



NUMSA Press Statement

31 July 2026

NUMSA Stands in Solidarity with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union— An Injury to One is an Injury to All!

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), representing over 300,000 metalworkers, stands shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity with our comrades of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)—specifically Warehouse Local 6 and Longshore Local 10—in their heroic battle against C&H Sugar Refinery in California.

NUMSA recognises this fight for what it is and we resolutely stand with our comrades in defence of the ILWU's right to strike in order to win this battle. This is an attack by the world's largest sugar refinery to force a poverty-wage contract onto its workforce. By stripping healthcare benefits, slashing overtime, and demolishing the seniority system, C&H Sugar has declared an open war on workers. In South Africa, we are all too familiar with greedy bosses who prioritise profit over human lives.

Capital knows no borders in its pursuit of profit, and neither does our international working-class solidarity. C&H Sugar's attempt to unload the vessel *Tai Herald*—carrying sugar extracted from Negros Island in the Philippines—is a profound outrage. In April this year, state armed forces slaughtered 19 people on Negros Island, including sugarcane workers. That sugar is drenched in the blood of our fallen Filipino comrades.

Since Local 6 took to the picket lines on 15 June, C&H Sugar has deployed every dirty tactic in the union-busting playbook. The company shamefully used scab labour to bypass Local 10's picket lines at private industrial dock, Levin's Terminal in Richmond. Then they mobilised the police—the armed wing of the ruling class—to protect scab labour and attack comrades picketing at the C&H facility in Crockett. During the powerful Bay Area port shutdown on 21 July, police issued dispersal orders and arrested ten union members and supporters.

Yet, in shutting down the ports that day, ILWU demonstrated the collective power of organised labour. You showed the world that not a single wheel turns, not a single light shines, and not a single ton of cargo moves without the consent of the working class! It is us, the working class, who ultimately produce the wealth!

NUMSA condemns the police for acting as C&H Sugar's private security force. History has repeatedly taught us—from the dark days of apartheid in South Africa, to the docks of California today—that the state apparatus will always unleash violence to protect capitalist profits.

Over the years NUMSA and ILWU have shared a special relationship built on internationalism and solidarity. To President Mike Villeggiante, the leadership of ILWU Local 10, the courageous striking workers of Local 6, and every supporter on the picket line, we say: Your fight is our fight! An injury to one is an injury to all!

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