

Govt has left us no choice but to use 'mass power', says Nehawu as it rejects public wage offer

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30m ago Govt has left us no choice but to use 'mass power', says Nehawu as it rejects public wage offer Marelise van der Merwe Share Nehawu members in Pretoria. Photo: File, Deann Vivier Nehawu members in Pretoria. Photo: File, Deann Viv Nehawu has formally rejected government's revised wage offer and declared a dispute. It says it will prepare members to strike if conciliation does not yield positive results. Popcru rejected the offer on Friday, while the PSA is consulting with members. The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union has formally rejected government's revised wage offer and will report back to its members to prepare them for a possible strike, it said in a statement on Friday night. It also confirmed it had declared a dispute on Friday afternoon. This followed the day's talks, which resulted in a minority of unions accepting the revised offer, an insider previously told Fin24. "Having noted the offer tabled by the employer, our members mandated the union to vehemently reject the offer and further directed the leadership not to sign an agreement of gratuity as it is not the real traditional wage increase. "In essence, the union must not sign any agreement that is outside the baseline and not making any improvement to the benefits of workers post retirement or at the time of resignation, as a matter of principle," Nehawu said. It added that it would be reporting back to its members "in order to prepare them for possible strike action if the conciliation process doesn't yield positive results". "Indeed, government has left us with no option other than to use our mass power," it said. Earlier on Friday, Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) was among the biggest unions to outright reject the offer, with Popcru spokesperson Richard Mamabolo saying it would "not have any impact on the baseline salaries of employees and pensions in the long term". On Friday night, Popcru too issued an updated statement, saying it was "left with no option but to offer PSCBC dispute resolution procedures". The offer includes a 1.5% pay progression for employees that fall under the Public Service Bargaining Council who would not have received the normal pay progression. Nehawu previously voiced its dissatisfaction with the proposed adjustment, saying a 1.5% pay progression would benefit fewer than 40 000 employees. According to the bargaining council, the lowest-paid public servants (level 1 workers) would see an 11.7% pay adjustment as a result of the salary increase plus cash payment, while level 10 employees would receive an overall increase of around 4%. The agreement will only take effect once a majority signs. But on Friday night, the Public Servants Association's (PSA) Claude Naiker said four unions had accepted the proposed increase, and it was the final offer on the table. Other unions have 21 days to accept the offer or formally reject it. "As far as PSA is concerned, we are currently balloting our members for a mandate whether to accept the offer or reject the offer," Naicker said. You have invested in the future Your News24 subscription is an investment in independent journalism. Thank you. Your support strengthens our ability to hold power to account and unearth stories you can trust. Read subscriber articles...