

SAGA supports US SAG-AFTRA strike despite negative effect on Cape Town movie industry

A week ago in the US, SAG-AFTRA's 160,000 members went on strike. This has had far-reaching consequences, with a knock-on effect on all production felt as far away as the tip of Africa, with the Cape Town film industry reporting the shutting down of filming of at least one video streaming service.



Source: © cometocapetown.com cometocapetown.com AS a consequence of the US SAG-AFTRA's strike, the Cape Town film industry has reported the shutting down of filming of at least one video streaming service

This is according to a report by [cape {{town}} etc.](#)

The film industry contributed more than R5bn (pre-Covid) to the local economy annually, and created more than 35,000 jobs. In 2022 with 4,221 permits were issued by the Film Permit Office.

A [News24](#) quotes Jack Devnarain, South Africa Guild of Actors (SAGA) chairperson, that more productions are likely to be halted as a result of the protests.

Despite this, the South Africa Guild of Actors (SAGA) declared their support for the strike immediately after it was announced.

"SAGA stands in solidarity with SAG-AFTRA and the Writers Guild of America (WGA)," he is further quoted as saying in

the article, adding, “We absolutely are in this fight with our American counterparts.”

South Africa faces same issues as US counterparts

This, he says, is because the issues their US counterparts have raised while negotiating with the streamers are “critical issues of global importance because even in South Africa, we are confronted with the same issues”.

In the article, he explains that “American actors are looking for better residual payments for their work on the streaming platforms, and very importantly, they are also looking for protection from AI, so that their work can’t be replicated or co-opted by software programmes”.

He adds, “These are some of the big issues we are facing in South Africa”.

However, he points out that while in the US actors have the right to unionise and to engage in industrial action, in South Africa, freelancers are not protected by the Labour Relations Act.

“In fact, we are specifically excluded. It means we may not form a union, engage in union activities, or engage in industrial action like going on strike”.

A global industry standard

For Devnarain the strike is an opportunity to establish an industry standard around the world.

In the article, he explains that as the “US is such an essential engine for creative industry growth and productivity, it means that the issues they are confronted with were always going to reach boiling point much faster than anywhere else in the world”.

Now we are there. The unions in the US have taken a bold and absolutely necessary stance to stop the abuse of performers and writers, stand for some kind of protection, and guarantee the residuals that need to be paid to performers,” quotes that *News24* article.

“Of course, in South Africa, not only are we denied royalty payments, but we also have the streaming platforms that have come into South Africa and are shamelessly exploiting South African talent while claiming that their business model does not allow for any residual payments,” he says in the article

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