



Transport and communication workers march arm-in-arm with political formations for workers' rights



By Pretty Mkhonta

On Thursday 18 August 2022, Southern Star Logistics workers organised under the Swaziland Transport, Communications and Allied Workers Union (SWATCAWU) marched together with Swaziland's political organisations to deliver a list of demands to their management.

The workers' defiance comes in light of the fact that political parties are still banned in Swaziland – since 12 April 1973. Associating with them often attracts political repercussions from the ruling tinkhundla regime. Despite this, however, more Swazis now openly defy this draconian law.

Since Southern Star's takeover of Unitrans Swaziland, there have been a number of pay cuts as explained by SWATCAWU. This worsened their already dire situation.

For the past six months, workers have been earning peanuts. This has led to workers finally taking further steps to confront their employer.

The workers demanded that Southern Star management stops meddling in union affairs and immediately stop all forms of union bashing.

Communist Party activists came out in solidarity with the workers. They marched together with workers until the protest ended.

Southern Star management tried to sabotage the workers' protest by blocking access to the workplace. In the process, they also locked in other workers inside the premises.

Despite this, workers were able to force the gate open. The company's slave drivers called Mswati's police on the workers, but their intimidation tactics failed to douse the workers' resolve.

The CPS as the vanguard of the working class rallied the workers through the voice of the National Organising Secretary Simphiwe Dlamini.

Addressing the workers, the Organiser stated that as the vanguard of the working class, it is their duty to ensure that the struggle of workers is also the struggle of the Communist Party. He further stated that the democracy we want in the country is determined by the unbanning of political parties and return of political exiles back to their country, among other key demands.

To achieve all these, "we want freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech", he added.

"It is every workers' duty to have a role in the struggle," emphasised CPS Organiser.

He also stressed that for the people's revolution to succeed, all workplaces, businesses, schools, and communities must be made sites of struggle.

CPS in solidarity with heavily exploited Southern Star workers



By Lwazi Maziya

The Communist Party of Swaziland (CPS) joined workers organised under the banner of the Swaziland Transport Communication and Allied Workers Union (SWATCAWU).

The workers protested at the truck company's gates and delivered a petition.

Southern Star Logistics, where absolute monarch Mswati III shares, is one of the worst exploiters of workers in Matsapha.

Employees of Southern Star have complained about arbitrary pay cuts and dire working conditions. Employees have been experiencing deductions from their monthly income for the slightest of mistakes.

Due to inflation and the expensive cost of living, workers have since been unable to cope and afford basic meals to survive.

"Undo all pay cuts against employees, for the past six years," reads one of the demands in the petition.

The workers also called for the total outlawing of slave wages, in particular from the company's wash bay department.

CPS National Organising Secretary, Comrade Simphiwe Dlamini, delivered words of solidarity to the

workers.

He first appreciated the revolutionary work being done by workers in all different workplaces and reminded protesters that, "Without workers, no wheel can turn. All the glamorous and shiny things we see would not have existed without workers."

He continued, "We advocate for freedom at workplaces. The CPS calls for the unbanning of all political parties, safe return of all exiled political activists and the release of imprisoned comrades."

He continued to elaborate that workers are members of society before they are workers, and also called for unity in communities, and that workplaces should be sites of struggle for socialism.

The National Organiser concluded his speech by encouraging workers to economically frustrate Mswati and his regime if ever the people of Swaziland are to gain their freedom.

The petition was successfully delivered and received by Thabani Gina the human resource manager on behalf of the Manager Mduduzi Magongo.

The workers vowed that they would make a follow-up on Monday regarding the delivered petition.

The CPS, on the other hand, continues to take the struggle to workplaces to organise workers for the total end of all forms of exploitation.

PETITION TO GENERAL MANAGER OF SOUTHERN STAR LOGISTICS (PTY) LTD IN SWAZILAND

We, the undersigned human rights formations, are particularly concerned on the state, attitude and lack of respect for employees' rights in your establishment.

We demand as follows;

1. Do away with slaves wages, in particular from wash bay department.
2. Do away with short or fixed term contract work.
3. Respect employees' rights and dignity.
4. Refrain from meddling to union affairs and immediately stop all forms of union busting: *busting*
5. Undo all pay cuts against employees for the past 6 years.
6. In a public statement explain your establishment's involvement in killing of civilians on 2021 political unrest.
7. That ten percent of your annual returns must be publicly declared and go towards poverty alleviation initiatives.

You are demanded upon to issue an employees' notice within 7 days with respect to demand 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 upon receipt of this petition. You are further demanded upon to meaningfully engage SWATCAWU in meeting demands of employees' welfare. We shall pay a visit soon.

NEHAWU honours martyr Amos Mbedzi on his birthday



By Tenanile

On Thursday 18 August 2022, around 100 activists gathered in Parktown, Johannesburg, to protest in front of the Swazi consulate against the tinkhundla regime.

The picket took place in remembrance of Comrade Amos Mbedzi who passed away on 7 June 2022 in Polokwane.

