

ANC 'DUMPS' WORKERS IN SMS

ALL-OUT STRUGGLE IS THE

ONLY ROAD TO SAVE JOBS!

FORWARD WITH ROLLING MASS ACTION

On Friday 6 March EPWP workers received a two-line SMS from the Department of Infrastructure Development (DID) informing them that their jobs would no longer exist after 31 March 2020. The SMS reads: *This serves as a notification that your contract with the Department is ending on the 31st March 2020. We thank you for your participation in the programme.*

The ANC-run DID is willing to throw workers out on to the street via an SMS that took less than 30 seconds to write. This is how little thought they give to workers who have given years of their lives to help run essential public sector services. If any worker still had any illusions that the ANC is a party for the working class then this must surely shatter that to pieces.

Workers have been patient and reasonable with the DID and the ANC-run Gauteng Provincial Government. But in return workers have been treated with contempt.

- On 12/13 February EPWP workers organised two days of protest action in Tshwane, including a night-vigil at Union Buildings. A memorandum was submitted to the Regional Office of the DID on Bloed Street. In the memorandum the EPWP Forum requested a meeting with the department within 7 days. **WORKERS HEARD NOTHING.**

- On 1 March comrades in the Nupsaw trade union wrote to the DID. They questioned the DID's silence and asked for a response within two days. **THE DID MADE EXCUSES.**

- On 3 March the EPWP Forum wrote to ANC Premier David Makhura. The Forum asked him to confirm receipt of the letter within 48 hours and to meet with them before Monday 9 March. **WORKERS HEARD NOTHING.**

In **FULL KNOWLEDGE** that workers were asking to talk, the ANC-run DID then sent its SMS declaring its intention to throw workers out on to the street.

The ANC-run DID is **FORCING** workers to take to the street. The ANC-run DID is **FORCING** workers to disrupt the functioning of government departments. The ANC-run DID is **FORCING** workers to disrupt the city-centres of Pretoria and Johannesburg.

What sort of behaviour is this? It is the behaviour of an out-of-touch political elite. Let us remind workers of the following:

(1) the salary of Ms Tasneem Motara, DID MEC, is R1.9 million per year

(2) the salary of David Makhura, Gauteng Premier, is R2.3 million per year

Just these two individuals earn more than 160 EPWP workers who must also support their families! These politicians hold office only because of the votes of ordinary people. Their salaries are funded from the taxes on ordinary people. Yet they do not even have the basic human courtesy to answer a simple letter! **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!**

There must be no pause in the rolling mass action until Makhura and Motara agree the following:

1. An immediate withdrawal of the contract cancellation SMS.
2. An immediate increase in stipends to the R3,500 national minimum wage.
3. A signed agreement establishing an **EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING TASK TEAM**, made up of representatives of government and the EPWP workers and their representatives to organise a process for the **ABSORPTION** of **ALL** EPWP workers as **PERMANENT** members of staff on a salary of **R12,500 p/m.**

The Gauteng Department of Health extended the contracts of Community Health Workers (CHWs - another EPWP 'project'). What does this decision tell us? That the decision of whether or not to extend, or to cancel, contracts lies directly with the departments. Finance Minister Tito Mboweni admitted this in his reply to the CHWs memorandum, delivered during the Union Buildings action.

So workers must be crystal clear: Motara and Makhura have made a CHOICE to throw you out on to the street. It is not written in the stars. There is no one above them forcing their hand.

We have heard that the decision to throw the EPWP workers out onto the street is **POLITICALLY MOTIVATED**. The ANC's Gauteng politicians are complaining that EPWP workers in Tshwane and Johannesburg are "infected with politics". They want to re-fill the programme with workers from 'uninfected' new areas.

But what "politics" are they talking about? The "politics" where workers organise to fight against exploitation? The "politics" where workers say enough of the political gravy train, corruption and nepotism? The ANC is upset that its slaves have rebelled!

WE NEED A WORKERS PARTY

The Saftu trade union federation passed a resolution saying: *"Saftu once all the discussions have been concluded about the modalities and the platform through a bottom up and democratic process, will catalyse the formation of a Workers Party."* (November 2019, Central Executive Committee)

Where is this party? EPWP workers need it **NOW!** Every delay in implementing this resolution leaves workers with one hand tied behind their backs in the struggle to defend jobs and wages. We cannot leave the capitalist politicians in office any longer.

EPWP workers can and should play a key role in founding a mass workers party with a socialist programme. EPWP workers must organise to lobby the Saftu leadership to implement this resolution as part of the struggle for permanent jobs and R12,500.

APPEAL TO PERMANENT PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS: TIME FOR A PUBLIC SECTOR GENERAL STRIKE!

The ANC government's budget has promised to cut the wages of permanent workers by R162 billion and cut departmental budgets by another R100+ billion. To do this they are willing to tear-up the three year wage-deal they signed with trade unions. The national ANC government is showing exactly the same contempt for its 1 million+ public sector workers that the Gauteng ANC government shows for its EPWP workers.

The ANC government is willingly dancing to the tune of the Moody's ratings agency company and behind them the rich bankers and finance capital. They want the working class to pay for the global crisis of the capitalist profit system.

All public sector workers – permanent or EPWP, members of any trade union and none – must unite and fight to stop this agenda. Permanent workers must throw their weight behind the EPWP workers' demand for permanent jobs.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!