



NUMSA condemns SA Steel Mills for failing to keep the workplace safe after four workers were burned with molten steel lava

**23 October 2023
Press Statement**

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) condemns SA Steel Mills for failing to keep the workplace safe after several workers nearly died in a horrific accident. NUMSA is deeply concerned about the well-being of workers at SA Steel Mills following a horrific accident around 6:30 am on Thursday morning, where four employees were burned with molten steel lava. NUMSA was alerted to the accident by the Regional Secretary of Sedibeng, comrade Kabelo Ramokhathali. We dispatched our health and safety official to the scene and he informed the Department of Employment and Labour of the incident. We must state that by the time we had informed the DoEL, SA Steel Mills had not yet informed the department of the incident. The inspector of the DoEL arrived at the scene around midday to conduct inspection.

Upon arriving at the scene of the incident, two employees had been hospitalized and were in critical condition. Two others were treated with normal first aid by first responders and sent home. NUMSA insisted that the other two be taken to hospital where they were treated overnight for burns and kept for observation.

Management claims that the accident was as a result of a cooling water pump which tripped causing the molten steel not to run through the mould, and it splashed outside the mould and caused serious burn injuries to the operators who were mending the process.

This is not the first time that SA Steel Mills has had accidents and NUMSA is on record for exposing the management of this company for consistently failing to act, to ensure that proper health and safety protocols are followed. In the last incident, a worker died and the owner Rafik Mohamed, was inhumane in his response to the incident. He refused to allow workers to take time off to deal with the trauma, and, also, to properly mourn the death of their colleague. Mohamed behaved like a slave owner and demanded that workers return to work immediately, or face dismissal. We condemn SA Steel Mills for putting profits ahead of safety!

It is clear that worker safety is not prioritized at SA Steel Mills and this is putting the lives of workers at risk. We are calling on the DoEL to take the issues of SA Steel Mills seriously and intervene decisively, otherwise, there will be more unnecessary deaths.

Aluta continua!

The struggle continues!

Issued by Irvin Jim

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