

Numsa has already rejected suggestions of a disciplinary hearing against Nondwangu. Earlier this year, the union's Ekurhuleni region threatened to march on Cosatu House if he was disciplined.

A Numsa source said members were angry at the decision and felt the Nondwangu matter was an internal one and should not be dealt with at Cosatu level.

City Press

Unions to discuss power hikes

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Two major trade union bodies will motivate their plans to picket and strike over rising food prices, and Eskom's proposed 53 percent tariff hike, at a meeting with the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) on Friday.

The Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) have made "Section 77" applications for protest action targeting members of Business Unity South Africa, a body representing business interests, which they hold accountable for escalating food costs.

In terms of labour law, a Section 77 notice gives unions the right to be in dispute over a socio-economic issue and to strike if necessary.

Cosatu labour market policy co-ordinator Rudi Dicks said they were concerned that business and government were not dealing with the effects of rising food prices and "job shedding" associated with load shedding, appropriately.

He said it was not fair to shift the blame for the electricity crisis on to workers.

A ripple effect in the communities

If thousands of miners were retrenched because of power restrictions, it would not only deprive them of an income but would also have a ripple effect in the communities in which they live.

"We will go to the meeting and attempt to resolve it," he said.

He said load shedding and electricity cuts meant that workers in the retail industry were having their working hours changed.

Cosatu and Fedusa believed there was profiteering in the retail food industry and wanted the Competition Commission to take a closer look at potential price fixing between the main supermarket groups.

Fedusa general secretary Dennis George said they also wanted the commission to be more severe on companies found to have colluded and fixed prices.

George said the pressures on workers resulted not only from food prices.

They also had to deal with increases in petrol, transport and school fees and increases in interest rates meant that disposable income was also being lost.

"We are all feeling the crunch," he said.

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lafrica.com

Israel Nkate
Communications and Media Officer
FEDUSA - Johannesburg
Tel: +27 11 279 1800
Fax: +27 11 279 1820
Cell: +27 83 592 4391

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