



NUMSA Press Statement

7 July 2026

NUMSA Members at NJR Steel Potchefstroom Embark on Indefinite Protected Strike Over Wage Exploitation and Employer Greed

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) confirms that members at Nigel John Riley (NJR) Steel Potchefstroom have embarked on an indefinite protected industrial action at employer's premises on 6 July 2026. This action follows a protracted dispute and deadlock.

The employer arrogantly refused to accede to workers' legitimate demands. After conciliation failed, the Commissioner issued the Certificate of Non-Resolution, which legally entitled workers to exercise their constitutional rights to strike. In compliance with the Labour Relations Act (LRA), NUMSA issued 48 hours' notice on 3 July 2026 for strike to commence on 6 July 2026.

In a desperate and unlawful attempt to intimidate workers, the employer retaliated on the same day by issuing a "Lock Out Notice" and threatened to lock out all workers wishing to participate in the protected strike. This is clear victimisation and a direct attack on the worker's constitutional rights.

The employer has rejected every demand and is further pushing that workers withdraw all demands before they will even table an offer. This is bad faith bargaining of the highest order.

Below are NUMSA's demands:

1. 10 % wage increase across the board.
2. Payment of backpay from the expiry date of the previous agreement.
3. Introduction of funeral cover without any clause that compromises workers and their families.
4. Introduction of Operator Assistance in all areas where single operators are exposed to safety risk and excessive workload. No workers should die in the name of profit.
5. Introduction of medical aid with the company contributing 80% and workers contributing 20%.
6. The payment of meal allowance for all drivers required to work away from workplace or overtime.

NJR Steel Potchefstroom continues to maximise profit year after year while treating the very workers who create wealth as disposable. The management is intent on keeping workers and their families in perpetual poverty and refuses to afford them basic dignity.

This is not just about wages. This is about an employer that believes profit must come before the livelihoods of the workers who sustain and create that very profit. This is about ending an era in which capital gets richer while labour grows poorer and is then blamed for its own exploitation.

NUMSA rejects this super exploitation. We also reject any attempt by an employer that seeks to force us into negotiating with a gun to our heads. We reject an employer that would rather lock workers out than pay them a living wage.

We call on the community, customers and all progressive forces to support NUMSA members at NJR Steel at Potchefstroom.

This strike will continue until management returns to the table with a reasonable offer that addresses all demands in full. Workers are not asking for charity. They are demanding their fair share of the wealth they produce.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

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