

South Africa: Citrus workers strike again in Eastern Cape



Farmworkers in South Africa's Eastern Cape went on a day's strike on Tuesday, reportedly accusing some employers of refusing to pay them the recently agreed minimum wage of R20 per hour.

They also demanded the reinstatement of workers expelled during a [previous strike](#) in June and the withdrawal of a high court interdict against officials of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), according to the [Citizen](#).

The article reported that 400 workers in Addo marched to the offices of the Sundays River Citrus Company where they handed over a petition. At the same time workers in Kirkwood handed over a petition to employers with the same demands.

Hannes de Waal, spokesperson for the Sundays River Citrus Producer Forum, said the march was a violation by SANCO of a High Court interdict which his organization had obtained.

"A number of individuals with their own agendas" were working against the interests of both producers and employees, he was quoted as saying.

"An interdict was issued against such individuals as they do not have the right to threaten workers and farmers, nor do they have the right to access workplaces. They are therefore expected to stay a minimum of 500 metres away from such places and respect the fact that they have nothing at all to do with the relationship between employer and employee."

He said the forum was in contact with SANCIO leadership and had come to the conclusion that SANCO was "a great organisation with fine principles" and that this was a breakaway group.

Vuyisile Sikani, regional chairman of SANCO and chairperson of the Sundays River Workers Forum, read the petition to the protesters before handing it over to Mark Keun, the human resources manager of Sundays River Citrus Company.

Sikani reportedly said employers should withdraw the court interdict against SANCO, reinstate workers expelled after the June strike, and apply "with immediate effect" the minimum wage of R20 per hour.

De Waal was quoted as saying: "We need to study the demands received and will certainly reply to them. It is our view that all growers are complying with the R20 minimum wage, unless anyone can prove that fact to the contrary."

Eastern Cape citrus workers previously went on strike during the first few days of June, which led to severe disruptions in the regions citrus operations.

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