



Brokers use us like condoms, says protester

By Bonile Ngqiyaza

Labour broking comes under the spotlight again this week as Parliament ponders whether to ban the practice.

Parliamentary hearings in four provinces coincide with a Cosatu national campaign today focusing on labour broking inequities.

Cosatu affiliate the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) set the ball rolling yesterday with a picket by about 400 members at Witspos in Ormonde denouncing the Post Office's use of labour brokers. Post Office employees from as far afield as Carletonville took part.

Mosito said he and fellow employees earned R1 600 a month

The Cosatu campaign is part of a call by the International Trade Union Confederation for workers' action today on what has been termed the World Day of Decent Work in support of appeals for reforms in the world economy.

The action is also intended to highlight the devastation and harm caused by the global economic and employment crisis.

The picket yesterday began with an exchange of harsh words between the protesters and a motorist in a blue BMW who breached a wall of toyi-toying picketers in front of the Wits Mail Centre.

The motorist got out of his car and demonstrated with the chanting protesters before driving off.

Many protesters held homemade placards bearing messages against labour broking. "Zuma stop labour brokers," some read, while others denounced "slavery".

The CWU's provincial secretary, Moeketse Lepheane, said the union had chosen the Witspos Mail Centre for the picket because 80 percent of the workers employed there were supplied by labour brokers.

Chairman Clyde Mervin said: "We have about eight labour brokers here and what is worse is that some of the managers are part-owners of these labour-broking firms."

Kgotso Mosito, 35, of Carletonville, said he and his fellow employees had received not an increase in four to five years.

A fellow worker, Thato Raleting, 30, said the only rises they had seen in all that time had been 6c a year.

"That's no increment. You don't even see it, you don't even see the difference," Mosito said.

Asked if he did not fear losing his job if labour brokers were banned, Raleting said: "We would rather be unemployed. I have been working 10 years for the same company. They use us like condoms. One mistake, you are out and they (get) another one in your place anyway."

Mosito said he and fellow employees earned R1 600 a month, depending on the work volume.

"But the permanent (employees) are earning R6 500 - and that is the lowest-paid employee. I have two children, a daughter and a son of nine months.

"My 55-year-old mother still depends on me."

Raleting is the father of two boys. "The first is 14 and the second is eight months now. I have also got a wife who is unemployed.

"My extended family is also dependent on me.

"I have got four young brothers and my mom, and all are dependent on this R1 600.

"I have to pay for transport costs of R340 a month, and R300 for water and electricity."

- This article was originally published on page 2 of [The Pretoria News](#) on October 07, 2009

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Published on the Web by IOL on 2009-10-07 06:48:00

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