



Unions at loggerheads over labour brokers

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Trade union Solidarity, says it does not support Cosatu's call for the total banning of labour brokers. Solidarity believes such a move could result in delivery problems in the country and negatively affect the economy. This comes as thousands of workers across the country are taking to the streets in support of decent jobs and to protest against labour brokers.

Cosatu President S'dumo Dlamini is among the federation's leaders that will address pickets around South Africa. Earlier, Dlamini warned that should its campaign against the banning of labour brokers not be successful, the labour federation would once again take to the streets in support of its cause.

Government's Portfolio Committee on Labour is meeting in Germiston today for another round of public hearings on the issue of whether labour brokers should be banned. A hot debate has ensued after Cosatu's call for the outright ban of labour brokering. Labour brokers say they give work to at least 500 000 people, although they acknowledge that there are bad eggs amongst them.

Trade union Solidarity says there's a third option - certain activities must be banned, while the industry as a whole should be regulated. The union's deputy secretary general, Dirk Hermann, says activities that must be banned for example are employers that use labour brokers to side-step their employers' responsibilities.

The President of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, Cedric Gina, says countrywide protest action against labour brokering will go a long way to ensure decent working conditions and pay for thousands of workers. More than 700 picketing members of Numsa have gathered in Wadeville on Gauteng's East Rand. The government has in recent months come under pressure from Cosatu to ban these brokers, an industry which the labour federation describes as modern day slavery. Government has decided to hold public hearings before deciding whether to retain them or not. Gina says thousands of its members are suffering at the hands of labour brokers.

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