



CPI Increases are not enough – workers at Gautrain deserve a living wage!
8 July 2025
Press statement

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) will be balloting its members to determine whether it will be going ahead with a strike at Gautrain. NUMSA has deadlocked with the Bombela Operating Company which manages the Gautrain. The union was granted a certificate to strike, which means we can give the employer 48-hour notice to down tools.

Our members rejected the employer's offer of 4.2% wage increase Gautrain workers, because this is not a meaningful increase. We are demanding 7% increase across the board. While management clings to the Consumer Price Index as a benchmark, workers are living in a country where the cost of survival has skyrocketed far beyond the CPI.

Let's talk facts:

- Eskom tariffs have surged by 12.7%, with more hikes looming.
- Fuel prices are R21 per litre, driving up transport and food costs.
- A basic basket of food now exceeds R5,000, according to the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group (PMBEJD) which reports that the average cost of a basic household food basket in Pietermaritzburg is R5443.12
- While half of South Africa's workers earn less than R5,400 a month.
- The average worker supports 5-7 unemployed family members.

Meanwhile, the lowest-paid Gautrain worker, a cleaner, earns approximately R9,000, therefore how are they expected to absorb these increases with a meagre 4.2% offer? This is not just a wage dispute. It's a question of dignity and fairness. The demands we are making are reasonable given that the cost of living is extremely high. This is why we say, CPI Increases are not enough – workers at Gautrain deserve a living wage!

Gautrain's world-class performance with over 7.9 million passengers annually and a 95% punctuality rate is only made possible by the very workers now being told to "tighten their belts" while executives remain insulated in air-conditioned offices. The same executives are rewarded with generous packages, when it is ordinary workers, whose labour is exploited, in order to generate Gautrain's world class performance.

NUMSA's demand for a 7% increase is a modest, reasonable adjustment that reflects the real cost of living in South Africa today. This is not a luxury, it is lifeline.

We call on the Bombela Operating Company and the Gautrain Management Agency to put a meaningful offer on the table. Workers are not asking for miracles, they are asking for economic justice. We all have a responsibility to end wage inequality and that includes the bosses at Gautrain.

We work to live. Not to fall behind.
ENDS

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