



**NUMSA Statement on the Memorandum of demands to the Office of the Presidency to
Save SA Smelters!
8 December 2025
Press statement**

The National Union of Metal workers of South Africa (NUMSA), marched to the office of the Presidency to register its frustration that both the Presidency and the Ministry of Electricity, are failing to implement a vibrant industrial policy, and this has put the entire manufacturing sector under threat. Our smelters are under care and maintenance and this is going to lead to a massive job loss bloodbath.

At Rustenburg smelter 3000 jobs have already been lost as a result of the smelter being mothballed, and if we do not succeed in implementing interventions that support the industry to be competitive, then workers will be affected in the following way:

- At Glencore Western Smelter in Rustenburg including at Glencore head Office – at least 1195 jobs will be lost.
- At Lion Smelter in Mpumalanga - 25 jobs are on the line
- At Glencore Char Technology – at least 70 jobs are on the line.
- By December 31 Glencore will have retrenched 2000 jobs in total!
- Almar Investment has already retrenched about 538 workers between June and September 2025.
- In Samancor more than 5000 workers face job losses if the retrenchments continue in January 2026.

NUMSA calls on the leadership of government led by the Presidency and the Minister of Electricity and Eskom to move swiftly in granting the smelter industry a competitive electricity tariff of 62 cents per KW/h as workers can no longer accept any form of delay. This matter has been in discussion for the past 3 years! NUMSA is very clear that government must stop exporting jobs out of the country by failing to beneficiate our Chrome Ore and Manganese. Countries like China have no Chrome Ore or Manganese and yet they have opened up many smelters to process South Africa's raw material.

NUMSA has been calling and demanding that government must ban the exportation of critical minerals such as Chrome Ore and Manganese. That includes declaring coal as a strategic mineral and the positive spin-off of such an industrial policy will be to attract all of those who are interested in our minerals to come and set up smelters here in South Africa to beneficiate our minerals. This can create the most needed jobs that are paying a living wage so that we can smash poverty, unemployment and inequality.

NUMSA does not understand why government is failing to comprehend such a basic fundamental element of industrial policy. We must learn from Indonesia. They banned the exportation of nickel from their country and they remain part of the World Trade Organization.

NUMSA has made the following demands to the Office of the Presidency:

1. We demand that government must introduce a Chrome Ore export quota to reduce Chrome Ore exports and introduce export rebates and introduce an export tax on Chrome Ore.
2. NUMSA demands that South Africa's Ferrochrome be excluded from the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and SA's carbon taxes.
3. We demand that the Negotiated Pricing Agreement on electricity tariffs should apply to Green Energy Projects rather than the Eskom Megaflex tariffs during periods of no generation.
4. NUMSA want to be clear with government that given the job loss blood bath not only in smelters and across all sectors such as the auto sector, tyre sector, engineering and steel sector, that all of these constitute a national catastrophe of a job loss blood bath which is worsening and deepening the crisis of deindustrialisation, mass job losses, mass poverty and inequality. This crisis sends a very clear message to government that it must stop conducting and behaving as if it is a first world country, by rushing to cut emissions when the Paris Accord we signed to was very clear that there must be a Just Energy Transition. This means that developing countries like South Africa have other priorities such as tackling the Apartheid spatial development legacy and to tackle poverty and unemployment. Therefore as a country we cannot be dictated to on what must constitute our country's energy mix. We must transition at a pace and a cost that we can afford and we must ensure that we can power our economy and communities with a competitive electricity tariff.
5. NUMSA continues to demand that government cannot fail to give this sector a 62 cent electricity tariff when we have an abundance of coal which is our strategic mineral. Government must mandate Eskom to deliver an affordable electricity tariff to this sector with immediate effect.
6. NUMSA further calls on government to nationalise this industry by taking ownership of shares in the smelter sector and it must make sure that workers also have a stake so that government does not complain about the billions it will be losing as a result of delivering this 62 cents competitive electricity tariff. If they do this, it will make the industry to be competitive and profitable and our government will benefit on behalf of the people, from dividends and it will generate revenue for the state. Workers will also benefit from the sweat and toil of their labour, by owning shares. We believe in empowering workers and we demand that the state must enable this process.
7. NUMSA demands that government must intervene in the economy, to direct and re-direct development and to champion manufacturing and industrialisation. It can do this by taking ownership and control of all commanding heights, all its minerals and to beneficiate them at the back of progressive partnership with the private sector.

This matter is urgent and this is why we expect a formal written response by close of business by **Friday 12th of December 2025**.

The memorandum of demands was not handed to an official in the Office of the Presidency as expected. Unfortunately, they sent very junior member of staff to receive the memorandum. We condemn the office of the Presidency for insulting workers by not bothering to show up! We communicated in advance and received written confirmation, that someone from the office of the Presidency would receive the memorandum. It is unfortunate that they did not show up, they clearly do not give this matter the attention it deserves.

We still expect them to respond in writing to our demands by the end of the week.

Ends.

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