

ANNUAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION REPORT

2024







Annual Industrial Action Report 2024

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Department of Employment and Labour
Chief Directorate of Communication
Private Bag X117
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Contributors:

Contributors: Millicent Semono and other Labour Market Information and Statistics officials

Editor: Abrahams Mutedi

Editing, layout and design, photography and distribution

Media Production Unit

Chief Directorate of Communication

Department of Employment and Labour



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ABBREVIATIONS

AFADWU	Agricultural Food and Allied Democratic Workers Union
COGTA	Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CWU	Communication Workers Union
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour
DEMAWUSA	Democratic Municipal and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
DENOSA	Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DSD	Department of Social Development
EC	Eastern Cape
ECCAWUSA	Entertainment, Catering, Commercial and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
GIWUSA	General Industries Workers Union of South Africa
GNU	Government of National Unity
HOSPERSA	Health and Other Services Personnel Trade Union of South Africa
ICHAWU	Independent Commercial Hospitality and Allied Workers Union
ILAWU	Independent Liberation and Allied Workers Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMATU	Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LMIS	Labour Market Information and Statistics
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MRBPS	Medium Term Budget Policy Statement
NABC	National Association of Bargaining Council
NASAWU	National Service and Allied Workers Union
NEHAWU	National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union
NTM	National Transport Movement
NUFBW	National Union of Food, Beverage, Wine, Spirit and Allied Workers
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
OECD	Organisational for Economic Cooperation Development
PAWUSA	Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
PSA	Public Servants Association
PSCBC	Public Service Co-Ordinating Bargaining Council
PWUSA	Progressive Workers Union of South Africa
SACCAWU	South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers' Union
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union
SIC	Standard International Classification
TAWUSA	Transport and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
TFGWU	Transport Freight and General Workers Union
UASA	University of the Western Cape Employees Union



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The department would also like to extend words of appreciation to the management in particular the Labour Policy and Industrial Relations (LP&IR) Branch. The Labour Market Information and Statistics (LMIS) team has also participated in extensive strike data collection through direct and indirect contact with the employers in the country. Their efforts, knowledge, experiences, and views regarding labour relations issues are always appreciated.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual industrial report presents an overview of the South African labour market's labour dispute trends from January to December 2024 and provides some policy considerations. A comparative strike analysis over the five years (2020-24) to gauge the degree of labour relations or instability in the country is also presented. The comparative analysis is conducted using additional disaggregation on key relevant indicators as dictated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), such as the changes in the number of work stoppages, workdays lost, work hours lost, wages lost per industry, employees involved in work stoppages, etc.

An important aspect to note is that the South African labour market is still in the recovery process from the global financial (2008/9) and Covid-19 turmoil. Within this context, the labour market has been under pressure due to slower economic growth, rising cost of living, high interest rates, and inflationary cost. A total number of 114 strike incidents were collected by the Department of Employment and Labour in 2024. Unlike the previous year, disgruntled workers across all industries embarked on work stoppages to petition their demands from employers in 2024.

The number of strikes increased by 17.5% in the past two years following an increase of 23.6% in 2022, although the strikes in 2024 were more but shorter in duration. This is precisely because there were various one-day national strikes from the community's local authority, education and other community, social and personal services activities sectors. These national strikes were due to wage hike demands, poor working conditions and trade union recognitions.

In 2024, the Industrial Action Report highlighted the following key results:

- By the end of December 2024, the South African labour market recorded a rate hike in the total number of strike and lockout incidents. It increased to 114 in 2024 compared to 97 strikes in 2023, translating to 17.5% more work stoppages between 2023 and 2024. This is almost the same volume as the first year of the pandemic in 2020.
- While the number of strikes increased, the number of participants (directly or indirectly) dropped as per the information drawn from the LRA 9.2 forms. About 65 501 (4.2%) less than (68 523) (4.4%) workers embarked on strikes during the twelve (12) months of the two years. Strikes in 2024 resulted in 832 490 working days lost. On average, each strike lasted 53 days per 1 000 employees involved in strikes activities in 2024. This is lower than 2 450 317 days lost with an average of 157 per 1 000 employees involved in 2023.
- The nature of strikes indicates that 68% of strikes were in company only, followed by lockouts (16%) and stay away (14%) in 2024.
- By industry (as per the Standard International Classification-SIC), the community industry remains mostly affected with strike issues over the last five-year periods. In 2024, the community industry recorded more than half (52.6%) of strikes and 504 139 working days lost which resulted mainly from the local authority workers who downed tools over the demand of better wages and grievances (unpleasant working conditions) in the industry. The manufacturing and transport industries were relatively affected at 14% and 12% of the total strikes in 2024. The three industries appears to be mostly vulnerable with labour relations matters though there is strong trade union leadership.
- Overall, 82% of employers reported not to have replaced their labour during strike activities whilst 18% of employers used replacement labour in 2024. To alleviate some pressure in the production chain, the community, manufacturing, transport and agriculture industries have used replacement of labour during the strike actions.
- Looking at the principal causes of work stoppages, disputes over wages, bonuses and other compensation matters remain the main cause of strikes in the country as reported by employers. However, the findings indicate that most cases of wage settlements were lower than the initial wage demands by unions. Using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a yardstick during salary negotiations, unions across various industries accepted an above average 5% wage offers from the employers.

- Even though unions across various industries accepted an above average inflations of 5% wage offers from the employers, data sourced from Labour Research Service indicated that the median wage settlement with parties involved in wage negotiations was averaged at 7% across industries except for the construction and community industries at 6.5% and 6%.
- Economically, approximately R133 million of wages was lost due to participation in work stoppages in 2024. It represents 18% less than R163 million in wages lost in 2023. The estimates are associated with fewer worker participation and fewer days lost due to work stoppages in 2024. The economic impact on wages lost would affect consumer's consumption level and business flow in the community during strike seasons. Limited wages mean no high expenditure patterns and less business profits in the local community.
- Most workplace disputes were resolved at a short space of time in 2024. On average, the duration of most strikes lasted less than ten (10) working days at 82% while 6% of strikes lasted for more than 31 days. This is a similar pattern where most 67% of work stoppages in 2023 lasted between 1-10 days.
- In terms of compliance, more than half of strike incidents were unprotected at 54% against 32% of protected strikes processed using the LRA 9.2 form. The level of unprotected strikes is a matter of concern as it can highly lead to violence. Unprotected strikes increased by 2% while a significant decrease of 10% in the level of protected strikes over the past two years.
- The proportion of membership from the SAMWU were largely represented on the streets to demonstrate their workplace disputes. Membership from SAMWU's local authority services (41.6%) dominated the streets to demand wage increments and other working conditions related matters in 2024. Meanwhile, there was a shift in the number of unionized members who lost time on the streets over workplace demands. The number of memberships drastically dropped over the two years.

The impact of 2024 strike incidents in the South African society

The challenges that South African workers faced in 2024 may seem distant, while the economic downturn is continually impacting daily workers' lives and struggles. The year 2024 started with expected improved growth prospects for the South African economy, despite slowing projected growth of 1.1% in 2024, down from the projected 1.3% in early 2024. However, the economy has since strengthened in response to the suspension of power cuts since March 2024, improved confidence following the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in June 2024, better-than-expected inflation outcomes and reduced borrowing costs. This positive trend is expected to continue, as it could support the economy over the period ahead. Analysts anticipated a projected annual increase of between 5% and 6% depending on sector performance, improved economic conditions and inflation rates.

South Africa has seen impressive growth in average salaries with figures beating inflation. Despite a nearly 825% rise in take-home pay, many South Africans find that the real increase in earnings is not enough to match the rapidly escalating cost of living. The disparity between income growth and rising living expenses, especially in key areas like housing, utilities and other essentials, has resulted in financial realities that fall short of easing the average South African's financial pressures. Even with expected growth, it is likely that salaries will still lag behind the real increases in essential living expenses¹. Essentially, a modest profit made by companies may not by any means claim to be in a financially robust position. Failure to adapt to the rising economy results in businesses, particularly small businesses, failing to pay or increase wages and salaries with some going as far as retrenching employees. Notably, this will drive workers to go on work stoppages to demand higher wage increases to meet the cost of living.

¹ Business Tech, Malcom Libera, 31 October 2024





INTRODUCTION

The debate on the rise of cost of living in South Africa has continuously become louder as workers complain about salaries not matching up. It is a cause for concern for most workers against a slow economic growth. As reported, the modest full year growth of 0.6% confirms that the South African economy once again expanded at a rate far below population growth, meaning the GDP per capita is likely to have declined further, leaving South Africans worse off in real terms². According to Business Tech, things such as electricity, transport, and basic groceries currently outstrip inflation, which has caused a significant decline in the quality of life for several families.

During the period under review, thousands of workers affiliated with various South African trade unions continued to embark on strikes over the state of the economy and the falling living standards of workers. In most of these situations, workers find themselves supporting far more people than their immediate families. The department continuously publishes this Annual Industrial Action Report (IAR) to present relevant strike and lockouts information that allow new development of policy decision to moderate and minimise labour relation issues at workplaces. The Labour Market Information and Statistics (LMIS) Directorate within the LP&IR Branch has compiled this IAR in line with the strategic goal of monitoring the impact of labour legislation in the Department. Its particular attention is on the most recent years (2023 to 2024) in examination by industry, the main areas of dispute and how the stoppages ended.

The IAR is structured as follows: the **first chapter** gives an overview of strikes in terms of the total number of work stoppages, the duration of strikes, and the economic impact of the strikes on the country in the form of wages lost. The **second chapter** examines the strike activities in respect of various industries. It also reflects on the working days lost per union proportion and causes. The **third chapter** illustrates wage settlements reached between employers and employee organisations. It presents those wage settlements that were concluded with strike incidents averted and abandoned strikes. It further outlines the analysis on the median wage settled by industry. In the **Annexure**, the strike profiles chronologically incidents that were identified, monitored, captured and submitted by the employer to DEL from January to December of 2024.

² Business day (2025), Economy shows modest rebound, p.1-2, 5 March 2025



R880 MUST FALL
WE WANT PERMANENT
B. FOODS ARE
TOO EXPENSIVE
SMALL

JESUS

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF STRIKE INCIDENTS IN THE
SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR MARKET, 2020-2024





CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF STRIKE INCIDENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR MARKET, 2020-2024

As the country is struggling with rising living expenses and economic challenges, several union federations called on the government to address economic policy challenges, with a particular focus on high unemployment and cost of living. Recent data reveals that workers decided to embark on strikes as half of the country's workers earn less than R5 530 monthly.

On the one hand, the wage disparity highlights the importance of protest with wages falling far short of covering basic living expenses. These earnings place many South Africans under immense financial strain as inflation and costs for essentials like food and electricity continue to rise. On the other hand, the union organisations have warned that these issues represent concerns for workers, highlighting the need for immediate action. Meanwhile, the decision to call a strike comes with consequences because unions and workers risk the loss of income that impacts the worker's family at large. In other words, the economic and social upheavals will often accompany industrial disputes.

Data collected from employers in 2024 reveals that South Africa was devastated during the winter strike season, with the community industry having been more threatened by labour actions than in the manufacturing, transport, utilities, construction and finance industries over the same period. However, the agriculture and finance industries have recorded fewer strikes, which may indicate relative stability or fewer labour relation issues leading to disputes during this period.

Compared to last year, the number of work stoppages was relatively higher, although most of the strikes took a shorter period to be resolved in 2024. The labour market saw a high volume of strikes in the third quarter (28.6%), followed by the first quarter (26.3%), the second quarter (23.6%), and the fourth quarter (22%). The strike incidents could imply that most labour disputes were concentrated in the "winter strike season" of the year.

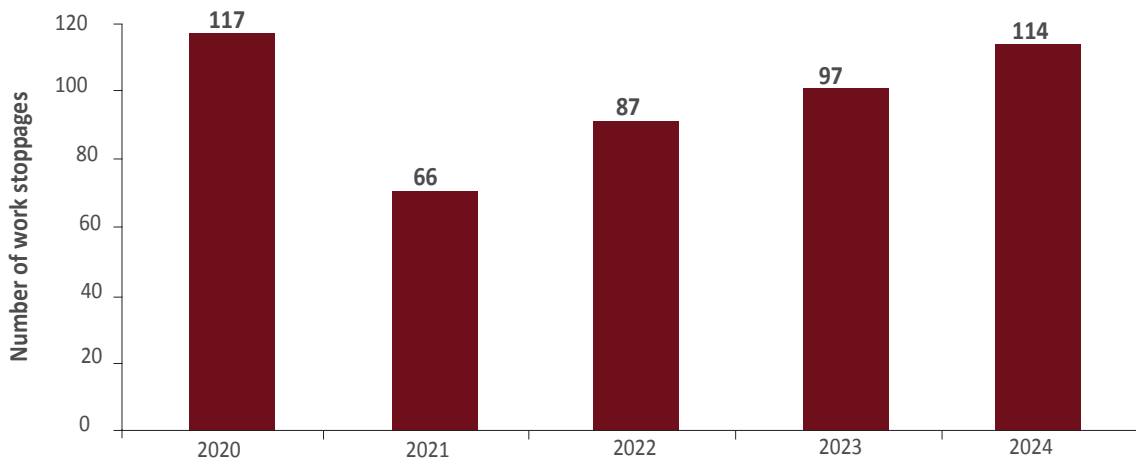
The community industry had the highest number of strikes (60) with 34 452 employees involved accounting for 52% of the total workforce involved in strike incidents in 2024. Approximately, 504 139 working days were lost in the community industry, representing 60% of the total working days lost due to work stoppages. The manufacturing industry was the second largest with 17 strikes, making up 15% of the total work stoppages recorded in 2024.

The overall percentage of employees involved in the 2024 strike activities accounted for 4.2%, lower than 4.4% of employees who actively participated in work stoppages in 2023. Disputes over wages, bonuses and other compensation matters remain the main cause of strikes in the country, where the demand for wage increment (73.7%) was larger than other causes of strikes. Although not higher than 2023, South Africa's workers across affected industries lost an estimated R133 million in wages due to 114 strike activities reaching a low in wages lost over the past five years. Wages lost in 2024 translate to 18.6% below R 163 million of wages lost from 97 strike actions in 2023.

The public sector reported most of the strikes than the private sector. Through strike data analysis, the public sector recorded a high number of working days lost, rising from 76.9% in 2023 to 94.7% in 2024. Over half of the recorded working days lost were reported in the community, local authority and education sectors. This means that about 27 071 (78.5%) of employees lost their days of work in these sectors in 2024.

Overall, the working days lost from the private sector accounted for 5.3% in 2024 compared to 23% of working days lost in 2023.

Figure 1: Trends in the number of work stoppages in South Africa, 2020 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

While acknowledging the disruptive nature of strikes across industries³, it remains a fundamental right of employees to emphasize their demands even though participation in strikes may impact working relationships. These work stoppages can have economic costs and disruptions, but they can also help workers negotiate better wages and benefits.

The changes in strike analysis show an upward trend in the number of strike disputes (year on year changes). **Figure 1** illustrates that the South African labour market recorded 114 strike incidents from January to December 2024, almost at the same level as it was five years ago, e.g., Covid 19 pandemic. The figure illustrate an upward increase of 87 strikes in 2022, 97 strikes in 2023 and 114 in 2024, respectively. Meanwhile, it was relatively peaceful in 2021.

Between 2022 and 2023, an increase of 17.5% of strikes and lockouts was recorded. The increase in the number of strikes and lockouts was proportionately larger in the community, transport, construction and manufacturing industries in 2024.

Not surprisingly, the quarters that recorded the highest numbers of strikes and lockouts were during the winter months of April to June and July to September, with around 52.2% of the total number of strikes in 2024. Other factors that affected strike disputes are collective bargaining timetables, size of the parties involved, duration of the stoppages, state of the economy, labour market etc.

Understandably, strikes are always disruptive, and they are intended to be so, but strikes are used by workers as a last resort in the collective bargaining processes.

