

Judgment reserved in Amplats case

Judgment was reserved by the Labour Court on Tuesday (1 October) in an application against Anglo American Platinum's (Amplats) retrenchment procedures.



The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which brought the application, said judgment was reserved until next week.

Spokesman Lesiba Seshoka said the union sought legal recourse because it considered the mining company's retrenchment procedure unfair. It also believed Anglo American Platinum had reneged on some of the conditions.

Amplats' spokeswoman Mpumi Sithole said the company was aware of the urgent application. "We have embarked upon an extensive consultation process and have discharged all our obligations under Section 189," she said.

Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act deals with retrenchment processes.

"The company will however continue to engage with NUM through established channels," Sithole added.

Job losses reduced

Amplats announced in January that 14,000 jobs would be cut as part of its restructuring process.

Last week it said retrenchment avoidance measures, like redeployment into vacancies across the group, voluntary severance, and early retirements had resulted in a reduction of the number of employees to be retrenched to 3,300. The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union downed tools in protest on the day the measures were announced.

According to the SA Labour Guide's website, companies found not to have followed fair procedures for retrenchments can be ordered to compensate the retrenched workers. Such compensation could be up to one year's normal remuneration for each retrenched worker.

On Monday (29 September), Business Day quoted NUM general secretary Frans Baleni as saying that the union had decided to pursue the matter in court but rather than through industrial action. He did not rule out the possibility of a strike.

Source: Sapa via I-Net Bridge

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