

Numsa pushes ANC to outlaw labour brokers

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THE National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) yesterday called on the African National Congress (ANC) to use its parliamentary majority to ban labour broking.

Numsa general secretary Irvin Jim likened brokers to modern day slave masters, saying they preyed on poor black workers. “We’re in the middle of a campaign to ensure that our stance is known ... the victory we want is the banning of labour brokers,” he said.

The campaign was an election issue pushed by the ANC’s alliance partners, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Numsa, along with other Cosatu affiliates and the SACP, will use tomorrow — the international day of action to end precarious work — to picket against labour broking.

ANC spokesman Brian Sokutu said the issue was being “vigorously” debated within the party and its alliance partners, but “we haven’t really come up with any resolution on what action we need to take”.

The matter has split opinion mainly between the Cosatu affiliates and rival unions such as the Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) which preferred labour brokers to be regulated. A month ago Fedusa signed a memorandum of understanding with the Confederation of Associations in the Private Employment Sector to promote “decent work” in the labour broking sector.

However, Numsa deputy general secretary Karl Cloete said regulation had not worked. Despite provision for registration under a bargaining council, labour brokers in the metal sector chose not to register.

Cloete said there was a constant battle between brokers and employers over who ultimately was responsible for workers’ welfare.

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