Table 1: Distribution of employee’s participation in work stoppage by industry⁴, 2024

Industry	Number of employees 2024*	Employees involved 2024	Percentage distribution of Employees involved per industry
Agriculture	1 467	233	15.9
Mining	26 686	15 901	59.6
Manufacturing	33 093	8 466	25.6
Utilities	3 533	684	19.4
Construction	1 316	945	71.8
Trade	13 337	1 652	12.4
Transport	11 757	2 936	25.0
Finance	939	232	24.7
Community	1 484 755	34 452	2.3
Total	1 576 883	65 501	4.2

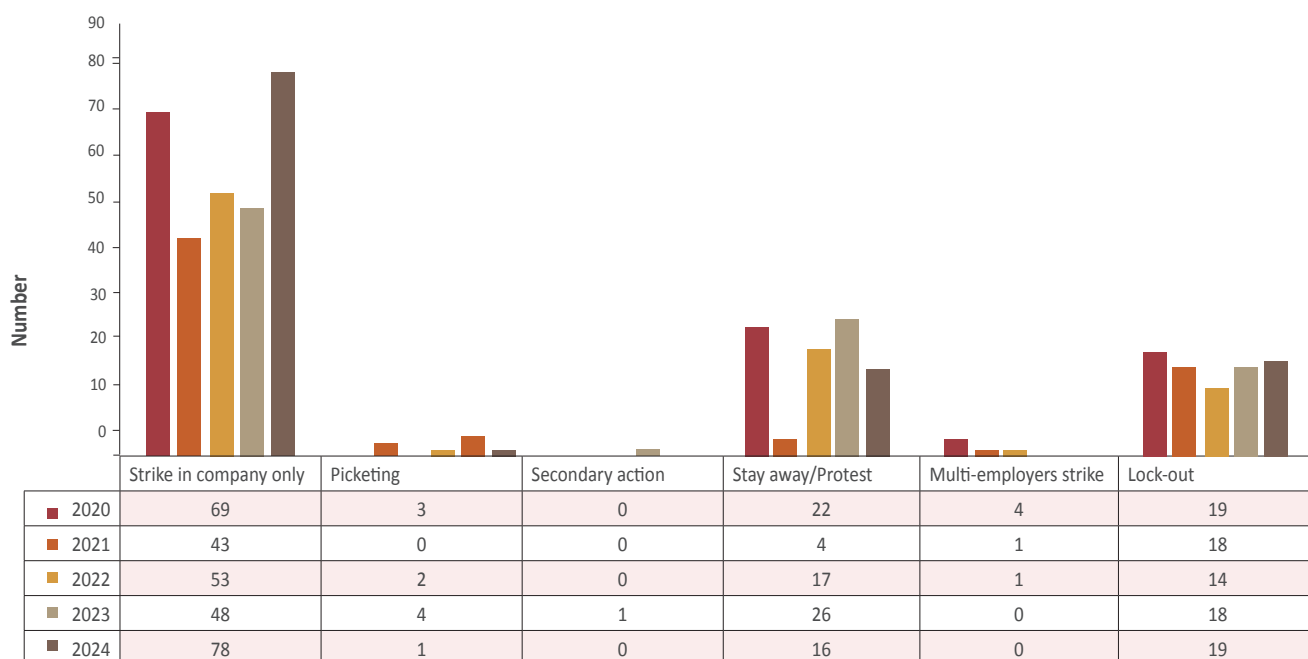
Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024 (*the statistics as reported by employers using the LRA 9.2 forms)

While the protest action may not be widely supported by all employees, employers must bear in mind that employees who participate in the protected protest action will enjoy legal protection. With the number of strikes increasing between 2023 and 2024, the number of participants (directly or indirectly) dropped as per the information drawn from the LRA 9.2 forms.

In 2024, the proportion of employees who participated in strikes and lockouts was at 65 501 lower than the number of participants (68 523) in 2023, as shown in **Table 1**. The overall participation rate of striking workers in 2024 was at 4.2% compared to 4.4% in 2023. The impact on productivity was also lower over the same period. This could imply that fewer workers avoided participating in strike activities considering the household impact on wage loss that would leave them worse off financially.

By industry, high participation rate in work stoppages were in the construction industry at 71.8%, followed by the mining industry, which recorded 59.6% of employee participation in strike activities. While the community industry recorded more worker’s participation in strike activities, the industry recorded the lowest at 2.3% of employees involved in work stoppages.

Figure 2: Distribution of work stoppages by their nature, 2020 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024

⁴ As per the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).

An analysis of strike by its nature over the period under review occurred largely in companies only at 68.4% in 2024, 49.4% in 2023 and 60% in 2022. The trend in 2024 was followed by lockouts at 16.6% and stay-away at 14%.

In **Figure 2**, strikes in the company only saw an increase of 62.5% increase, while lockouts recorded an increase of 5.5% from the previous year. One of the lockout cases was observed at uShaka Marine World, a popular tourist spot in Durban, where employees engaged in a protest over their salary demands. Emanating from the strike action and the financial challenges faced by the management of the facility, the attraction was temporarily shut down to safeguard the visitor’s safety.

Table 2: Distribution of working days lost by principal cause of disputes, 2020-2024

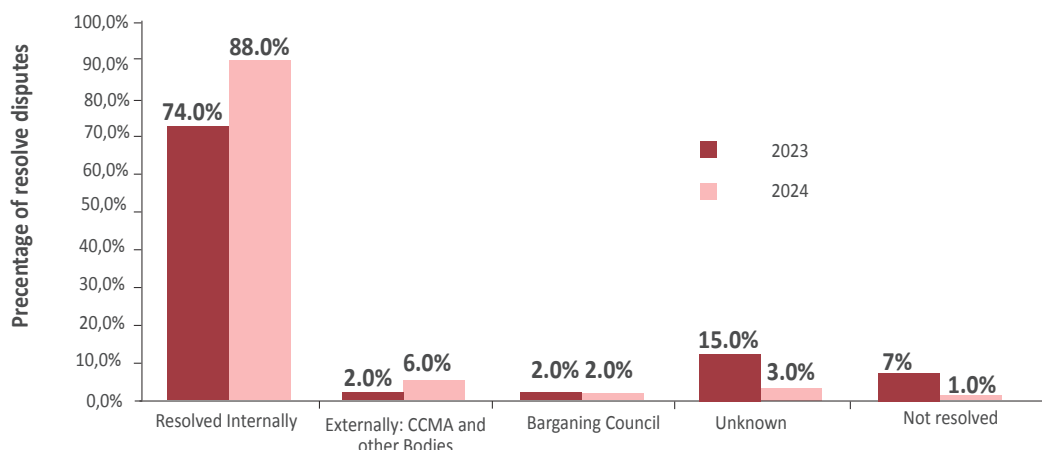
Principal cause	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Wages, bonus and other compensation benefits	624 960	522 529	3 152 216	2 316 639	613 678
Working conditions	18 700	27 071	39 919	31 261	11 440
Disciplinary matters	1 320	11 386	1 140	520	3 158
Grievances	82 123	22 860	5 866	43 139	46 007
Socio-economic and political conditions	6 979	19 799	3 028	369	2 129
Secondary actions	33 068	0	18 396	388	270
Retrenchment/redundancy	130	16 112	0	7 849	4 706
Refusal to bargain	2 573	6 546	25 053	26	44 170
Trade union recognition	2 428	8 449	7 800	10 660	94 078
Other reasons	11 664	62 094	90 219	39 466	12 854
Total	783 945	696 846	3 343 637	2 450 317	832 490

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024

The statistics in **Table 2** confirm that there is more than one factor that may cause a work stoppage. Over the five-year period, the demand for wages, bonuses and other compensation benefits was the main bone of contention. The result shows that the demand for wage increment (73.7%) was largely reported by employers in 2024. Other related unresolved matters such as the demand for trade union recognition (11.3%), followed by grievances logged against the employers (5.5%), led the workers to justify more time on work stoppages. For example, nursing staff from various local clinics refused to work at the facility due to workplace safety matters. Consequently, some patients who required primary healthcare were not assisted and referred to nearby clinics while the clinic sought an urgent resolution to the matters.

Similarly, the number of working days lost in the local authority and retail sectors arose in 2024 from 2023, as the ‘trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, repair of personal household goods, and community, social, and personal services workers, refused to bargain against the employer’s wage offer.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of how disputes were resolved, 2023 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024

The resolution of a work stoppage can take many forms. The most common is agreement between the opposing parties. Such agreements are often reached without a third party, but sometimes the services of an arbitrator or adjudicator are called upon. Of the strikes and lockouts resolved between 2023 and 2024, about 74% and 88% ended after agreement was internally resolved. Approximately 6% of stoppages ended by calling the services of an arbitrator such as the CCMA and other bodies. This was followed by agreements that were reached through the bargaining council at 2% in 2024, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.

The intervention of the CCMA to resolve workplace issues was appreciated by the employers and the employees and has resulted in many strikes being called off. Due to a deadlock in talks between some unions and employers, the employees decided to return to work without an agreement. To that effect, 1% of the disputes remained unresolved in 2024. Compared to the current year, this is 14% lower than similar cases in 2023.

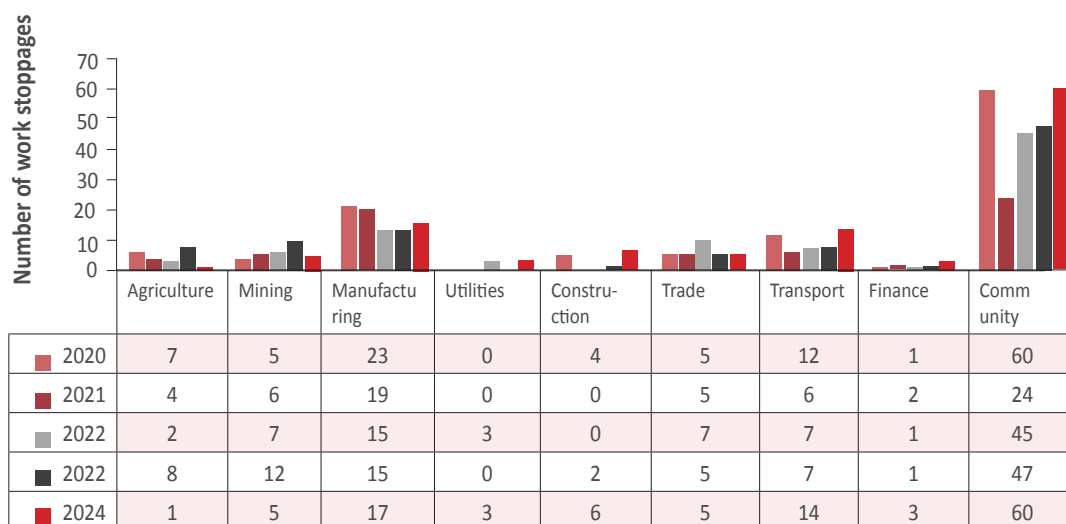
Table 3: Distribution of how annual salary increments were negotiated in South Africa.

	Oct-Dec 2023	Jan-March 2024	Apr-June 2024	July-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Year on Year change (%)
Individual and employer	1 224 000	1 138 000	1 075 000	1 052 000	1 088 000	-11.0
Union and employer	2 735 000	2 871 000	2 752 000	287 600	2 911 000	6.4
Bargaining council	1 360 000	1 352 000	1 393 000	1 421 000	1 432 000	5.3
Employer only	7 896 000	7 850 000	7 832 000	7 805 000	7 832 000	-0.8
No regular increments	790 000	835 000	805 000	816 000	797 000	0.9
Unspecified	79 000	59 000	62 000	43 000	28 000	-64.6

Source: Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), quarter 4 of 2024

Data from Statistics South Africa in **Table 3** shows similar patterns as analysed in Figure 3 above. High number of workers reported wage agreements were internally reached without a third party. In every quarter of 2024, employees reported that salary increments continued to be settled by employers only⁵. This process was followed by negotiations settled between the union and employer at the workplace and disputes resolved through bargaining councils. Comparatively, the unions and the employers have made strides to intervene between the employers and unions to resolve workplace annual salary increment disputes over the two-year period.

Figure 4: Distribution of work stoppages by industry, 2020 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

⁵ Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Four Survey, Quarter 4 of 2024, p-70.

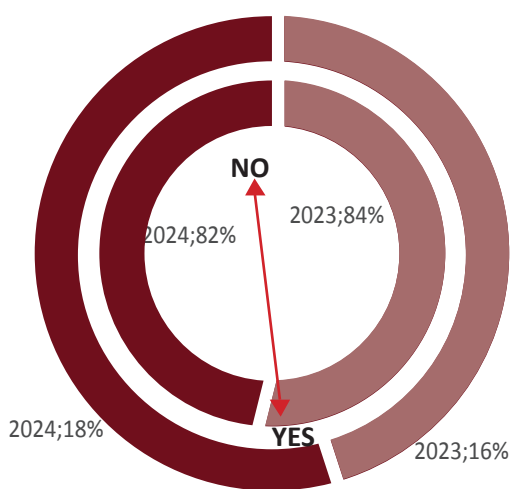
Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of workplace disputes by industry over the past five years. Over the last five years, the result shows that more strikes occurred in the community industry (the public sector). The community, manufacturing, transport, utilities, construction, transport and finance industries registered relatively large shares of strike incidents in 2024. The community industry recorded 60 strikes and 504 139 working days lost, the highest number of industrial disputes which resulted mainly from the local authority and health workers who downed tools over higher wages, grievances and unpleasant working conditions. In the same community industry, the number of strikes and lockouts increased significantly from 47 strikes in 2023 to 60 strikes in 2024, representing a 78% increase in strike activity over the same period.

The manufacturing industry registered about 15% of strikes, where 8 466 employees participated in 17 strikes, leading to 172 581 working days lost due to demand of higher wages and better working conditions. In the manufacturing industry, the strike at the steel and engineering company caused most car manufacturers and dealers to call off their manufacturing sites due to the unavailability of parts. Numsa affiliated workers' demands for profit sharing and bonuses led to intense protests at the Ford Silverton plant. In July 2024, over 3 000 workers claimed that only shareholders and management were gaining from the profits, not the workers.

Additionally, the union asserted that Ford could afford profit-sharing for everyone. Despite being brought before the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), the union failed to reach an agreement with Ford management on profit-sharing. The strike which began on July 4th was then interdicted by the Labour Court, which ruled that the collective job action was unprotected according to the law.

Furthermore, the transport industry experienced a significant rise in strike activity, with 7 strikes in 2023 and 14 strikes in 2024. Most travellers who had made travel arrangements and bookings for the December holiday seasons were affected by the 70% increase in strikes in the transport industry during the summer months (October to December). The transport industry's striking workers have continued to express concerns about unpaid bonuses and unreasonable salary increases, even as companies were making profits due to high travel demands.

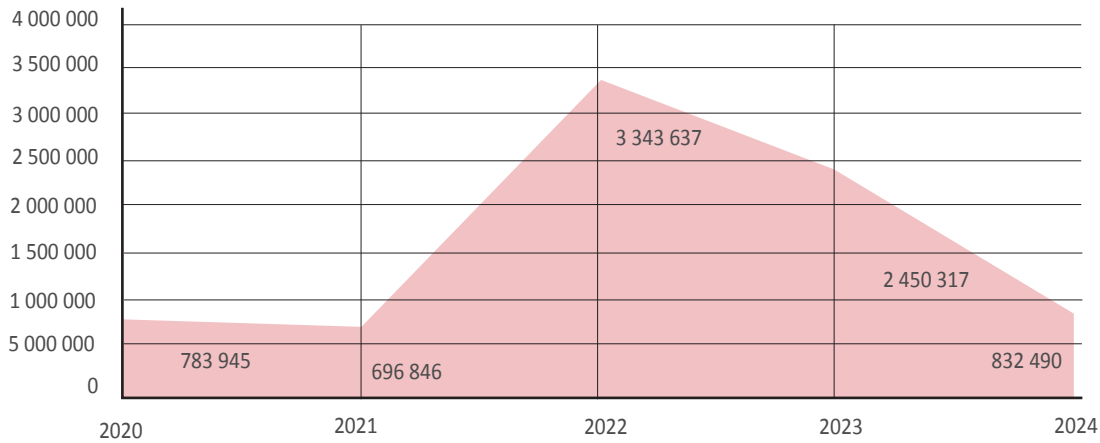
Figure 5: Percentage distribution of replacement labour used during the strikes, 2023-2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023-2024

The replacement of labour during strike incidents appears to be an important vehicle for productivity-efficiency. It might be a strategy to continually keep production in place to minimise the risk of losing profits. In **Figure 5**, 82% of employers reported not to have replaced their labour during strike activities whilst 18% of employers used replacement labour in 2024. The community, manufacturing, transport and construction industries were relatively affected with work stoppages; therefore, replacement of labour was strategically considered in the industries. In the manufacturing industry, for example, the replacement of labour was mainly applied in the basic metals, fabricated metal products, machinery and equipment and manufacturing of food products, beverages and tobacco products sub-sectors over the same period.

Figure 6: Trends in working days lost⁶ in South Africa, 2020-2024

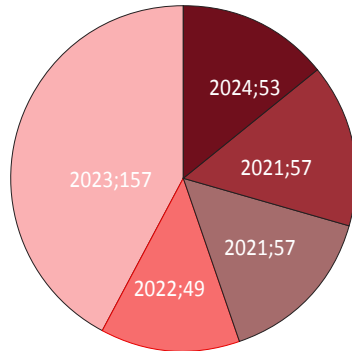


Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

As per its definition, workdays lost average 3.3 million annually in the 2022, 2.4 million in 2023, but 7 hundred thousand and 6 hundred thousand in 2020 and 2021 as presented in **Figure 6** above. The working days lost decreased dramatically from 2.5 million with 97 strikes in 2023 to slightly above 8 hundred thousand with 114 strikes in 2024. This represents a decrease of 66% in working days lost across all industries over the two years.

The variation in working days lost was attributed by the lower number of workers who participated in strikes and the duration only because of the trade and finance workers’ union strikes over grievances against the employers. Dissatisfaction over wage increase and other related workplace demands was the cause of working days lost.

