



President James Motlatsi: "Retrench shareholders & not mineworkers"

Miners march ...

On 15 October, thousands of miners marched through the streets of Johannesburg to protest against retrenchments.

The historic NUM march marked the beginning of a huge campaign to fight retrenchment.

About 50 000 mineworkers are threatened with losing their jobs.

The Mine bosses say that the poor gold price is forcing them to retrench miners. It is clear that the mining industry is taking the easy way out to keep their profits at a maximum. They do not care that thousands of families will be facing starvation.

Miners from all major regions came to the march, dressed in their mining overalls and helmets. They marched on the Chamber of Mines and Anglo-American, where they presented their proposals on how the mining companies should handle retrenchments.

The mining bosses were given a deadline to respond to the proposals.

NUM did not march alone. The miners were joined by leaders from the ANC and SACP, who were also wearing miners' overalls and helmets.

NUM President, Comrade James Motlatsi, said the mining companies were only interested in profits, not

people. He called on the mines to retrench shareholders and not mineworkers.

The Chamber of Mines boss, Mr Clive Knobbs, expressed concern about retrenchments and tried to convince miners that it was unavoidable. But he was jeered and booed when he tried to address miners in the hated language of Fanagalo.

Workers were clearly not convinced that retrenchments are unavoidable.

For NUM there is no turning back. We cannot afford to take retrenchments lying down. We will fight for our jobs. We will fight for the sake of our families. We will fight for the future of this land.

NUM Demands:

- That the mines stop using retrenchment as a union-bashing tactic.
- That the Chamber of Mines start negotiating with NUM on retrenchment and the re-structuring of the industry.
- One month's severance pay for every year of service.
- That the mines set up a retrenchment fund so that whenever retrenchments take place proper benefits can be paid to workers.
- That the bosses pay for re-training so that workers can gain other skills.
- That retrenched comrades get vacancies first.