fairness.

Load-Date: October 26, 2023