Figure 7: Working days lost per 1 000⁷ employees (time-loss ratio) due to strikes, 2020 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database 2020-2024

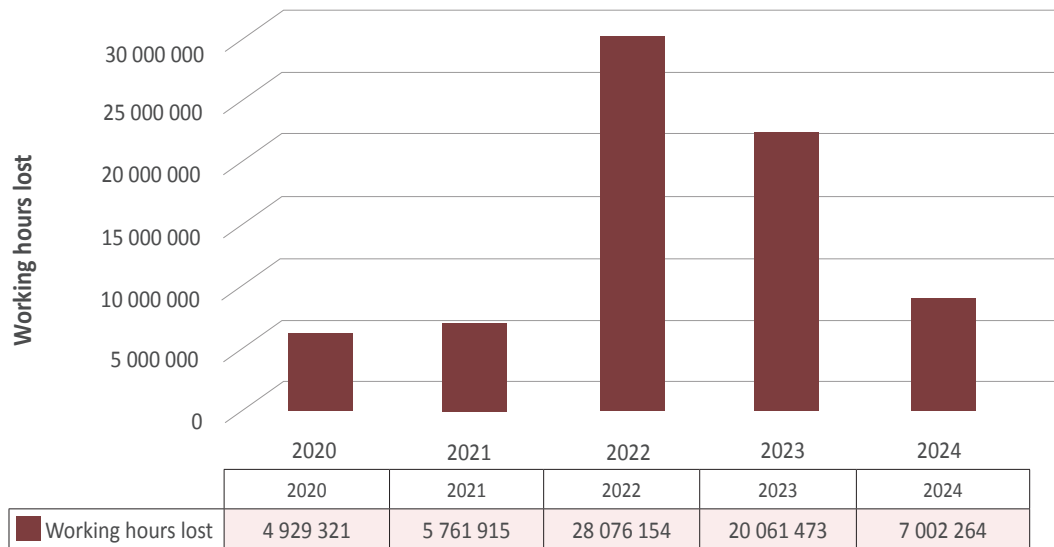
Using a time-loss ratio of the number of workdays lost per 1 000 employees enables more meaningful comparisons of annual work-stoppage statistics. The time-loss ratio reveals an overall declining trend from an annual average of 57 workdays lost per 1 000 employees in 2020 to 49 in 2022, an increase to 157 in 2023 and declined to 53 in 2024 as shown in **Figure 7**. In other words, for every 1 000 employees who participated in a strike in 2024, 53 working days were lost. Although strikes have largely occurred in big companies, fewer workers have decided to participate in work stoppages as reported by employers to the department in 2024. *While using the OECD strikes data for the period of 2020-2021 to compare with South Africa, France (79 days) had the highest annual average lost days due to strikes, followed by Belgium (57 days), Norway (50 days), and Denmark and Finland (49 days each)⁸.*

⁶ The working days lost due to strike implies the total number of workers involved directly in the strikes or lockouts multiplies by the length of work stoppage. These are of little use purposes of international comparisons. The number of days not worked per 1 000 employees will be the best estimate for such international comparison.

⁷ This indicator allows for international comparison in strike activity where data is available. For international comparison, the ratio distinguishes which country is “strike-prone” when compared to another country..

⁸ <https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/03/07/industrial-action-in-france-and-the-uk-which-countries-have-the-most-strikes-in-europe>.

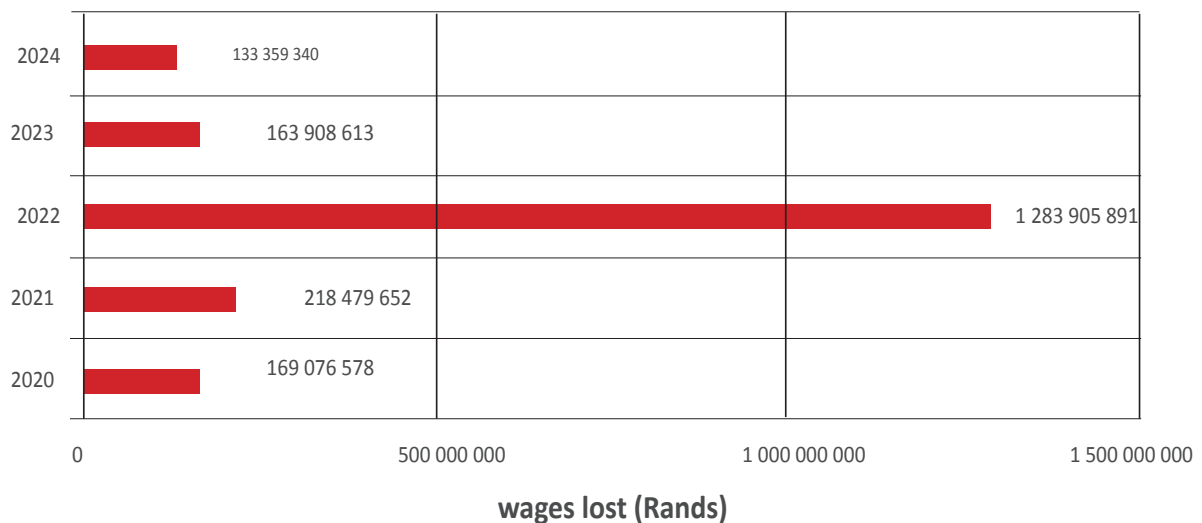
Figure 8: Trends in working hours lost in South Africa, 2020 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database 2020-2024

As a result of fewer working days lost in 2024, **Figure 8** shows almost the same patterns as the downward trends with working from 2022 to 2024. There were 7 002 264 working hours lost in 2024 down from 20 million and 28 million working hours lost due to strikes in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The average working hours lost across industries decreased by 65% in 2024.

Figure 9: Wages lost⁹ due to work stoppages in South Africa, 2020-2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database 2020 - 2024

During the strike, employees mostly adopted the opportunity of cost principle. It is the potential forgone profit from a missed opportunity. Most often workers will prefer to choose one wage settlement over another wage settlement. It is a difficult decision to make but it has to be for high wage expectations to face multiple factors associated with the socio-economic conditions. However, strikes have a substantial economic cost resulting in revenue losses for both businesses and the government. When production is disrupted, businesses experience lower sales and revenue, impacting their profitability and ability to invest.

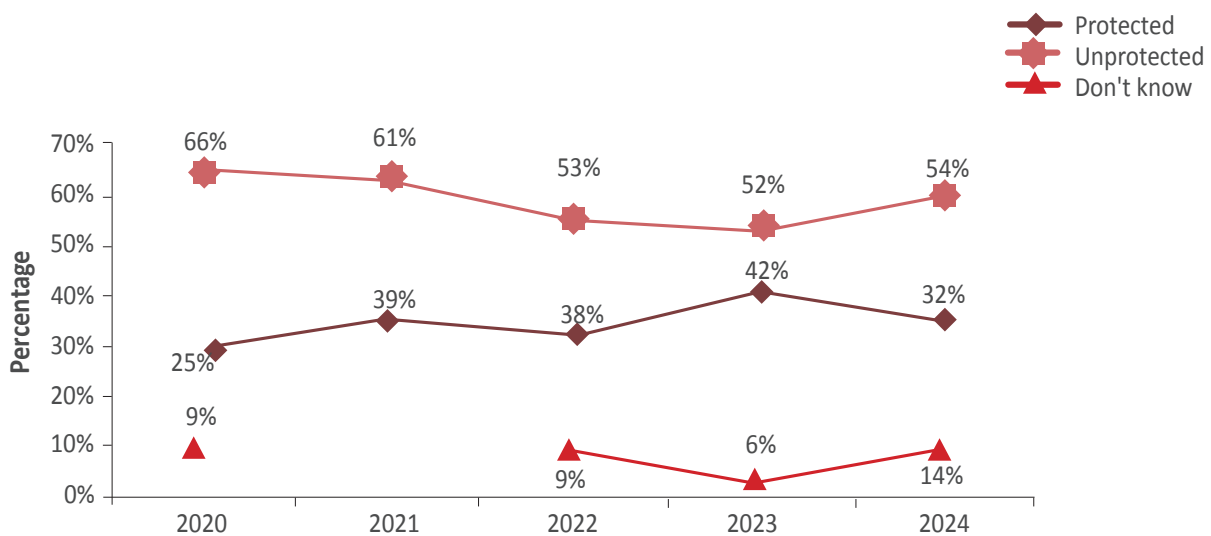
⁹ There is a need for a case study to gather data from a number of companies that were affected by the strike activity in order to estimate the cost of strike to company. This can be a case study for the Research unit in the future. .

Over the last five years, strikes have cost the South African economy millions and billions of rands. In 2024, South Africa’s workers lost an estimated R133 million in wages due to 114 strike activities reaching a low in wages lost over the past five years. It can be argued that the decrease in wages lost was attributed to the fewer working days that workers spend in the streets to demand their basic needs against the employers and the effectiveness in resolving workplace disputes between unions and employers.

The manufacturing industry which contributed to 15% of work stoppages, has recorded 40% of the overall wages lost in 2024 as workers stayed longer on the streets before wage settlement.

Despite having recorded lower wages due to strikes activities in 2024, most families were still impacted with the effects of income loss. Subsequently, the government may continue to increase social welfare costs as workers loose income during strikes and rely on support programmes. Notwithstanding this, these economic costs can strain public finances and hinder overall economic development.

Figure 10: Percentage distribution of the protected and unprotected strikes in South Africa, 2020 - 2024



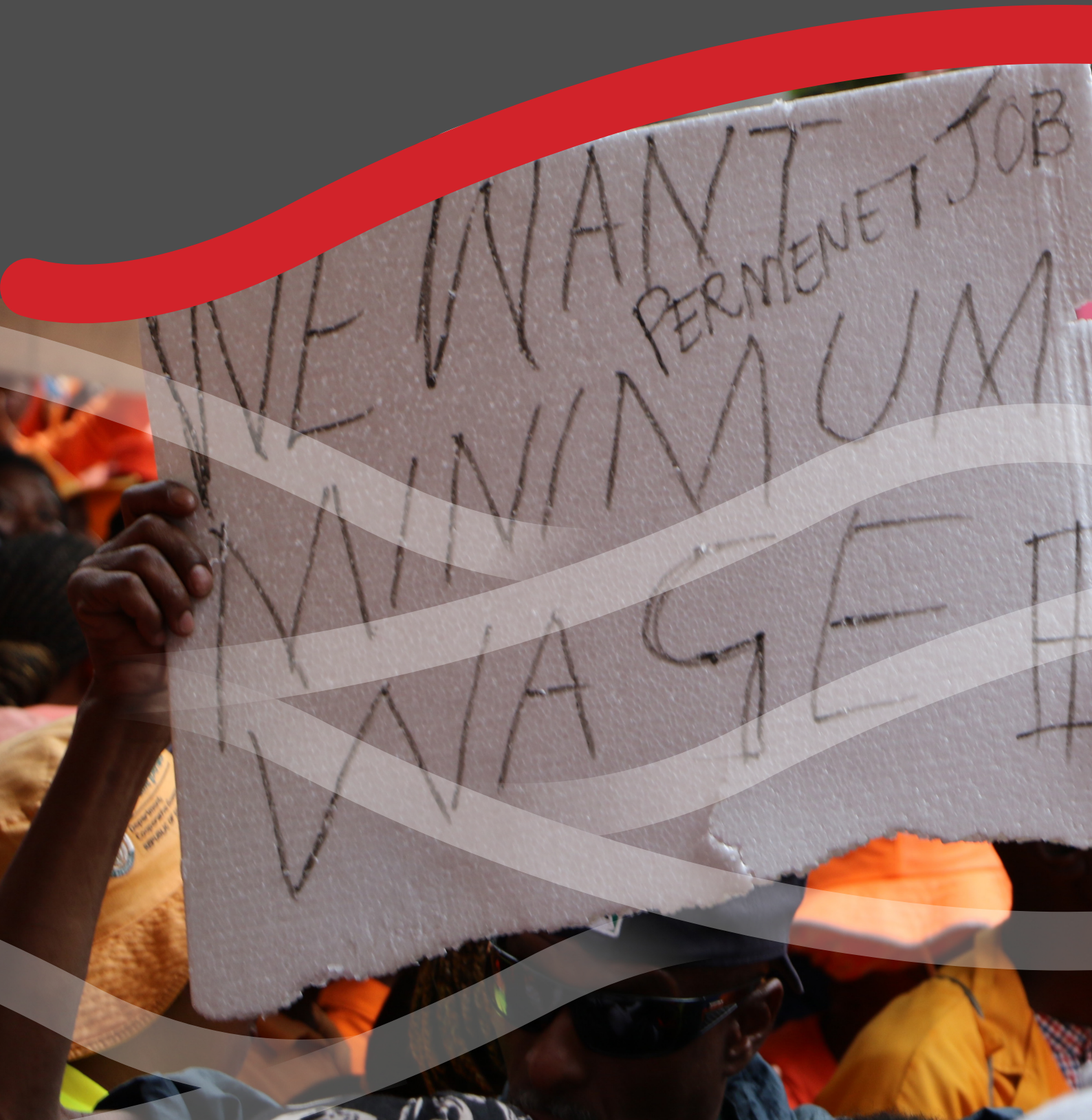
Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

Understanding the difference between protected and unprotected strikes is critical for both employers and employees in South Africa as compliance with the legal procedures in that protected strikes ensures that employees can exercise their rights while employers uphold labour laws across workplaces. However, engaging in an unprotected strike can have severe consequences for employees, including potential dismissals. Over the past five years, strike statistics collected from the employers indicate that not all workers and labour unions complied with the labour laws before going on strikes activities in the country. As painted in **Figure 10**, more than half of strike incidents (54%) were unprotected as reported by employers in 2024. Approximately, 32% of strikes were compliant with the labour laws (protected) over the same period. The persistent proportion of unprotected strikes is a matter of concern considering an increase of 2% and a significant decrease of 10% in the level of protected strikes over the past two years.

Emanating from the unprotected strike actions, the community and manufacturing industries registered these strike incidents because of wage demands and other working conditions and grievances against the employers.

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN WORK STOPPAGES, 2023 AND 2024



CHAPTER TWO: ANALYSIS OF THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN WORK STOPPAGES, 2023 AND 2024

Using the DEL strike database, this chapter examines trends in work stoppages over the past years. Particular attention is focused on the most recent years (2023 to 2024) in an examination of incidences on the number of workdays lost, hours lost, wages lost across various industries.

To some extent the distribution of employment size and trade union participation in strike incidents is also comparatively presented. Prior to the analysis, it is important to acknowledge that income inequality and the cost of living have continuously limited worker's purchasing power in the country. Without the ability to strike, workers have little leverage against employer's powers. In this case, the right to strike is about upholding a standard for what decent work looks like in the country. Unfortunately, South Africa's debt-service costs has become its largest spending item and are rising faster than economic growth. In the manufacturing industry, for example, outputs have shrunk in the fourth quarter of 2024 after production declined, albeit slower than expected, dragged lower mainly by motor vehicles and transport equipment.

Data from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) displayed that manufacturing production fell by 1.2% (year-on-year) in December 2024, following a downwardly revised 1.9% decrease in the prior month and coming in below the expected 1.7%. Subsequently, the manufacturing's basic metals, fabricated metal products, machinery and equipment sector performance have dropped as the services and logistics industries have thrived, accompanied by rising dissatisfaction over salary increments and working conditions.

2.1. Industrial distribution of work stoppages and wages lost by industry, 2023 - 2024

Table 4: Distribution of work stoppages and wages lost by industry, 2023 – 2024

Industry*	No. of work stoppages 2023	Worker's wage lost (Total 2023 (Rand's))	No. of work stoppages 2024	Worker's wage lost (Total 2024 (Rand's))
Agriculture	8	13 826 631	1	0
Mining	12	40 520 060	5	39 079 241
Manufacturing	15	36 582 251	17	53 393 390
Utilities	0	0	3	0
Construction	2	1 043 491	6	3 933 895
Trade	5	53 322 083	5	1 556 719
Transport	7	3 418 029	14	5 410 527
Finance	1	0	3	97 233
Community	47	15 196 068	60	29 888 335
Total	97	163 908 613	114	133 359 340

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023-2024 (*Note that the Standard International Classification (SIC) was used (excluding the Private household total industry)).

In **Table 4**, the statistics reflect the work stoppages and wages lost by industry over the two-year period. As the number of work stoppages increases between 2023 and 2024, the wages lost decreased. By industry the manufacturing, mining and community industries were mostly affected with production losses mainly from wage increase demand and bonus related demands. In the manufacturing industry, protests for unpaid wages were large-scaled and intense. The industry accounted for 40% of the total wages lost in 2024. For example, in July, more than 3 500 Numsa workers from Ford SA went on a 7-day strike over Ford's management refusal to share its profits with workers. During the period of the strike, the production and supply of parts throw supply chain processes were affected and caused disarray in the industry.

