

Union accuses SAB of bribery

The Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) has accused SA Breweries on Monday (7 October) of using underhand tactics to end an ongoing strike.



"Fawu is in possession of sms's sent to workers by management to lure them into abandoning the strike and accept extra cash in addition to their monthly salaries," spokesman Dominique Swartz said in a statement.

Fawu embarked on an indefinite strike at SAB over a week ago, demanding a nine percent wage increase across the board.

SAB has offered seven percent, which would increase the average monthly pay for shift workers by R1,196, to R18,283.

Swartz claimed on Monday (7 October): "It is interesting that SAB suddenly found money to offer to workers should they abandon the strike. This action has just confirmed to us that they are indeed able to give workers a decent increase if they have "bribe" money to waste."

Swartz said despite SAB claiming the strike was not affecting operations, the company would fail to reach targets for the festive season should the strike continue.

Bonus and contingency plans

SAB spokesman Robyn Chalmers denied SAB was bribing anyone or that was it offering a bonus to workers. It was, instead, giving workers performance-related payments (PRP) and allowances for achieving certain targets over peak periods.

She said the company's final offer to the union was a seven-percent average increase with performance-related pay (PRP). SAB said it believed that a wish to fundamentally undermine PRP was at the heart of the strike.

"SAB is paying incentives to employees who are achieving exceptional operating performances leading up to the company's peak season," she said.

"To qualify to receive this incentive for exceptional performance, stringent production and delivery targets are set each week and if these are not achieved, the incentives will not be paid," she added.

The company said it had a full contingency plan in place to minimise disruptions to operations and customers during the strike action. Chalmers said a strike was always problematic, but the company was confident of its plan.

"SAB has a total of about 6,400 people working in the beer division, of which about 2,800 are members of the bargaining unit," she said.

"Currently, about 860 Fawu members are on strike, amounting to just over 30% of the bargaining unit - so a minority of workers are on strike," she added.

Source: Sapa via I-Net Bridge

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