

Accidents claim

2 miners



Free State – Two prominent mining giants have been forced to stop operations at their respective mines following fatal unrelated incidents that have left two people dead.

South Africa's third largest gold miner – Harmony Gold – on Tuesday closed its Tshepong mine in the Free State after a fall-of-ground incident left one worker dead and others injured. Meanwhile, another prominent South African miner – Gold Fields – on Wednesday closed its Beatrix mine in the Free State after a fatal accident, according to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

Harmony Gold said the mine would be closed until all investigations into the early morning accident had been

completed. The accident comes less than a week after a worker died in a locomotive accident at Harmony's Unisel mine, also in the Free State. The mine reopened on Monday night. The National Union of Mineworkers warned that it would "bring the industry to its knees" if mining companies continued to flout safety legislation.

NUM also revealed that a miner died after he had drilled into a misfire, which then caused an explosion, which claimed him and left another worker injured. "The death brings the total number of mining fatalities in South Africa to 70 this year," said a NUM statement.

The union intends to march in the streets of Johannesburg in protest over the lack of safety in the country's mines.

Employees will not settle: R50 increase not enough

The union Solidarity declared a wage dispute with the Chamber of Mines' gold sector, following the fourth round of wage negotiations in the gold sector of the Chamber of Mines (13 July 2011).

AngloGold Ashanti and Goldfields offered a general wage increase of 5.5% for category 3 employees, and a wage increase of 5% for category 4 to 8 employees, as well as for artisans, miners and officials. Harmony and Rand Uranium offered a wage increase of 5.3% for category 3 employees, and 4.8% for category 4 to 8 employees and

artisans, miners and officials. According to Louis Pretorius, spokesperson of Solidarity, the employers' improved offer means nothing. During the third round, employers had offered a general wage increase of 5% for category 3 employees and 4.5% for category 4 to 8 employees, as well as for artisans, miners and officials.

"Today's offer of a mere half a percentage point more, is nothing but tinsel," Pretorius indicated. "At the rate at which wage negotiations are now progressing, a wage agreement is definitely not

even in sight yet", he added. Meanwhile, the offer for the living out allowance has still not improved, with employers still only offering a R50 increase.

Moreover, Solidarity's demand that the retirement age of mine workers working above ground be increased to 63 years has not been complied with either. A facilitator from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) will now have to resolve the dispute. A date for the dispute round has not yet been made known.

NUM says Impala Platinum faces wage strike



The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) on Wednesday declared a wage dispute with the world's second-largest platinum miner Impala Platinum (Implats).

The union is demanding a 14% hike in salaries on a one-year deal, while Implats is offering 6.5% for the lowest earning workers on a three year agreement (13 July 2011).

"We are heading for a strike once again. It is a direction we do not

want to go to but the employers seem determined that they need one and we will deliver," said NUM representative Eddie Majadibodu.

The NUM has now formally declared a dispute with Implats and Northam Platinum, while the union said that it was also approaching its members at Anglo American Platinum to, "shake the biggest platinum company in the world".

Northam Platinum Dispute



The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) on Tuesday declared a dispute with miner Northam Platinum, saying the JSE-listed company was reluctant to bargain.

"The union has approached the company a number of times for bargaining purposes, but has been sent from pillar to post," said NUM negotiator Zwelitsha Tantsi.

But, Northam spokesperson Marion Brower said that an initial meeting was held in early June, in which the NUM represented certain bargaining units. Subsequent to the meeting, the NUM requested to represent an

additional two bargaining units, in which it did not seem to hold a 33.3% representation, complicating the negotiating process, she explained.

The NUM claims that it represent 89% of Northam's workforce, or about 8 000 workers.

Unions have been asking for a R1 000 for every employee across the board. Brower pointed out that together with the R3 500 living out allowance; this represented overall increase of about 25%. Meanwhile, the NUM said that it hoped to meet with Northam on July 26.