Meanwhile, the improved economic performance of the mining industry in 2024 has thrived workers to demand higher wages and bonuses from most companies. The mining industry, which is the largest contributor to the country's economy was hit by the illegal strike from the platinum sector. The 4-day illegal

work stoppage involving more than 42 000 contract workers at the mining’s North Shaft of Impala Bafokeng’s BRPM operation started on June 27 with workers demanding permanent positions. Allegedly, the illegal strike caused attendance levels to drop between 60%-70%. On the other hand, 233 workers associated with the Independent Commercial Hospitality and Allied workers Union from the agriculture’ fishing, operation of fish hatcheries and fish farms were locked out from the workplace after failed negotiations with the employer. After the lockout strike, the matter with the employer was soon resolved and workers returned to work without wages being lost. Essentially the principle of “no work no pay” was not applied to workers who participated in the lockout strike.

2.2. Industrial distribution of working days lost, 2023 - 2024

Table 5: Distribution of working days lost by industry, 2023 - 2024

Industry	Working days lost 2024		
	2023	2024	% change
Agriculture	56 428	2 330	-95.9
Mining	133 081	79 132	-40.5
Manufacturing	136 896	172 581	26.1
Utilities	0	1 844	0.0
Construction	5 355	22 005	310.9
Trade	160 690	28 334	-82.4
Transport	20 447	21 646	5.9
Finance	1 575	479	-69.6
Community	1 935 845	504 139	-74.0
Total	2 450 317	832 490	-66.0

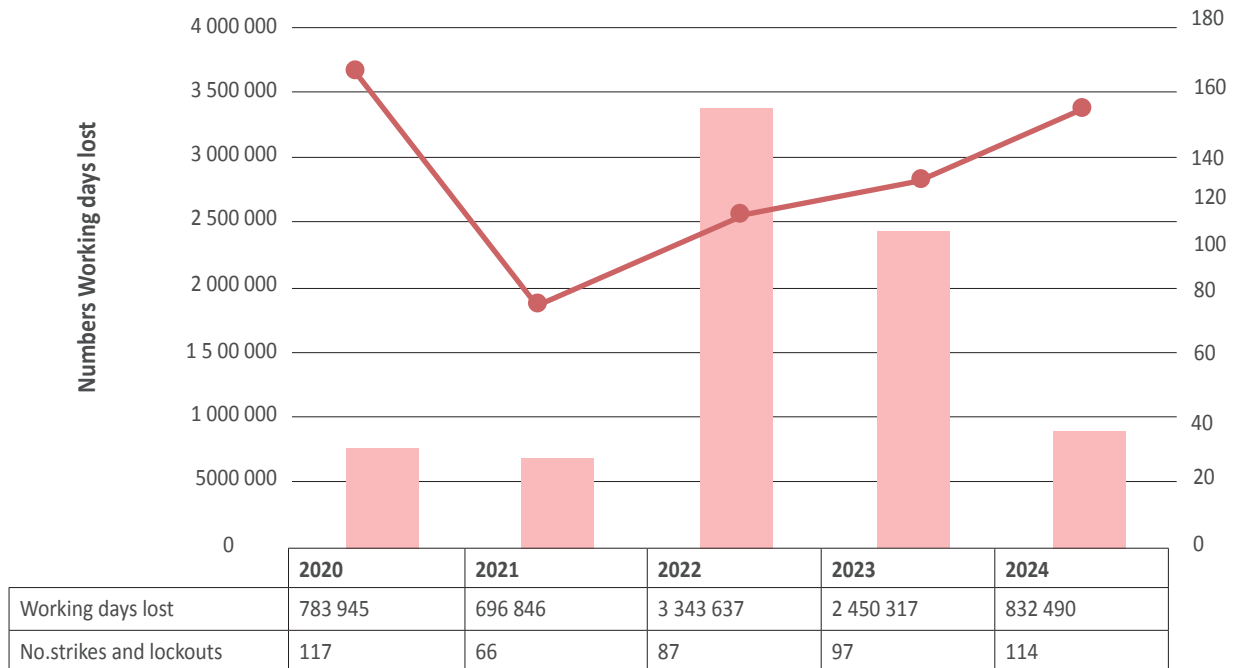
Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023-2024 (Excluding the private household industry)

As discussed above, **Table 5** reflects the changes in the working days lost by industry between 2023 and 2024. Overall, the total number of working days lost decreased by almost 66% over the two years. The decline in working days lost in 2024 suggests that there was not much of the economic impact where few workers were involved in the strikes activities due to fear of becoming worse off financially. Contrary, results could also suggest that workers and the unions may have averted the strike actions and accepted the employer’s offer presented to them.

The community industry experienced the most (504 139) working days lost, representing 60% of the total working days lost due to work stoppages in 2024. However, it recorded a drop of 74% in working days lost due to workers’ demands between 2023 and 2024. To some extent, cleanup operations went on hold and residents suffered from a lack of service delivery after SAMWU’s striking workers called off their duties over working conditions and salary increase demands.

The changes in the construction industry are alarming since more than 300 working days were registered in the industry between 2023 and 2024. On the other hand, the finance industry was less affected as it lost 479 working days considering the number of strike and the workers who participated in the 2024 strikes activities. Working days lost in the finance industry declined by 69% between 2023 and 2024.

Figure 11: Trend in the working days lost and number of strikes, 2020 - 2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

The relationship that exists between the number of strike incidents and working days lost is illustrated in **Figure 11**. Despite the rise in the number of strikes activities in 2024, the working days lost were fewer. The results could indicate that there was not much of the economic impact where workers spend time on the streets to demand better wages and workplace conditions against the employers. Looking at the past two-years, the number of work stoppages increased while the working days lost decreased but the pattern seems to be moving in the same direction in previous years.

2.3. Industrial distribution of working hours lost, 2023-2024

Table 6: Distribution of working hours lost by industry, 2023-2024

Industry*	Working hours lost 2024		
	2023	2024	% Change
Agriculture	421 470	20 970	-95.0
Mining	1 325 164	868 928	-34.4
Manufacturing	1 212 137	1 455 158	20.0
Utilities	0	14 752	0.0
Construction	48 143	197 765	310.8
Trade	1 291 506	228 293	-82.3
Transport	165 029	201 171	21.9
Finance	12 600	3 832	-69.6
Community	15 585 424	4 011 395	-74.3
Total	20 061 473	7 002 264	-65.0

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database; 2023-2024 (*Note: The Private household industry is excluded because of zero work stoppages was recorded).

The distribution of working hours lost due to strikes by industry is presented in **Table 6** above. Similar to the lower working days lost recorded, the total working hours lost decreased in 2024. Overall, it decreased by 65% due to work stoppages. The decrease in the working hours lost was because of fewer employees who participated in strikes activities and fewer hours spend on the streets to petition their demands against employers.

Data collected from the employers shows that out of 832 490 working days lost in 2024, about 7 002 264 working hours were lost due to work stoppages. The community industry who recorded the highest strikes incidents recorded the highest working hours mainly due the local authority strike incidents. The community industry could have been worst hit with working days and hours as one of the municipalities, the SAMWU averted strike from the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) on the 6th September 2024, which represents the country’s 257 municipalities. The construction industry recorded 5% of strike with an annual increase of 310.8% of working hours lost over the two-year period.

2.4. Working days lost per 1 000 employees by industry, 2023-2024

Table 7: Time-loss ratio¹⁰ by industry, 2023-2024

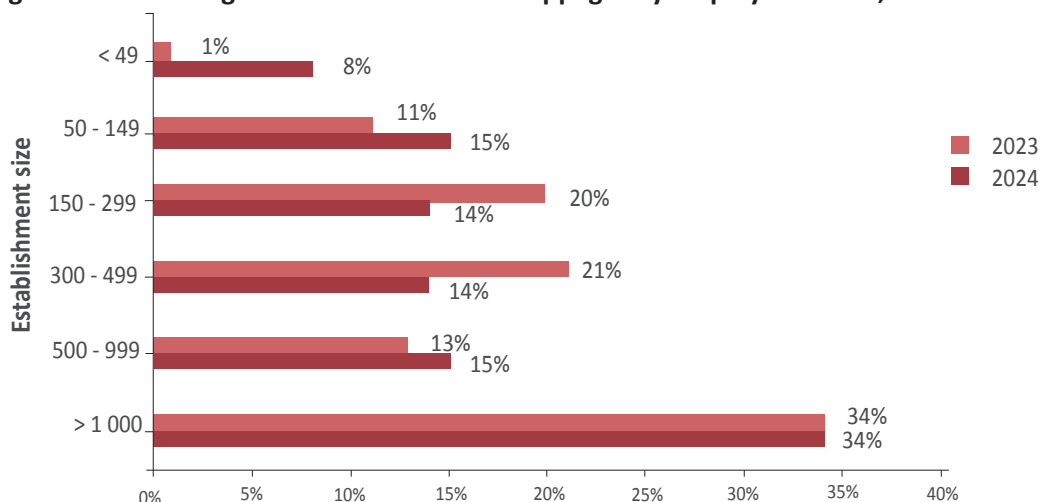
Industry	Time-loss ratio		Total number of workers*	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
Agriculture	61.3	2.4	920 000	934 000
Mining	298.4	163.4	446 000	484 000
Manufacturing	90.8	105.5	1 507 000	1 635 000
Utilities	0.0	14.5	123 000	127 000
Construction	4.1	15.9	1 322 000	1 38 1000
Trade	47.8	8.1	3 362 000	3 469 000
Transport	20.0	20.6	1 023 000	1 047 000
Finance	0.5	0.1	2 964 000	2 716 000
Community	494.7	12.4	3 913 000	4 021 000

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database (Note: * Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Survey, quarter 4 of 2024 Total employment by industry (excl. Private households' industry))

Table 7 illustrates the time-loss ratio of working days lost per 1 000 employees by industry in 2023 and 2024. The mining and manufacturing industries were mostly affected with time loss due to industrial disputes in 2024. In the mining industry metal ores, except gold and uranium and other mining and quarrying recorded the highest value of 163.4 days lost per 1 000 employees in 2024. Strikes in the finance and agriculture industries lasted for fewer days at 0.1 and 2.4 in 2024. This is associated with the number of employees who participated in the short duration of strikes in the industries.

2.5. Work stoppages by employment size of establishments, 2023 - 2024

Figure 12: Percentage distribution of work stoppages by employment size, 2023 – 2024



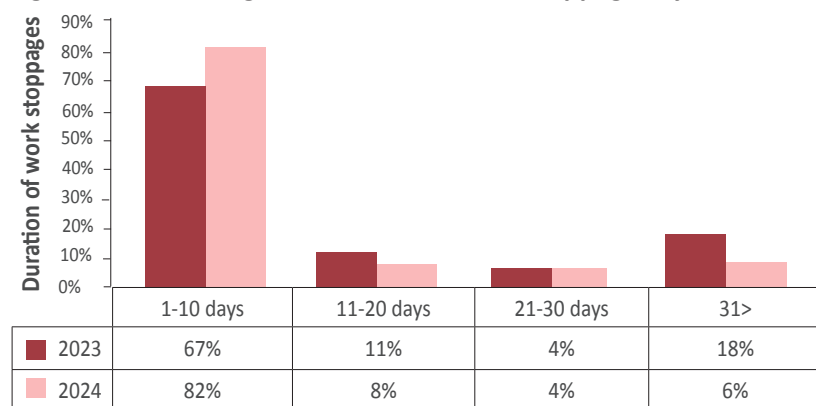
Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023-2024

¹⁰ This is the measure which best reconciles the number of days lost due to industrial action with the varying sizes of the countries’ employed population and provides a reasonable basis for international comparisons. In this report, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter four of 2020, were used regarding the total number of employees by industry.

Figure 12 above shows the work stoppages by the size of establishment which is associated with the number of employees. The majority of workplace disputes were from the largest establishments with more than 1 000 employees in 2023 and 2024. The proportion of strike incidents from the largest establishments remained steadily at 34%. For example, Cosatu had called for a one-day nation-wide strike against the crippling high unemployment rate in the country¹¹. Determined to have their workplace disputes resolved in 2024, workers from medium sized establishments between 150 - 299 and 300 - 499 accounted to 20% and 21%, respectively.

2.6. Duration of work stoppages, 2023-2024

Figure 13: Percentage distribution of work stoppages by duration, 2023-2024



Source: Department of Employment and Labour Strikes Statistics database 2023-2024

Figure 13 shows the distribution of work stoppages by duration across all economic sectors. Clearly, the trends has not changed much in terms of the duration of strikes during the last two years. The analysis of strike statistics in 2024 reflects that the most workplace disputes were resolved at a short space of time. Efficient and effective labour dispute resolution overcomes the lengthy delays and saves on company cost, productivity and largely socio-economic impact on both employers and employees.

The results above shows that 82% of strikes lasted on average between 1-10 days while 6% of strike lasted for more than 31 days in 2024. This is a similar pattern where most 67% of work stoppages lasted on average between 1-10 days in 2023. In general, there were lower percentages of work stoppages that lasted for longer than 11 and more days (18%) compared to 33% of strikes that lasted for longer than 11 days in 2023. The Bombela Operating Company Workers represented by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), for example, have expressed frustration over the prolonged negotiations. Workers downed tools in protest demanding a 13% of wage increase over months long negotiations.

¹¹ Joined by affiliated trade unions including the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU) and the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), Cosatu has stated that its primary grievance is South Africa's high unemployment rate, with 11.3 million people in need of jobs. Given the high unemployment rate, Cosatu was demanding a moratorium on retrenchments because it doesn't make sense to say we have this high unemployment rate and we are still cutting the jobs in the country.

2.7. Trade union involvement in work stoppages, 2024

Table 8: Distribution of work days lost by trade union membership involved, 2023-2024

Name of the union	Employees involved per trade union in 2023	Days lost per trade union in 2023	%	Employees involved per union in every strike in 2024	Days lost per trade unions in 2024	%
AFADWU	281	13 577	0.55	0	0	0
AS	0	0	0,0	285	1 893	0.2
AMCU	315	10 014	0.41	1 082	5 410	0.6
BWAWUSA	0	0	0	284	7 100	0.9
DENOSA	0	0	0	499	2 751	0.3
FAWU	882	7 767	0.32	428	1 399	0.2
GIWUSA	0	0	0	131	8 135	1
HOSPERSA	1	2	0	253	1 120	0.1
ICHAWU	0	0	0	172	1 336	0.2
IMATU	444	6 970	0.28	54	90	0
ITU	0	0	0	150	9 300	1.1
NASA	66	5 016	0.2	0	0	0
NASAWU	79	7 110	0.29	0	0	0
NEHAWU	6 281	49 153	2.01	2 366	20 344	2.4
None reported	11 667	951 322	38.8	17 072	55 939	6.1
NONE UNION MEMBERS	18 059	872 182	35.5	13 299	287 443	0.3
NUM	569	5 008	0.2	1 032	5 160	0.6
NUMSA	3 347	84 761	3.46	5 256	64 235	7.7
NUFBSAW	562	30910	1.26	0	0	0
NUFBWSAW	1 115	50 175	2.05	0	0	0
NUPSAW	600	1 800	0.07	271	789	0.1
PSA	53	272	0.01	456	2 734	0.3
SACCAWU	4 683	147 087	6	0	0	0
SADTU	0	0	0	1 290	3 470	0.4
SAEWA	86	946	0.04	130	520	0,1
SAIAWU	0	0	0	209	2 508	0.3
SAICWU	0	0	0,00	105	1 260	0.2
SAMWU	18 729	187 760	7.66	20 229	346 349	41,6
SAPTU	176	2816	0.11	0	0	0
SATAWU	479	15 579	0.64	447	3 198	0.4
SOLIDARITY	49	90	0	1	7	0

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2023-2024 (*Note all LRA 9.2 forms provided accurate estimates in terms of number of employees involved per union membership names. Follow ups were made with employers but limited responses were received by the time of writing the report. Thus, readers must take the “not reported figures” with caution)..

Detailing on the distribution of working days lost by trade union membership involved in work stoppages, the role and effectiveness of our country’s trade union can be viewed as union’s owning up to the conditions of workers at the workplace. Over the two years, the proportion of membership from the SAMWU were largely represented on the streets while they demonstrate their workplace disputes.

As shown in **Table 8**, the strike results reflect that the proportion of trade union in the local authority services was at 7.7% in 2024 compared to 41.6% in 2023. However, more than half of the strikes in 2024 were reportedly unprotected by the local authority sector. As labour unions like SAMWU navigate the challenges faced by the workers, the focus remains on addressing grievances and ensuring fair treatment for workers at the workplaces. There was a shift in the number of unionized members who lost time on the streets over workplace demands. The trade union membership number has drastically dropped from 35.5% to 0.5% over the two years.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN WAGE SETTLEMENTS, 2024





CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN WAGE SETTLEMENTS, 2024

The South African government recognizes the rights of workers to organize, bargain collectively and strike. These are legal frameworks through which workers have historically won better wages, safer working conditions and dignity on the job against socio-economic conditions such as the rising cost of living and high debt service costs that have eroded the limited buying power of the consumers. It is understood that all parties will be better off if the strike processes are well managed at the workplaces.

