

Strike ends at Massmart after agreement reached

By Nqobile Dlodla

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Thousands of striking workers at companies under Massmart Holdings in South Africa, which is owned by Walmart Inc, will return to work after reaching an agreement over disputes, a labour union said on Monday.



Workers disgruntled over low wages and changes to terms and conditions of employment, go on strike outside a Makro store in Johannesburg on 19 November 2021. Source: Reuters/Suraya Hisham

The disgruntled workers had been on strike since 19 November over low wages, unilateral restructuring and changes to terms and conditions of employment.

At Builders Warehouse, unions were demanding a wage increase of R500 monthly, while Massmart was offering an increase of R320.

The unions also wanted workers who had lost jobs due to restructuring at the general merchandise chain, Game, to be reinstated. Massmart had said it had identified alternative jobs for those workers.



Massmart workers commence indefinite strike

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Settlement agreements

In settlement agreements seen by Reuters and sent by the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu), an affiliate of the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the parties agreed on an across-the-board monthly wage increase of R400, or 4.5%, for all 45-hour permanent and 40-hour fixed employees who are union members.

This will be "retrospectively" effective from 1 July 2021, according to the settlement agreements. They also agreed on an increase of 4.5% on the hourly rate for all permanent part-time associates.

In another agreement, Massmart said it would try to reinstate Game retrenched workers into vacant positions across the company.



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"This has been a challenging time for those involved and we are pleased that the decision to end the strike will enable participating Saccawu members to return to work," Massmart said in a statement.

Saccawu said workers returned this afternoon.

The more than two-week strike had no impact on Massmart's operations as it hired contract employees to its stores.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reporting by Nqobile Dladla; Editing by Bernadette Baum

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