Protesters called for justice for Amos Mbedzi and all political prisoners in Swaziland.

The picket was led by NEHAWU (National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union). Also participating in the protest were the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), South African Communist Party (SACP), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and Swazi political formations including the Communist Party of Swaziland (CPS)

Amos Mbedzi was a South African revolutionary internationalist who, after having made his contribution to the struggle against apartheid in his country, dedicated the remainder of his life to serve the people of Swaziland. He was arrested on 20 September 2008 after surviving a bomb blast which left his two other comrades, Jack Govender and Musa "MJ" Dlamini, dead, with him heavily injured.

Despite being heavily injured, the Mswati autocracy tortured and denied him access to proper health care.

In August 2012, he was sentenced to 85 years imprisonment for the charges of sedition, violation of Swaziland's immigration law, unlawful possession of explosives and for the bizarre charge of murdering his comrades.

Among other demands, the petition called for the unbanning of all political parties, end of the repression of democratic political organisations, the immediate removal of the draconian 12 April 1973 decree, and the unconditional return of all exiles.

"In as much as there are other political struggles happening, it is important that today we remember our fallen hero, Comrade Amos Mbedzi," said NEHAWU Gauteng Provincial Chairperson, Comrade Sello Mafelo, as he welcomed activists to the picket.

Malefo went on to state that Amos Mbedzi was "one of the forces that we recognised as NEHAWU and as an internationalist all around, because in as much as Comrade Amos Mbedzi was born and bred in South Africa, he sacrificed his life for the struggle of liberation for both South Africans and Swazis."

"He never fully enjoyed his life in democratic South Africa because the people of Swaziland were not free. He moved to Swaziland to ensure that the people are fully liberated," Malefo added.

Amongst the messages of support delivered by different political formations, was the CPS's International Secretary, Comrade Pius Vilakati. He outlined how the imperialists and capitalists played a major role in the killing of



**NEHAWU Gauteng Provincial Chairperson,
Comrade Sello Mafelo**



**Amos Mbedzi's son, Mkhonto Doctor Mbedzi at the
picket.**

Comrade Amos Mbedzi in their consorting with the tinkhundla regime.

Pius pointed out that, "For many years we have been protesting, delivering petitions in the Swazi Consulate, but nothing has been done. The Mswati regime has shown that it is not willing to listen to the people of Swaziland."

The International Secretary went on to criticise the enabling role played by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), United States and the European Union, in the process emboldening the ruling regime.

Pius continued, "Comrade Amos Mbedzi was killed by Mswati and his tinkhundla forces, working together with the capitalists, which is why he was taken from Swaziland and brought back to South Africa secretly. Let us ask ourselves, comrades: How and why is it that a democratic country could hide the transferring of Amos from Swaziland to South Africa?"

"For 14 years, Comrade Amos Mbedzi was behind bars, and none of these international institutions ever intervened in calling for justice. They kept him in jail, and when Mswati wanted to inflict more torture on him and his family, they transferred him as if there was hope for his release, yet they knew very well that they were pushing him out to die," added Pius.

Amos Mbedzi was sent off as a people's hero in his community in Makonde, Limpopo Province, on 12 June 2022.

"Amos died a revolutionary," said Pius.

When the Mswati autocracy sent Amos out to South Africa, they were not releasing him from jail, however. He was still imprisoned.

"Amos died while still arrested. The capitalists and imperialists are also guilty of murder in this case," continued Pius.

The CPS also called for a determined fight against the ruling absolute monarchy.

Pius stated firmly, "Now, comrades, it is time for everyone to choose sides: It is either you are with the people or with the oppressor. There is no middle road!"

After Mswati's Police Day 'eye for an eye' speech about two weeks ago on Friday 5 August, different political formations' messages of support emphasised that it was a clear indication that it was time for mass insurrection in Swaziland.

Mkhonto Doctor Mbedzi, the son of Amos Mbedzi, also participated in the picket.

Mkhonto recalled his father's memories in what was an emotional day for him.

Mkhonto narrated, "Today is a very emotional day for me. I remember when I heard that he was arrested, I went to visit him and he said 'I am a soldier, I will remain a soldier. Take me to the battlefield and see what I can do!' When he was hospitalised, paralysed, he only moved his right side. He turned his hand, and he was counting. I asked him what he meant, he said, 'Give me a gun, take me to the battlefield and I will show you what I can do.' The last time I saw him alive, he barely moved but what he managed to do was to lift his hand and make a fist."

"Today I want to assure each and everyone here that the spirit of those who died are guiding you. May you never give up, be consistent and be united," Mkhonto added.

NEHAWU gave the Swazi consulate 14 days to respond to the people's demands as captured in the petition.

Amos Mbedzi on this day, 18 August 2022, would have turned 58 years old if it were not for Mswati and his tinkhundla regime that persecuted him for his resilient spirit in the fight against oppression of the Swazi people. Issue 16 of the CPS journal, *Liciniso*, will be released in celebration of a great revolutionary and internationalist par excellence.

**Long live the revolutionary spirit of
Comrade Amos Mbedzi!**