On 27 February 2024, Matthew Parks, from Cosatu News cautioned that the annual salary increase in workers is critical moreover should ensure that at the very least workers receive an increase which is in line with inflation,” to an expected 5% of the country’s Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) rate. The effective collective bargaining as a fundamental principle has also ensured successful conclusion of long and rigorous salary and wage negotiations in 2024. The agreements recognized the critical need to improve livelihoods and a positive working relationship between the employees and the employers. In this regard, this chapter addresses matters on how wage settlements were concluded during the strikes in various industries. The distribution of final wage settlements in selected industries and wage settlements concluded without strike incidents is also examined.

3.1. Wage settlements concluded after the strikes ended in various industries, 2023 - 2024

Table 9: Median¹² wage settlement in various industries, 2023 – 2024

Industry	2023 (%)	2024 (%)
Agriculture	7%	7%
Construction	7%	6.5%
Mining	8%	7%
Manufacturing	7%	7%
Utilities	7%	7%
Finance	7%	7%
Transport	7%	7%
Trade	6%	7%
Community	7%	6%

Source: Labour Research Service, Wage settlements Trends, December 2023- 2024

Looking closely at the last two years, Labour Research Service (LRS) data shows how wage settlements were concluded in various industries. According to **Table 9**, the average number of wage settlements remained steadily at 7% over the two years. The median wage settlement from all industries remained the same at 7% except for the construction and community industries at 6.5% and 6%.

On the other hand, the mining industry who settled for 8% in 2023 settled for the average 7% wage settlements in 2024. Meanwhile, the community industry who was affected by most strikes settled for the below (6%) median wage agreements in 2024.

¹² The median is the number, which found in the middle of a range of numbers. For example: if the range of numbers is 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 then the median is 10.

Table 10: Distribution of final wage settlement in selected industries, 2024

Industry	Employer	Agreement date	Initial demand	Employer offer	Settlement	Protected / unprotected
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing	Sea Harvest (PTY) LTD	9 December	8%	6.5%	6.5%	Protected
Community, Social & Personal Services	Nelson Mandela University	15 March	8%	1.1%	6.9% plus 0.55%	Protected
	Pretoria University	11 March	7%	4%	5.1% plus 1 %	Protected
	University of Cape Town	16 May	10%	5.8%	5.6%	Unprotected
	uShaka Marine World	15 March	25%	5%	5.5% - 6.5 %	Protected
	South African Bureau of Standards	2 August	4-5.8%	4-5.8%	4-5.8%	Protected
	Lupo Bakery	26 November	13%	10%	10% plus 2% UIF	Protected
Manufacturing	Premier's Ministers sweet	1 November	19 500 per month	7%	7%	Protected
	RCL Foods (Tzaneen)	4 March	R500	R430	R430	Protected
	RFG foods (Pty) Ltd	16 August	8.49%	7.52%	7.52%	Protected
Mining & Quarrying	Imerys Refractory Minerals SA	30 June	12.5%	6.5%	6.5%	Protected
Transport, Storage & Communication	South African Airways	7 December	15.7%	8.46%	9.47%	Protected
	Bombela Operating Company	25 July	13%	6.5%	6.8%	Protected

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024

The wage increase strike has given rise to several questions surrounding an employer’s responsibility towards its employees. The question can be asked, do employers have an obligation to offer unreasonable wage increase or to offer reasonable wage increase to employees? Consequently, employers are put under pressure because of the South African economy that is struggling to recover from inflationary target and the rising cost of interest rate. Following negotiations involved, parties agreed on final offers with notable improvements in respect of the cost-of-living adjustments.

Drawn from the results in **Table 10**, it’s clear that collective bargaining faced major challenges where in some instances unions from various sectors rejected the employer’s offer and resorted to taking their grievances to the street until the employers improved offer. However, using the Consumer Price Index as a yardstick during salary negotiations, unions across various industries have accepted an above average 5% wage offer from the employers. It must be understood that the 2024 wage negotiations were about give and take with unions eventually settling for what is reasonable despite their above wage increment demand. Even though the median wage settlement was at 7% across most industries, parties involved in wage negotiations were able to push for a 5% above inflation wage increase. Amongst others, unions representing the Transport, Storage & Communication’s South African Airways, victoriously reached a way above the 5% wage offer with the employer.

3.2. Wage settlements concluded without strike incidents, 2024

The decision by the union to terminate the strike was taken after constructive negotiations. It was of extreme importance for the affected employers to amicably negotiate with all stakeholders to place the interest of business on a path of sustainability considering the dire situation facing the businesses and the demands of the workers.

3.2.1. Averted strike incidents

The South African employers, unions along with bargaining councils managed to avert and abandon workplace dispute activities and concluded salary and wage negotiations for employees in the various sectors in 2024. The agreements below entail that:

- On 6 September the SAMWU reached a consensus with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) 2024, which represents the country's 257 municipalities and their entities in the South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC). A 5-year salary and wage collective agreement was reached effectively from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2029.

Details of the wage agreement were as follows:

- 2024/25 financial year: Workers will receive a 6 percent salary and wage increase, payable as follows: A 4.5 percent increase, effective from 1 July 2024 and an additional 1.5 percent increase, payable by 1 March 2025.
 - 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years: Workers will receive a salary increase of CPI plus 0.75 percent.
 - 2027/28 and 2028/29 financial years: For these years, salary increases would be pegged at CPI plus 1.25 percent
 - Conditions of Service: All conditions of service linked to salary increases such as allowances will increase by the same percentage in all financial years. However, in the first year of the agreement, housing allowance and employer contributions to medical aid will increase by 4.5 percent.
 - Housing allowance for low-income workers: employees earning R22 000 per month or less who do not currently receive any form of housing allowance will benefit from a once-off payment of R2 000 in the first year of the agreement.
- The parties signed a one-year wage agreement with the SAMREA on behalf of its members in the sugar sector on 19 July 2024. The agreement, which was effective from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, follows an extensive three-month negotiating period as well as a deadlock in June 2024. Both parties, UASA and SAMREA ultimately agreed to a 7% wage increase for all employees as well as a shift allowance increase of 11.5%. Employers would also be increasing employees' medical aid contributions to 60%, with employees paying the balance.
 - On 18 July 2024, the trade union UASA signed a **five-year wage agreement** with the management of the Cullinan mine, which is owned by London-listed Petra Diamonds. The agreement was effective from 1 July 2024 to 1 July 2028, stipulating a 5.5% or consumer price inflation (CPI) increase for entry level or C-Lower, employees for the first three years and a 6% increase in years four and five. C-Upper employees would receive a 5% or CPI increase every year in the first three years of the agreement and a 5.25% or CPI increase in years four and five. The company's pension fund contribution for C-Upper employees would increase by 0.5% from 7.5% for the duration of the agreement.
 - On 7 June 2024, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) Kimberley Region concluded and signed a **five-year wage agreement** on behalf of its members at diversified mining and metals company South32's Hotazel Manganese Mines in the Northern Cape. The parties agreed to the harmonisation of B-lower-level employees, effective from 1 June 2024. On the agreement, the B-Band employees would receive a wage increase of 7% in year one of the agreement, a 6.5% increase in year two and 6% in years three, four and five. The C-Band employees would receive a 6.5% increase in year one, 6.2% in year two and 5.7% in years three, four and five.
 - The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (NUMSA) reached an above-inflation **multi-term wage agreement** with earth-moving equipment company Almar Investments, which would see workers earning average increases of 7% for the next three years. The pay deal would translate to a 7% increase from March 2024 to February 2025, an increase of 7.5% from March 2025 to February 2026 and 7% from March 2026 to February 2027.

- The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) concluded a 2024/2025 wage increment agreement with Amanzi Bargaining Council on 9 July 2024. This agreement came after protracted negotiations at the Amanzi Bargaining Council resulting in parties concluding an agreement that in the main covers salary increment, housing allowance and conditions of employment. The agreement reached that salaries and wages of employees covered by the bargaining unit would be increased by 7% across the board with housing allowance increased by R200 to R3 700 per month including the annual leave entitlement which would be increased to 30 days for the financial year 2024/25.
- South African National Parks and the National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers (NUPSAW) has signed a **three-year multi wage agreement** which was effective from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027. The agreement entailed those employees from 19 national parks within the bargaining unit of Job Grade A1-C5 who were employed prior to 1 April 2024 would receive an across-the-board increase of 7% for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and 1% salary adjustment as an annual pay progression. Consequently, the qualifying bargaining unit employees would receive an 8% increase. The parties further agreed to salary adjustments for the financial years 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 based on the projected Consumer Price Index plus 1%. Employees would also receive a 5% increase to the night shift allowance, danger allowance and sleep-out allowance.
- The CWU and BEMAWU parties were unable to reach a wage agreement against the SABC on the backdating of the agreed increase from April 2023. The initial demand on the increase was 18% later dropped to 12% and then 9%. The union members in SABC were further willing to accept the SABC's 6% offer on condition that it's backdated to 1 April 2023. The parties settled on the 6% salary increases on the 22 April 2024 with effective from 1 October 2024.
- On 7 May 2024, the NUMSA and SATAWU unions signed a **two-year deal** with employers in the bus passenger sector for increases of 5% and 6.5%. The wage talks between unions NUMSA and the SATAWU unions and employer organizations, the SA Bus Employers Association (SABEA) and the Commuters Bus Employers Organization (COBEO) got under way in February 2024 at the SA Road Passenger Bargaining Council, which covers operators such as PUTCO, Bojanala Bus, Algoa Bus Company and Great North Transport. The parties secured an across-the-board increase of 5% on the rate of pay, which was implemented from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025. In the second year of the agreement, an increase of 6.5% on the base rate of pay would be implemented from 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026. From 1 April 2024 the minimum hourly rate would increase to R48.15 and from 1 April 2025 it would increase to R51.28 until March 2026. Among other benefits, the travel allowance would increase to R786.48 effective from 1 April 2024 and to R837.60 on 1 April 2025. The dual driver allowance had been increased to R476.36 for the first year effective 1 April 2024 and in the second year it would increase to R507.32 on 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026.
- The SEIFSA affiliated membership, which accounts for 57% of all affiliated to NUMSA, signed the **three-year** metals and engineering sector wage agreement on 13 May 2024 at the Birchwood Conference Centre, in Boksburg. The agreement detailed that the Rate A in year one would receive an increase of 6% and Rate H 7%. In years two and three of the agreement, Rate A would receive an increase of 5% and Rate H 6%.

3.2.1. Abandoned strike incidents

- In the case of abandoned strike incidents, GIWUSA union members went on strike from 28 June to 29 July 2024 demanding 15% salary increase from the employer's offer of 7% salary increase. Due to a deadlock in talks between the union and RIBA manufacturers, the employees decided to return to work without an agreement.

CONCLUSION



Continuing to monitor the workplace conflict is important, since a deteriorating labour climate can have broader economic consequences. This annual industrial report provides insightful strikes and lockouts information in the country in 2024. At this point strike information is detailed as provided by employers in the LRA 9.2 forms. Approximately 114 and 97 work stoppages resulting in working days loss of 832 490 in 2024 and 2.4 million in 2023 were initiated by unions.

Wage disputes, particularly wages increment, bonus and other compensation benefits, constituted the main reason of work stoppages in the country during the period under review. The slow economic recovery is having a profound and ongoing impact on labour disputes. In this economic environment with narrower profit margins, companies are more likely to owe salaries and other related benefits to workers to avoid business closure. In 2024, South Africa's workers lost an estimated R133 million in wages due to 114 strike activities reaching a low in wages lost over the past five years.

The Department of Employment and Labour is, however, confident that policy makers from various institutions will continue to intensify efforts to address these workplace challenges. This is also emphasized by the Government of National Unity (GNU) to work around the clock in building an inclusive economy. Furthermore, the GNU's strategic priorities for achieving sustainable economic growth, alleviating poverty and high cost of living and developing an ethical, capable developmental State need to be promoted.

Affected by 114 work stoppages in 2024, the collective intervention of the bargaining councils between the employers and the unions had to ensure effective resolution of managing the workplace disputes by reducing the duration of the strikes on average between 1-10 days. Due to financial pressures, some of the South African employers, unions along with bargaining councils managed to avert strikes and find amicable solutions to matters raised by workers.

The community industry, including the local authority and education sectors, had bonuses owed to workers and working conditions issues in the workplaces. These trends in outstanding wage and bonus increases are related to the financial pressures on some local governments and public institutions.

Key points for policy considerations:

- ❖ To reduce the high level of workplace disputes, the DEL recommend the early start of renegotiating new wage agreements to avoid delays and to find amicable solutions before the lapse of the wage agreement period. Lessons can be drawn from the 2025/26 public sector wage negotiations where government and labour unions concluded a three-year multi-wage agreement before the new financial year;
- ❖ Bargaining councils and labour unions to share the best practices and provide technical skills to both employers and employees for effective dispute resolutions;
- ❖ Transparency and consideration of budget constraints when negotiating wage agreements is critical between the parties involved.

Limitations of the strikes data coverage

A detailed breakdown of strike activities that occurred and monitored in the Department of Employment The implications of the following limitations are significant, leading to inaccurate reporting of strikes collection and thus ultimately affects our ability to effectively analyse strike data and coverage:

- There seems to be a general hesitance among employers when it comes to disclosing sensitive information, particularly if they are experiencing a strike for the first time.
- Ensuring the quality and consistency of data across various organizations poses its own set of challenges. I've encountered situations where employers submit incomplete LRA 9.2 forms, necessitating constant follow-ups to request corrections which can be both time-consuming and frustrating.

- Many employers are understandably hesitant to share data due to concerns of privacy and security. Some are also apprehensive about the potential risks of fraud, which exacerbates their reluctance to provide the necessary information about strikes or protest action.



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ANNEXURE A

Profile of work stoppages, 2024

On a year basis, the Labour Market Information and Statistics (LMIS) team monitors, collect and record strike activities daily through direct and indirect contact with the affected employers and other employer associations. The annexure below tables the number of strikes identified and collected daily. Below are how strike activities occurred and monitored in the Department of Employment and Labour's media monitoring data system in the last twelve months from January to December 2024.

January

- Rea Vaya buses parked at the company depot in Meadowlands, Soweto in Johannesburg rapid bus service due to a worker dispute. The exit point of the depot was blocked and buses could not operate, citing labour-related issues between PioTrans and its employees. Passengers were advised to use alternative transport during the strike action. **Source: TimesLIVE, 3 January 2024.**
- Workers at the Impala Bafokeng Platinum mine in Rustenburg in the North-West Province resumed with their protest on 7 January over unmet demands. Their demands including mine management withdrawing the suspension notices it issued against some workers for their involvement in a three-day sit-in underground in December 2023. Before the mine closed for the December holidays, over 2 000 workers embarked on an underground sit-in. **Source: News24, 7 January 2024.**
- Staff at Mabandla Clinic in Kariega, Nelson Mandela Bay refused to work at the facility due to workplace safety matters. Due to the ongoing protest, patients who required primary healthcare were assisted in nearby clinics while the clinic seek urgent resolution to the problem. **Source: GroundUP: 12 January 2024.**
- Health workers at Rustenburg's Forensic Pathology Unit have downed tools over working conditions. Workers claimed that their health was at risk due to the lab's non-compliance with occupational health and safety requirements. **Source: 16 January 2024.**
- Matjhabeng employees embarked on a strike action over working conditions (which includes a lack of PPI's), and the continual interference of the executive Mayor. Striking workers were demanding his immediate dismissal. **Source: Sabc News 29 January 2024.**
- Teaching and learning went disrupted at various schools in Matsulu, outside Mbombela in Mpumalanga. This follows the dissatisfaction with the appointment of a new circuit manager for the Nkululeko Circuit. The department convened a meeting with all relevant stakeholders and were happy that an agreement was reached that learning and teaching will resume the next day while the department was looking into their demands. **Source: SABC 31 January 2024**
- Some of the Nkomazi Local Municipality's (NLM) employees affiliated with the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) downed tools over overtime pay on 31 January 2024. They marched to the municipal manager's office to demand payment of their overtime hours worked over the holidays. **Source: Mpumalanga News 31 January 2024.**

February

- The Johannesburg bus service has been crippled by strike action on Thursday 1 February. The disruption was due to a wildcat strike by several Metrobus employees over unresolved workplace grievances by the employers. **Source: eNCA News, 1 February 2024**
- Workers at Themba Hospital in Mpumalanga have returned to work after a three-day strike. The workers affiliated with the Health and Allied Workers' Union, NEHAWU were demanding proper infrastructure,

filling of posts and working equipment. It is alleged the union met with the provincial Health Department and agreed to prioritize some issues in ten days' time. **Source: SABC News, 2 February 2024**

- The University of Cape Town Employees Union (UCTEU) went on strike on Thursday 8 February after wage demand negotiations with the university management failed. The demands over the strike action included a wage increase of 1.5 percent for 2023 and 7.5 percent for 2024, the immediate release of payments of the performance awards for June 2022 to May 2023 cycle and the establishment of a unified bargaining forum among other things. **Source: GroundUP, 7 February 2024.**
- uShaka Marine World in Durban was shut down temporarily due to a wage dispute between the theme park and the union representing its workers. Allegedly, uShaka Marine World theme park's workers issued management with a strike notice after arriving at a stalemate during wage negotiations. It is alleged an entity of the eThekweni Municipality-owned entity, uShaka Marine World has over the past few months been engaged in salary increase negotiations with the South African Municipal Workers Union which represents the employees. Despite the employer's best endeavors, the parties could not come to an agreement and the matter was seemingly referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration for intervention. People hoping to visit Africa's largest aquarium at the time were advised to place their plans on hold as the facility closed due to the protest action." **Source: The Citizen, 9 February 2024.**
- Members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) downed tools at the University of Pretoria main campus in Tshwane over wages leading to a technical glitch on the university's systems. The workers were demanding a 7 percent salary increase while the employer was offering 4 percent. The workers blocked the entrance to the university's main campus accusing the employer of arrogance and negotiating in bad faith. **Source: SABC News, 15 February 2024**
- Nurses at the Eastern Cape's Dora Nginza Hospital launched a go-slow protest over their outstanding December 2023 overtime pay. **Source: News24, 21 February 2024.**
- Workers employed at NC Cleaning and Greening project set tyres alight outside Sol Plaatje Municipality in protest over non-payment and personal protective equipment (PPE). The workers stated that there were supposed to be 2 000 people recruited for the project, but this was reduced to 600. They added that they were provided with two contracts with different tariffs. The first contract stated that we would be paid R230 per day and the latest contract stipulates R130 per day. It is alleged the police were called to monitor the situation. **Source: DFA, 22 February 2024**
- Workers at RCL Foods have embarked on an indefinite wage strike at the food manufacturing company's operations in Tzaneen, Louis Trichardt and Thohoyandou, saying their current salaries can no longer sustain the high cost of living. The General Industries Workers Union of South Africa's media liaison officer in Limpopo, reported that 200 workers including food packers were demanding a R600 monthly increase while the employer is offering R400 monthly. **Source: Capricorn FM, 23 February 2024**
- The Nehawu affiliated workers of Nelson Mandela University (NMU) picketed at the George Campus entrance as part of a wages strike. An official handover of the union's demands to management at the university's main campus in Gqeberha was done on Friday 23 February when they threatened a full-blown strike should their grievances not be attended to. The union's demand included a wage increase of 8 percent and a 60 percent to workers' medical aid contributions. **Source: George News, 26 February 2024.**
- Services rendered by Ray Nkonyeni Municipality's (RNM) Community Services department was briefly halted on Monday morning, 19 February, after workers downed tools in protest. The workers marched to the RNM council chambers demanding backpay of over 18 months, saying that they had heard that some RNM councillors had started receiving the money in October 2023. **Source: South Coast Herald, 26 February 2024**

- Municipal workers in eThekweni have downed their tools in demand for better wages. The workers, who are members of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), were demanding equal pay to their counterparts in other metros. **Source: Groundup,28 February 2024**
- The Johannesburg Water Crisis Intensified as staff strike over pay disputes continued. Residents of northern Johannesburg grappled with severe water supply disruptions since the onset of a strike by Johannesburg Water staff at the Zandfontein depot overpay disputes. Despite a critical meeting between Johannesburg Water management and the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) representatives, the deadlock remained unresolved, leaving several areas including Bryanston, Sandton, Randburg, Hurlingham Manor and Blairgowrie facing low water pressure or a complete lack of water service. **Source: Labour News,28 February 2024**
- Nurses downed tools over safety concerns at Pietermaritzburg clinic. The disgruntled workers said they were afraid of reporting to work following an armed robbery at the KwaPata Clinic. Due to the strike patients in need of medical care were turned away from the after staff members refused to work at the facility over safety concerns. **Source: The Witness 28 February 2024.**

March

- About 300 people employed in the greening and cleaning project by the Polokwane municipality and the department went to protest over non-payment of their January stipends. On the day of the protest, 5 March 2024, Forestry, Fisheries and Environment Ministry instructed management to urgently investigate the non-payment of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers in Polokwane, Limpopo. **Source: Sabc News, 5 March 2024**
- A small group of strikers carrying placards saying “no to Sunday work”, “overworked and underpaid at Bucu” and “employer to contribute 50 percent towards provident fund” has picketed outside the Bucu Hardware store in First Avenue as part of a nationwide strike by the Building Wood and Allied Workers Union of South Africa. Employees at a Fish Hoek hardware store downed tools on Monday 26 February as part of a nationwide strike by the Building Wood and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (BWAUSA). **Source: Daily Sun,6 March 2024**
- City Parks security guards picketed outside the offices of their employer in Braamfontein on Wednesday, 6 March over unpaid overtime from 2022.The protest came after the employer had committed to pay back their dues in February 2024. **Source: Daily Sun, 7 March 2024**
- Community Health Workers and NUPSAW leaders marched to the health department’s office in East London on 11 March 2024 over working conditions. Workers were demanding to be employed permanently by the Eastern Cape Department of Health. **Source: GroundUP, 11 March 2024**
- Security guards at the Northern Cape Department of Sport, Arts and Culture embarked on an indefinite strike action over outstanding bonus. It was further alleged that instead of bonuses being paid to workers, money was used to pay stand-by security guards during the strike action. **Source: DFA ,17 March 2024**
- Preparations for the Eastern Cape’s Human Rights Day commemoration was disrupted on Tuesday 19 March as more than 1 700 workers downed tools over a payment dispute. Contract workers for the department of forestry, fisheries and the environment employed to clean the streets of Nelson Mandela Bay staged a protest over the none-payment of their stipends for March 2025. **Source: HeraldLIVE, 19 March 2024**
- Employees at the dilapidated Buffalo City Metro’s fire station headquarters in Fleet Street were involved in a stay-away on Thursday morning against unpaid overtime. **Source: DispatchLive,21 March 2024.**

April

- Pay problems put brakes on bridge project after Footbridge construction workers downed to demand

their overtime pay and salary increases. **Source: Daily Sun, 3 April 2024.**

- The Ermelo Provincial Hospital's workers, led by Nehawu's regional secretary marched to the hospital on 3 April to submit a memorandum demanding answers from the provincial chief director of hospital. The doctors and nurses expressed their dissatisfaction over the hospital's infrastructure being in dire condition with broken laundry machines being just one example. Workers also complained about lack of nappies for newborn babies and the supply of medication as they don't have enough stock in the pharmacy. **Source, Highveld, 3 April 2024**
- Employees at Alfred Duma Local Municipality closed the gates on 9 April, demanding answers from Human Resources Management. The Job Creation Programme staff forced everything to a standstill, saying they are undermined by management. According to one of the employees, who opted to remain anonymous, they alluded that they have been temporarily employed for more than two years; some for one year. "We were told there were no permanent vacancies and we understood. However, we noticed that new people have been hired from outside and they are permanent, which makes us wonder how that happens". **Source: Citizen, 11 April 2024**
- The Dube TradePort Corporation, an agency of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government, has announced that members of the Nehawu trade union have gone on a wage dispute strike. Nehawu issued the notice to strike after what Dube TradePort described as a "prolonged" process of negotiation and arbitration. Dube TradePort remained open to further engagements with the union to find a resolution that balances the interests of workers and the financial sustainability of the organisation." **Source: Cosatu News, 24 April 2024.**

May

- Members of the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) working at the Rustenburg Local Municipality in the North-West went on strike over grading of salaries. Allegedly, the union has been demanding improvement of their salary scale codes for more than seven years. The union started with the strike on 6 May and alleged that the municipal manager and directors had already had their scales upgraded to Grade 7. **Source: Sabc News 7 May 2024.**
- The city bus operators belonging to municipal workers union the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) neglected operations on Tuesday 7 May affecting the Tshwane bus service. The municipality members embarked on an illegal strike overtime payments and salary increase". **Source: Sabc News, 8 May 2024.**
- National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers Union (Nupsaw) community health workers and health facility assistants in the Northern Cape staged a march to the provincial Department of Health's offices in Kimberley on May 8 to demand permanent contracts. **Source: DFA, 2 May 2024**
- North- West Transport Investment (NTI) workers marched to the Department of Transport in Pretoria on 8 May to demand the department's intervene to get their unpaid salaries paid. Led by the South African Workers Union Ya Bashumi (SAWU-Ya Bashumi) and supported by the National Economic Development Forum (NEDF) and members of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), marching workers were singing songs of struggle over the four months that they say they have had to survive on loans and assistance from family and friends. **Source: Elitsha, 10 May 2024.**
- Servest landscaping and cleaning workers based at Stellenbosch University, held an organized protest in collaboration with the Independent Commercial Hospitality & Allied Workers Union (ICHAWU) to demand higher wages from Servest management. According to a statement sent out by ICHAWU's head office students were urged to boycott Servest on 13 May, the day of the protest. **Source: Stellenbosch Media Forum News, 21 May 2024.**
- Some fuel retail stores in Gauteng experienced difficulties due to the truck drivers' strike at distribution company, SG Convenience. Workers affiliated to the Dynamic People's Union (DPYUSA) of South Africa in

Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal downed tools demanding better wages and working conditions. Reportedly, workers at the company's warehouses perform their duties without proper PPE and danger allowances. The impact of the strike was also felt by some consumers. **Source Sabc News, 23 May 2024.**

- Doctors and nurses at Mofumahadi Manapo Mopeli Regional Hospital in QwaQwa, Free State, downed tools on Wednesday, 22 May over facility safety reasons and the deployment of enough security guards. **Source: Daily Sun, 24 May 2024**

June

- Over 200 mineworkers embarked on a sit-in at Sibanye-Stillwater's Kwezi Shaft in Rustenburg in the North-West. The mineworkers allegedly downed tools in protest of the proposed Employee Share Ownership Scheme (ESOP) for Kroondal employees. However, in a statement to employees, mine management stressed that discussions were continuing between the company and unions regarding the details of the proposed scheme. **Source: Sabc News, 4 June 2024**
- Cash-in-transit workers affiliated to the Motor Transport Workers' Union (MTWN) have downed tools at their Alton office in Richards Bay. The workers accused the employer of unfair retrenchments in terms of Section 189 of the Labour Law. **Source: Zululand Observer, 14 June 2024**
- The Mpumalanga's Mthimba clinic was shut down after a robbery that left nurses fearful for their safety and 23 cars stolen from hospitals over the six months period. Nehawu asked the workers not to show up for duty unless the department of health guarantees their safety. The recent attack has sent shock waves among members, hence they have instructed the workers at Mthimba clinic to down tools until the department has assured them of their safety. **Source: Sowetan, 18 June 2024.**
- Workers at Core Group (technology and computer sales) have downed tools after wage negotiations deadlocked and conciliation at the CCMA failed. The strike took place at Block B, Geertsema Road, Jet Park, Boksburg, Gauteng. The 80 workers, all working in the warehouse, demand an R1 700 per month wage increase across the board, a guaranteed 13th cheque and a 10 percent provident fund contribution by the employer. The workers have also given the employer the option to structure this as a R2 000 per month wage increase across the board, a guaranteed 13th cheque plus a 5 percent contribution to a provident fund, or an R2 500 wage increase per month across the board. **Source: Casual Workers Advice Centre, 24 June 2024**
- The Msunduzi Municipality has called for calm following a strike action by some of its staff members. The staff went on strike over concerns of delayed payment and working conditions. Among the issues raised by employees are delayed payments and requests from the night shift team for adjustments to their shifts. **Source: The Mercury, 25 June 2024.**
- The South African Federation of Trade Unions (Safu) has thrown its weight behind the Grindrod Logistics workers' strike over retrenchments and the trend among companies of casual labour, as well as the use of brokers. The strike came days after the Transnet National Ports Authority announced that Grindrod Logistics had won the bid to develop a R285 million container terminal at the Port of Richards Bay. The project which is being developed by the joint venture group, Maersk Group (51%) and Grindrod Group (49%), will increase cargo handling capacity from 50 000 to 200 000 twenty-foot equivalent units a year. It is alleged, the federation "stands firmly" behind its affiliate, the Tirisano Transport and Services Workers Union (Taswu), which on 21 June downed tools in protest against retrenchments and dismissals affecting more than 85 truck drivers. **Source: Business Day, 26 June 2024**
- About 100 workers affiliated with the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA) and the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) downed tools at the Ribas Manufacturers in Sandton, Johannesburg on Friday morning 28 June to demand higher wages. Ribas makes and distributes a range of condiments under the TOP Brand franchise and Cash&Carry house brand sauces. On Friday, workers told GroundUp they would continue striking until their employer increased their wage by R4 per hour rather

than the R1.75 offered by the company. **Source: GroundUp, 28 June 2024**

July

- Some employees at Impala Bafokeng have embarked on an unprotected strike at the mine's operation in Rustenburg on 2 July 2024. It was reported that the cause of the strike is the demand for permanent employment for some employees. **Source: Sabc News, 2 July 2024.**
- Thousands of Ford SA workers affiliated with the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) have downed tools at the company's Silverton plant in Pretoria over profit sharing. The union accuses the company of raking in billions of rands in profits annually and refusing to share the windfall with the workers. **Source: The Citizen, 4 July 2024.**
- Some Gautrain workers affiliated with the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) began their indefinite strike over wage disputes on Monday 8 July 2024. Workers downed tools over a 13 percent wage hike that they have been demanding from Bombela Operating Company since April 2024. The visibly disgruntled workers were seen burning tires and debris to barricade the road leading to the Gautrain's all-important Maintenance Workshop Depot. **Source: EyeWitness News 8 July 2024.**
- The Leeto La Polokwane bus drivers staged a protest outside their depot in Ladanna, Limpopo on Monday 8 July 2024. The drivers were raising concerns about workers' contracts, pensions and provident funds that are allegedly deducted but not paid to their scheme. **Source: Capricorn FM News, 8 July 2024.**
- The local aviation industry found itself on tenterhooks after the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) embarked on a strike action on Monday, 15 July at the international airports of OR Tambo in Johannesburg, King Shaka in Durban, Cape Town International, King Phalo in East London and in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) over a pay dispute with ground-handling services provider, Menzies Aviation. At the center was Numsa's demand that hourly-paid workers become monthly salary earners to avoid potential loss of income due to sick leave. **Source: Engineering News 16 July 2024.**
- Workers at a non-profit organisation in Kimberley in the Northern Cape, caring for children with mental and physical disabilities, have downed tools over unpaid salaries. Workers claimed they were not paid for the last two months. The workers reported that while they enjoy working at the Helen Bishop Home, not receiving salaries is making life difficult for them and their families. **Source: YouTube, SABC News, 17 July 2024.**
- On 16 July, residents and businesses were requested not to take out garbage until the municipality advises otherwise. This was due to interruptions in the municipal services as the Umdoni workers downing tools over grievances against the municipality management. **Source: South Coast Herald, 18 July 2024.**
- Hundreds of workers at the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) downed tools during a demonstration outside the company's headquarters in Pretoria. The workers belonging to the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) embarked on the strike action against the company's payment and employment structure. **Source: Sabc News, 23 July 2024.**

August

- Security guards stood outside the Northdale Hospital hospital on Chota Motala Road demanding payment from their employer, Ncweti Security. The guards refused to allow anyone, including ill residents who needed healthcare, to leave or enter the hospital. One of the aggrieved guards said they had several grievances with the company, but payment of salaries was their biggest issue. It is alleged an official from Ncweti Security confirmed that the protest was over non-payment but said this was due to the company not being paid by the Health Department. **Source: The Witness News, 2 August 2024**
- Tensions at Zithulele Hospital boiled as Eastern Cape community protested against the removal of a doctor. A decision to remove a family medicine specialist, from one of South Africa's iconic rural hospitals

and send him to a large academic hospital in Mthatha has led to a debilitating strike that caused the shutdown of the hospital and the evacuation of patients to other facilities. It is alleged the protest was followed by the suspension of seven staff members, some of whom had been on leave at the time of the strike. **Source: Daily Maverick, 7 August 2024**

- Workers from the Tekwane Citrus Farm near Mbombela in Mpumalanga have downed tools on 7 August 2024. The workers say they were promised twelve months contracts with job security. Instead, workers alleged they have been served with termination of contract letters. **Source: YouTube, 7 August 2024**
- On Thursday 8 August 2024, a significant number of SAMWU members employed by the Newcastle Municipality, organised a spirited march. Workers paraded from Allen Street, through the CBD to the Municipal offices located on Scott Street. The air was filled with the sight of placards and banners, all clearly visible as the union made their presence known. The union South African Municipal Workers Union explained that the demonstration was prompted by the Municipal management's failure to implement the salary increments that were agreed upon in the Salary and Wages Collective Agreement of 2021. **Source: Newcastillian News, 8 August 2024**
- Workers from Rhodes Food Group (RFG) have taken to the streets in a strike demanding wage increases and better working conditions. The protest, which began on the morning of 31 July, has seen employees from various sectors uniting to call for fair compensation and improvements to their workplace environments. The Krugersdorp News was on the scene to speak to some of the workers who willingly gave comments but asked them to remain anonymous to protect themselves from the actions that the company might take against them. The workers claim that they were peacefully striking adjacent to the company's three gates when suddenly the police arrived and started to shoot at them in defense of the company. "We are demanding an increase of R700 in our salaries but the employer refuses to accept our demand reported the workers. **Source: The Citizen, 14 August 2024**
- Several South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) offices in the Western Cape were closed on 14 August 2024 as a result of a strike action by security guards. The offices in Athlone, Vredenburg, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, Eerste River, Mitchells Plain, Robertson and Beaufort West were unable to service clients while offices in Gugulethu, Oudtshoorn, George, Worcester, Witzenberg, Vredendal, Wynberg, Paarl, Bellville, and Grabouw continued to provide either full or reduced services. For clients affected by the closures, alternative appointment dates were arranged where possible. It is alleged the strike was due to a dispute between the security company appointed by SASSA and the employees. **Source: GroundUp, 14 August 2024**
- Staff members at Empangeni clinic downed tools amid claims of management not prioritising their safety at work, leaving several patients in limbo and unattend to. According to the National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union regional secretary, the attitude of management was the reason their members went on a go slow, as they did not intervene in the matter. **Source: Zululand Observer, 16 August 2024**
- About 100 workers associated with the Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) picketed outside the Heineken beverage plant in Struandale on 16 September after a deadlock in overtime and remuneration negotiations. Fawu Shop Steward reported that workers had reached a stalemate with Heineken about the introduction of a new work shift schedule implemented in June 2025. **Source: The Herald (South Africa) 19 August 2024.**
- More than 600 workers have downed tools at the Mister action Sweet factory in Wadeville, Germiston, demanding a monthly minimum wage of R19 500. The strike began on Monday, 19 August and workers vowed to continue striking until the employer meets their demands. Most are members of the Simunye Workers Forum, Mister Sweet, which was acquired by the giant Premier Group in 2021 and manufactures sweets, including gums, jellies, marshmallows and chocolates. It is alleged the union was demanding a basic salary of R19 500 per month and a R15 an hour increase across the board while the company was offering a 7 percent wage increase. **Source: GroundUp 21 August 2024**

- The M1 highway in Braamfontein went completely closed off to traffic on Thursday 22 August after close to 10 000 workers affiliated with the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) in Johannesburg downed tools blocking the busy route with dump trucks. The Pik-it-up workers and city administrators were demanding back pay amounting to R10.3 million that they say the metro has failed to pay. Due to the strike action, not only traffic was disrupted but the operations of the city as well. **Source: EWN, 22 August 2024.**
- Makhanda looked like a war zone on Tuesday 27 August with a wildcat Makana municipal worker strike further collapsing the disastrous municipal service delivery that residents endured. Fuming residents, already accustomed to poor service delivery, have faced days without water and electricity as well as uncollected rubbish piling up in the streets. The wildcat strike was sparked by claims that workers were not paid overtime in July as finances were tight and were asked to instead take time off in lieu of being paid. **Source: Daily Dispatch, 28 August 2024.**
- Unionized healthcare workers of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) went on a protest action in central Witbank, Mpumalanga Province, on 29 August. Workers were demanding improved levels of security at healthcare facilities after an increase in levels of crime. **Source: Capricorn FM, 29 August 2024.**
- Community health workers, hospital facility assistants and members of the Covid-19 brigades embarked on a go-slow on 28 August as they demand to be absorbed by the Northern Cape Department of Health. Staff members also called for the cancellation of all non-critical permanent appointments. Workers pointed out that they were expected to “do the dirty work” while they were only receiving a stipends of R3 500. **Source: DFA 30 August 2024.**

September

- One of South Africa’s biggest townships came to a standstill on 3 September when water supplies to East London’s Mdantsane were cut as essential workers from the Amatola Water Board (AWB) protested over claims of corruption and maladministration. Several schools were closed while Cecilia Makiwane Hospital was forced to rely on backup supplies and businesses in Mdantsane were shut down. Surrounding areas were also affected due to the ongoing “industrial action” which affected the Nahoon Dam, Laing Dam, Masincendane and Debe Nek water treatment works. **Source: The Herald, 4 September 2024.**
- Hundreds of EPWP workers under the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment marched to the office of the Limpopo Premier and Polokwane municipality offices on 5 September to hand over a memorandum of grievances over wages and extension of contracts. The workers were seeking intervention from those government structures in raising their concerns to the Presidency and the Forestry department because they could not travel to Pretoria. **Source: Capricorn FM, 5 September 2024.**
- South African Employees of St Benedictine Hospital in Nongoma who are under the umbrella of the Health and Other Services Personnel Trade Union of South Africa (Hospersa) engaged in a picket on 5 September to complain about bullying, victimization, intimidation and discrimination by senior managers. The picket drew about 100 members of the union, which included nurses and general workers. **Source: Scrolla Africa, 6 September 2024.**
- Msunduzi traffic was disrupted as disgruntled officers went on strike in and around the city on 10 September. Security and traffic officers gathered at City Hall to meet with the City’s management about their wage grievances and working house schedules. The bone of contention, according to the South African Municipal Workers’ Union (Samwu), was the implementation of certain council decisions by the management without consultation with the employees. **Source: The Witness, 10 September 2024**
- About 300 workers at the iconic BMW’s production plant in Rosslyn north of Pretoria have gone on strike over what they claim are “mass dismissals”. BMW Group South Africa has reported in a holding statement the dismissal was amid acts of bribery, fraud or corruption by its employees. **Source: Business Report, 16**

September 2024.

- On Thursday 19 September, the Witness news reported that KwaZulu-Natal's government mortuaries have the highest number of unclaimed bodies as employees protested over poor working conditions. Among the challenges faced by employees in government mortuaries included fridges not working most of the time, the lack of chemicals to clean and disinfect, flies and maggots on corpses due to the high temperature in the fridges, a shortage of staff and vehicles and inadequate personal protective equipment. Nehawu regional secretary reported that the union wants the department to commit to monitoring and rectifying these issues. **Source: The Witness News, 20 September 2024.**
- Workers at the Atlantis coal mine in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, continued with their unprotected strike despite managers warning to return to work. Workers down tools over working conditions as well as the removal of the area manager. **Source: @Newzroom405, 23 September 2024**
- Health workers including nurses at the Matikwane Hospital in Mkhuhlu, Mpumalanga downed tools protesting over unsafe working conditions. The workers alleged that they were forced to work while construction workers are removing asbestos in the hospital. **Source: Sabc News 27 September 2024**

October

- Workers affiliated with SATAWU at Atamalang Bus Services in the North-West Province halted their services on 8 October over unpaid September salaries. They accuse management of unfair labour practices and the non-payment of provident funds, among others. Atamalang Bus Services operates in Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and the strike has affected many commuters who rely on their services. **Source: Newzroom Afrika, 8 October 2024.**
- Scores of Enoch Mgijima local municipality (EMLM) workers, affiliated to the SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu), returned to work after their employers secured a court interdict against striking workers concerning a dispute over wage increases. Their grievances over a negotiated wage hike arrangement came after the SA Local Government Association (Salga) signed a "historic" five-year wage increase deal with the labour unions. The deal stipulates that wage increases will be effective from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2029, with an increase of 4.5 percent from 1 July 2025 and a further 1.5 percent on 1 March 2025. "This legal action was prompted by an illegal strike organised by members of Samwu, during which non-striking employees faced threats, intimidation and coercion to leave the workplaces", **Source: The Rep 11 October 2024.**
- Over 200 employees from DSV Transport and Logistics in the Eastern Cape have been dismissed via SMS after embarking on a wage hike strike. According to the South African Equity Workers Association the strike started on the third of October and the company still hasn't responded to its memorandum of demands. **Source: eNCA News, 18 October 2024.**
- Members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) at arms manufacturer Denel went on strike demanding a 15 percent wage increase. This is after they received only two salary increases in the last five years. Workers picketed at Denel's headquarters in Centurion, to get the management of the state-owned enterprise (SOE) to give in to their demand. Numsa reported that workers at Denel have suffered severely because of destructive cost-cutting measures by the SOE's management and government. **Source: Business Live, 24 October 2024**
- Nearly 250 employees affiliated with the Financial Sector and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (Fawusa) from Lupo Bakery in Gauteng went on a wage strike demanding a 13 percent wage increase and an increase in the company's contribution towards their Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). Speaking to Daily Sun, Fawusa representative reported that they managed to secure a 10 percent wage increase, including a 2% contribution from the company towards UIF. **Source: Daily Sun, 26 October 2024.**

November

- The Tshwane metro warned commuters to be wary of disruptions affecting the Tshwane Bus Services

(TBS) due to an illegal protest on Thursday 7 November. The protesting group closed the gates of the city's C De Wet bus depot after unofficially being made aware of the disciplinary committee's verdict. It is alleged the group was seemingly part of the 33 bus drivers who were in the process of being served with dismissal letters for participating in an unprotected strike in May this year. **Source: Rekord, 7 November 2024.**

- Ray Nkonyeni council workers at Port Shepstone went on strike over unpaid wages, leaving rubbish uncollected and services stopped. Workers were demanding six months' back pay and better job grades. It is alleged the council's lawyers wrote to the workers saying the council has no funds and that they won't talk about pay until everyone returns to work. **Source: The Citizen 7 November 2024.**
- A palpable stillness settled along the roads leading to ArcelorMittal South Africa's (AMSA) Newcastle Works, where the protestors took their concerns to the company management. NUMSA National Spokesperson, explained that the strike action had been initiated in response to AMSA management's decision to dismiss workers just before Christmas. It was highlighted that the closure of Coke Making Battery 6 and 7 had led to the retrenchment of at least 107 employees. Thus, members were provoked into striking following the conclusion of the section 189 process. **Source: News Castillian: 14 November 2024.**
- On Monday 26 November nurses at Cofimvaba Hospital near Queenstown, downed tools demanding the acting CEO to be removed. Striking nurses accused the acting CEO of disrespecting, insulting them and playing favorites. The Eastern Cape Department of Health had to move patients from Cofimvaba Hospital to other facilities after nurses went on an unprotected strike. **Source: Groundup, 26 November 2024.**

December

- South African Airways pilots protested outside South African Airways Park in Johannesburg on 5 December for better working conditions and salary increase. Striking South African Airways (SAA) pilots and the airline management were deadlocked with the flight crew vowing to continue their industrial action "indefinitely" unless the airline gives in. Trade union National Transport Movement Pilots Forum (NTM) was said to have accepted a tentative offer, but the SAA Pilot Union had rejected it outright. **Source: The Citizen, 6 December 2024.**
- While the management of Isolomzi Security Company and the Bitou municipality bicker about payments, at least 50 security guards have been struggling to make ends meet due to unpaid salaries since October 2025. The guards downed tools and staged a picket outside the Isolomzi offices in Plettenberg Bay on Friday 6 December. **Source: The Herald, 11 December 2024.**



ANNEXURE B

Data Appendix

The following supplementary tables contain data not included in the main report:

Table B.1: Distribution of work stoppages and wages lost by province¹³, 2020 - 2024

Province	Work stoppages				Wages lost Total (R)					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Gauteng	43	60	50	35	48	116 092 102	86 378 633	913 467 431	13 826 631	70 729 504
Western Cape	21	18	9	15	12	1 753 120	30 116 880	5 130 914	40 520 060	2 459 435
Mpumalanga	12	5	6	6	15	18 704 728	1 479 685	34 112 379	36 582 251	109 452
KwaZulu-Natal	18	27	12	16	22	5 220 958	19 985 044	18 630 070	0	9 602 392
Eastern Cape	37	15	20	4	22	6 160 952	28 121 057	2 668 569	1 043 491	5 956 669
Limpopo	4	1	7	4	8	7 428 996	350 000	285 301 737	53 322 083	171 707
North-West	8	5	8	7	6	11 882 878	36 969 646	23 862 699	3 418 029	38 335 338
Northern Cape	6	2	1	7	4	440	13 334 146	732 092	0	805 755
Free State	4	2	0	7	4	1 832 404	1 744 561	0	15 196 068	5 189 088
Total	153	135	113	101	141	169 076 578	218 479 652	1 283 905 891	163 908 613	133 359 340

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database

¹³ The total number of work stoppages differs from the total of strikes at the national level. This is due to national work stoppages that may affect a number of branches or establishments in the nine provinces, being counted as one in the national but according to workplaces affected in several provinces being counted more than once.

Table B.2: Distribution of employees involved by industry, 2020-2024

Industry	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Agriculture	1 576	1 386	4 186	5 494	233
Mining	8 587	43 513	73 040	12 179	15 901
Manufacturing	17 542	28 164	11 579	3 297	8 466
Utilities	0	0	2 763	0	684
Construction	452	0	0	415	945
Trade	461	4 565	12 057	5 615	1 652
Transport	2 234	879	24 063	1 608	2 936
Finance	235	166	3 919	45	232
Community	70 625	11 626	21 920	39 870	34 452
Total	101 712	90 299	153 527	68 523	65 501

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

Table B.4: Distribution of working days by cause of working conditions by industry, 2024

Industry	Disciplinary	Grievances	Other Compensation	Other Reasons	Refusal	Retrenchment / Dismissals	Secondary strike	Socio-Economic	Trade Union	Wages	Working	Total
Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mining	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Manufacturing	1	2	5	0	0	1	0	11	1	5	1	27
Utilities	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Construction	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7
Trade	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Transport	0	2	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	20
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Community	1	8	17	6	1	0	0	6	0	8	21	70
Total	2	14	43	7	4	2	2	21	2	18	26	141

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024

Table B.5: Number of strikes lasting fewer than five days per industry, 2024

Industry	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0
Mining	1	2	2	1	4
Manufacturing	1	2	4	4	11
Utilities	1	0	1	1	3
Construction	1	1	1	1	4
Trade	0	1	1	2	3
Transport	3	1	1	3	8
Finance	0	2	1	0	3
Community	12	9	12	6	39
Total	19	18	21	17	75

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2020-2024

Table B.5: Number of strikes lasting five days or longer by industry

Industry	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Agriculture	0	0	0	1	1
Mining	0	1	0	0	1
Manufacturing	1	0	3	2	6
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	1	1	0	0	2
Trade	1	1	0	0	2
Transport	0	1	3	2	5
Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Community	8	5	5	3	21
Total	11	9	11	8	39

Table C.1: Number of workers involved, working days lost and working hours lost by industry/sector, 2024

Industry/Sector	Workers involved	Working days lost	Working hours lost
Finance	232	479	3 832
Financial intermediation, except insurance and pension funding	94	94	752
Other business activities	109	327	2 616
Publishing, Printing & Reproduction of Recorded Media	29	58	464
Construction	945	22 005	197 765
Construction of buildings	40	280	2240
Construction	905	21 725	195 525
Utilities	684	1 844	14 752
Electricity, gas, steam and hot water supply	320	1 280	10 240
Collection, purification and distribution of water	364	564	4 512
Trade	1 652	28 334	228 293
Hotels and restaurants	36	72	864
Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motor cycles; repair of personal household goods	1 340	26 636	212 945
Supporting and auxiliary transport activities; activities of travel agencies	246	1 476	13 284
Wholesale trade in agricultural raw & materials & livestock	30	150	1 200
Manufacturing	8 466	172 581	1 455 158
Basic metals, fabricated metal products, machinery and equipment	4 511	119 559	981 229
Manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel	59	295	2 655
Food products, beverages and tobacco products	2 139	47 744	428 976
Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products	107	511	6 108
Manufacture of textiles, clothing and leather goods	630	630	5 454
Manufacture of transport equipment	849	3 671	29 368
Pharmaceutical Company	171	171	1 368
Community, social and personal services	34 452	504 139	4 011 395
Computer and related activities	166	498	3 984
Education	3 702	68 605	543 328
Health and social work	2 965	15 838	127 450
Local Authority	23 369	377 228	2 989 824
Other community, social and personal services activities	2 680	18 996	151 968
Public administration and defense activities	626	8 147	69 100
Recreation, cultural and sporting activities	379	10 947	88 456
Research and development	265	2 650	22 525
Security Services	300	1 230	14 760
Mining and quarrying	15 901	79 132	868 928
Metal ores, except gold and uranium	15 711	78 372	861 708
Other mining and quarrying	190	760	7 220
Transport, storage and communication	2 936	21 646	201 171
Air transport	723	4 705	55 498

Passenger transport	1 328	9 861	83 039
Public Transport	311	968	8 436
Recruitment Agency	29	116	1 044
Supporting and auxiliary; Transport Activities; Activities of Travel Agencies	545	5 996	53 154
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	233	2 330	20 970
Fishing, operation of fish hatcheries and fish farms	233	2 330	20 970

Source: Department of Employment and Labour, Strikes Statistics database, 2024

Table C.2: Number of working days lost by nature of Organization, 2023-2024

	2023	2024
Central Government General	19 744	299
Government Enterprise	2 641	65 045
Local Government General	1 750 425	373 575
Provincial Government General	112 985	349 479
Private Sector	564 522	44 092
Total	2 450 317	832 490

Technical notes:**D1. Methodology for monitoring industrial action by DEL****D4. Strike Data collection**

The collection and analysis of industrial action statistics is guided by the guidelines and practices that have been developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The point of departure can be found in the ILO Resolution adopted by the Fourteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in January 1993, concerning statistics of strikes, lockouts and other action due to labour disputes. This resolution is accommodative rather than prescriptive in its approach. It states that; "Each country should aim at developing a comprehensive programme of statistics of strikes, lockouts and where relevant other action due to labour disputes in order to provide an adequate statistical base for the various users, taking into account the specific national needs and circumstances" (ILO Bulletin of Labour Statistics, 1993-2, Annex I, XI). The Department has been provided with a legislated instrument (LRA 9.2 Form) to collect data on labour disputes. The Labour Relations Act 66 Of 1995 section 205 (3) states that (a) An employer must keep a record of the prescribed details of any strike, lock-out or protest action involving its employees, (b) An employer must submit those records in the prescribed manner to the registrar.

D2. Definitions

Section 213 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 provides the following definitions:

A strike:

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, by persons who are or have been employed by the same employer or by different employers, for the purpose of remedying a grievance or resolving a dispute in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, and every reference to work in this definition includes overtime work, whether it is voluntary or compulsory (s 213).

A lockout:

The exclusion by an employer of workers from the employer's workplace, for the purpose of compelling the workers to accept a demand in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, whether or not the employer breaches those workers' contracts of employment in the course of or for the purpose of that exclusion.

A protest action:

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, for the purpose of promoting or defending the socio-economic interests of workers, but not for a purpose referred to in the definition of strike".

Barker, F et al (1996) in "South African Labour Glossary" defined the following concepts as follows:

Picketing:

Action by employees or other persons to publicize the existence of a labour dispute by patrolling or standing outside or near the location where the dispute is taking place, usually with placards indicating the nature of the dispute. The aim of picketing might simply be to communicate the grievance to the public or it might be to persuade other employees in that workplace not to work and to take their side in the dispute, to deter scab labour, to persuade or pressurize customers not to enter the workplace, to disrupt deliveries or drum up public support.

A secondary strike:

This refers to a strike in support of a strike by other employees against their employer. The strikers have no issue with their employer, but that employer might be in a strong position (due to there being a close business relationship as either an important customer or supplier) to pressurize the employer who is in dispute.

Stay away action:

This is an industrial action by a group of employees in the form of absenting themselves from work without permission in support of some socio-political or socio-economic issue, which does not relate to their employment situation.

Work stoppage:

A work stoppage is made up of a series of events, all relating to the same issue. Work stoppages have two characteristics, type and degree. The type of action is either a strike (action initiated by an employee), or a lockout (action initiated by an employer). The statutory definitions of strikes and lockouts are given in the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

Industrial action:

This is an action by unions, employees to pressurize the other party in the furtherance of an industrial dispute. It usually refers to strikes and lockouts but could also include picketing, product boycotts, sit-ins, go-slow strikes and other actions, which disrupt the production process.

Establishment involved:

An establishment involved is one in which one or more groups of employees are directly involved in action due to a labour dispute, or in which such actions is affected by the employer.

Work hours:

It refers to those hours during which an employee is obliged to work.

D3. Coverage

Data collection attempts to cover the entire country, all economic activity and all sectors of the economy, legal and illegal industrial action. The system attempts to cover all industrial action due to labour disputes. The figures in this report are inclusive of all industrial actions, which come to the knowledge of the Department, and the methods taken to secure information practically preclude probability of omissions of a serious nature. This is a painstaking exercise, and it is believed that the statistics indicates the conditions of labour disputes in the country with "reasonable accuracy". Since LRA 9.2 Form has been redesigned, the Department is now in a position to cover employees both directly and indirectly involved in industrial actions separately, that is, those who participate directly or indirectly by stopping work. Workers absent from their normal place of work at the time of a strike or stoppage, for reasons such as sick leave, vacation, business or personal reasons, whether authorized or unauthorized, are excluded from participation in industrial actions and are therefore not counted.

The LRA excludes independent contractors from the definition of employee. The LRA further excludes from the scope of coverage certain categories of workers, namely members of the National Defense Force, National Intelligence Agency and South African Secret Service. The coverage by the Department of industrial action, however, includes all of the above, provided they embarked on an industrial action in the period under consideration.

D4. Strike and lockout data collection issues

In addition to the legal obligation on employers to report industrial action, the Department of Employment and Labour has introduced an active media-monitoring programme that is enforcing the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 section 205 subsection (3) subparagraph (a) and (b) on employers to submit the strike information in the prescribed manner to the registrar. Through this system, media information on industrial action is used as a source of information to make contact with employers and to encourage compliance with reporting strike incidents. Telephone, emails, sms, WhatsApp, and telefax tools were used as means of communication with the affected employers to ensure "a reasonably, accurate and large coverage" of all labour disputes in the country.

The cooperation that exists with the private sector employers had also speed up the process of strike data collection. After completing the LRA 9.2 form, most employers send it to the Head Office of the Department of Labour. Some employers will probably keep a blank form with them, which will proactively be completed when a strike arises in the company and they voluntarily forward it to the department in time.

After receiving the form either directly from the employer or from the provincial office, Head Office staff members will check and assess if the information provided is sufficient and correct. In case it is not, the staff in the LMIS unit will contact employers with the aim of getting missing information. From this process, the strike information is captured into a database specifically designed for monitoring industrial action in the country. The information includes workers who were directly and indirectly involved during the industrial action, excluding all those who were on leave. This method of data collection and processing has consistently remained the same over time.

The Department has to rely on the employers affected by labour disputes for detailed information on various indicators such as employment size, duration of strikes, reason given for striking, etc., which are required by 1995 Labour Relations Act. Some attempts are made to contact other parties involved in resolving the disputes. This information is also analyzed and reported. However, employers constitute a principal source of strikes and lockouts data.

D5. Calculations

Working days lost

All calculations are made on the basis of information recorded on the LRA 9.2 Form. After capturing the data, the loss of working days is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the duration of the stoppage in days lost and adding the totals for all stoppages during the reference period. For example, if during the reference period there were one stoppage, involving 2 000 workers and lasting four days, working days lost would be computed as follows:

- $2\ 000\ worker's \times 4\ days = 8\ 000\ working\ days\ lost$

Working hours lost

Working hours lost is the aggregate number of working hours lost stemming from all work stoppages during the reference period. The statistic is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the number of hours of the stoppage and summing the products thus obtained for all stoppages during the period. For example, if during the reference period there is one stoppage, involving 4 000 workers and lasting four hours and four days working hours lost would be computed as follows:

- $2\ 000\ worker's \times 4\ hours\ lost \times 4\ days\ worked = 32\ 000\ working\ hours\ lost$

Estimated working time is computed by multiplying the employment for the period by the number of days typically worked by most employed workers during that period. In some cases, Saturdays (when customarily not worked), Sundays, and established holidays are excluded. It is also to determine the normal hours of work for groups of workers since LRA 9.2 Form provides for this. An average eight-hour day is used to represent the normal working day in the country.

Time- loss ratio (Working days lost per 1 000 employees)

- This is the number of working days lost per 1 000 employees due to strike. It is the standard method that has been used to convert working days lost into a strike rate that takes account of the size of total employment. This also enables comparisons to be made across industries and provinces that differ in employment size. For example, a country with 16 069 000 employees in December 2016 and loosing 946 323 working days will have a ratio of 58.9 arrived at as follows: $946\ 323/16\ 069\ 000 \times 1\ 000$



Measurements

The criterion used to identify a single strike and lockout is the Labour dispute in question. In line with the ILO recommendations, the Department of Labour denotes one industrial action as follows:

- A temporary work stoppage, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in one establishment at one time;
- Temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in several establishments at the same time;
- Temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in one establishment at different times, in which the period between stoppages is not more than two months; and
- Temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in several establishments at different times, in which the period between stoppages is not more than two months.

While attempts to satisfy the ILO requirements are made, the instrument of data collection (LRA 9.2 Form) remains as the point of departure, in order to meet the specific needs of the Department and the country.

*Compiled and edited by LMIS officials.
For further enquiries, kindly email to Millicent.semono@labour.gov.za*

<p>LRA Form 9.2 Section 205(3)(a) Labour Relations Act, 1995</p>	<p>RECORD OF STRIKE, LOCK-OUT OR PROTEST ACTION</p> 
<p>READ THIS FIRST</p>  <p>WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?</p> <p>An employer must keep a record of any strike, lock-out or protest action involving its employees.</p> <p>WHO FILLS IN THIS FORM?</p> <p>The Employer / relevant Employers' Organization</p> <p>WHERE DOES THIS FORM GO?</p> <p>The Director-General, Department of Labour, Private Bag x117, Pretoria, 0001 Tel: (012) 309 4004 Fax: (012) 309 4406 E-mail: Strikes@labour.gov.za</p> <p>OTHER INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>The employer must submit this form within seven days of the completion of the strike, lockout or protest action.</p> <p>If a strike, lockout or protest action occurs in more than one workplace of a single employer then a separate form must be completed for each workplace.</p>	<p>RECORD OF DETAILS OF STRIKE, LOCKOUT OR PROTEST ACTION TO BE KEPT BY EMPLOYER IN TERMS OF SECTION 205(3)(a)</p> <p>1) EMPLOYER DETAILS</p> <p>Name company:.....</p> <p>Contact Person.....</p> <p>Physical address:</p> <p>Province:</p> <p>Tel: Fax:</p> <p>E-mail address:</p> <p>Industry:</p> <p>Sub-Sector / Nature of business</p> <p>2) EMPLOYEE DETAILS</p> <p>2.1 Total number of workforce:</p> <p>2.2 Working time (<i>Please complete where applicable</i>)</p> <p>Number of ordinary <i>hours</i> worked per day: / Shift.....</p> <p>Number of ordinary <i>days</i> worked per week: / Shift</p> <p>3) DETAILS OF THE ACTION (see definition on Page 3)</p> <p>3.1 Nature of action:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strike in company only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-employer strike</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lockout</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stay-away, protest action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other industrial action, specify</p> <p>.....</p>

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If the action was a strike. Did the employer lockout the strikers? (defensive lockout)

Yes	No
-----	----

How was the industrial action resolved?

Was replacement labour used?

Yes	No
-----	----

3.2 Strike duration:

Began: (Date) (Time)

Ended: (Date) (Time)

Duration in workdays (or hours if relevant)

3.3 Employees involved

Number of employees participating¹:

Number of employees affected²:

Total work-hours lost:

Total wages not paid (in Rands):

3.4 Unions involved:

Yes	No
-----	----

Name of Trade Union	Number of employees involved per union
TOTAL	

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3.5 Compliance with the Act

Was the action in compliance with the Act? (e.g. procedural or un-procedural)

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

3.6 Strike reasons:

<input type="checkbox"/> Wages only (If the action was a wage strike, kindly indicate the following):- Percentage demanded by Union..... Percentage offered by employer Percentage agreed on by both parties..... <input type="checkbox"/> Bonuses and other compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Retrenchments / Dismissals <input type="checkbox"/> Working conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-economic / political conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to bargain <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary action from another dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Grievances <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplinary matters <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational rights
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other reason, (please specify).....	
<p>¹ Workers <i>participating</i> are those workers who went on strike or were locked out as a result of the dispute.</p> <p>² Workers <i>affected</i> are those workers not involved in the strike but could not continue with their normal duties as a result of the strike.</p> <p>Name of employer (<i>in full</i>):</p> <p>Signature of employer: Date:</p>	

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DEFINITIONS**Strike:**

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, by persons who are or have been employed by the same employer or by different employers, for the purpose of remedying a grievance or resolving a dispute in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, and every reference to work in this definition includes overtime, whether it is voluntary or compulsory (section 213).

Lockout:

The exclusion by an employer of workers from the employer's workplace. For the purpose of compelling the workers to accept a demand in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, whether or not the employer breaches those workers' contracts of employment in the course of or for the purpose of that exclusion.

Secondary strike:

A strike in support of a strike by other employees against their employer. The strikers have no issue with their employer, but that employer might be in a strong position (due to there being a close business relationship as either an important customer or supplier) to pressurise the employer who is in dispute.

Protest action:

The partial or complete refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, for the purpose of promoting or defending the socio-economic interest of workers, but not for a purpose referred to in the definition of "strike".

Stay away:

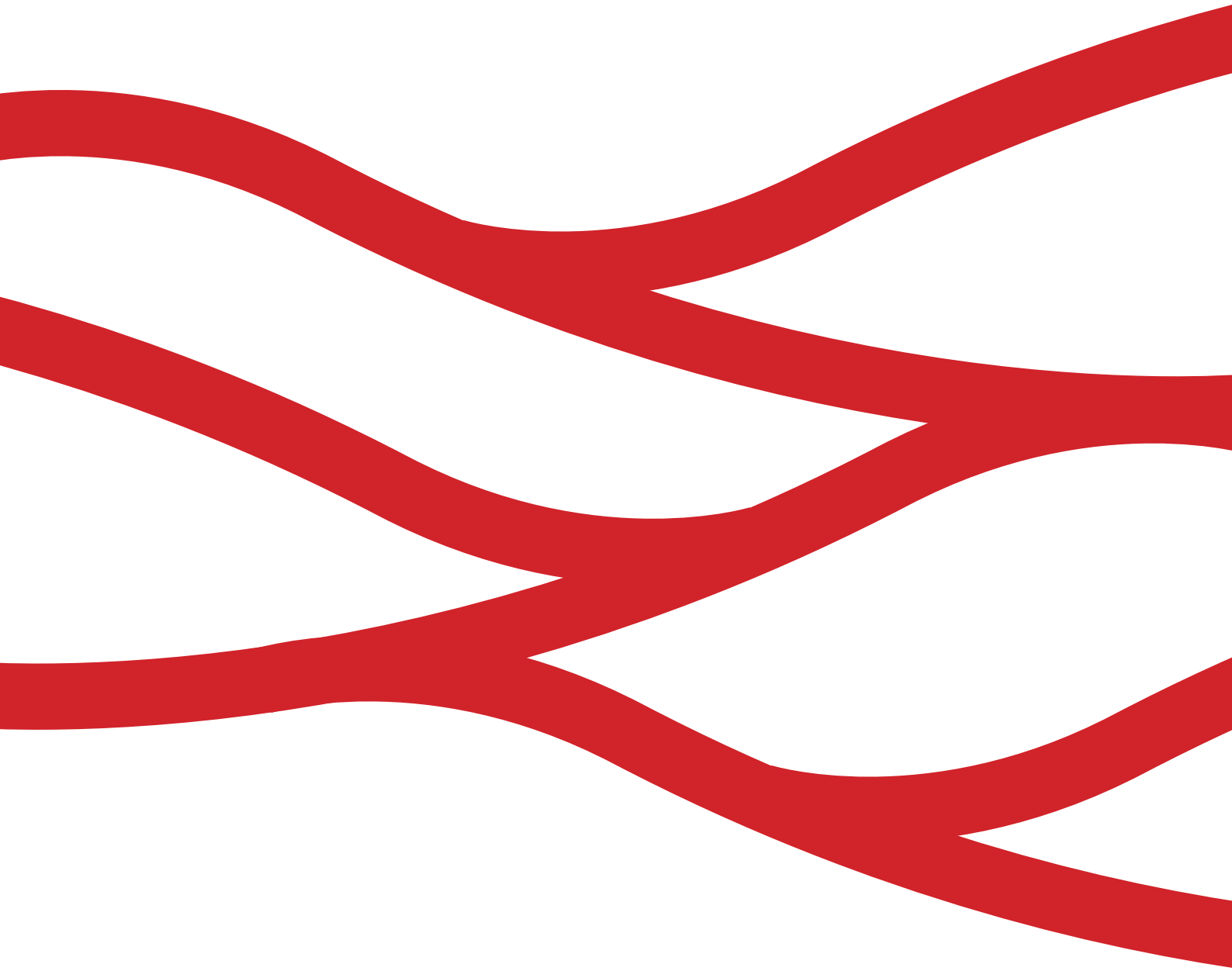
Industrial action by a group of employees in the form of absenting themselves from work without permission in support of some socio-economic issue which does not relate to their employment situation.

Work hours:

Hours during which an employee is obliged to work. Work hours lost is calculated by multiplying the number of all workers involved in each stoppage by the number of hours the stoppage lasted.

Working days lost:

Days during which an employee is obliged to work working days is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the duration of the stoppage in days lost and adding the totals for all stoppages during the reference period.





employment & labour

Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA