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Pikitup employees go to work

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AFTER weeks of frustration caused by the piles of trash littering the streets and their doorsteps, Joburg residents can finally breathe a collective sigh of relief that Pikitup workers will be back at work today.

News that the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) and Pikitup had reached an agreement to end the crippling strike, effective immediately, was announced on Saturday by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), which facilitated the settlement.

But as negotiations on salary and other issues are still going to be ironed out over the next three days, there is still a worry that the strike could begin once again.

Member of the City of Joburg's mayoral committee for environment and infrastructure services, Mathidiso Mfikeo, was quick to call the settlement "the most special agreement we have ever had" in the city.

"I slept for the first time in weeks yesterday," she said, "because I knew there was a commitment driven by the city and the union to say to the City of Joburg that we are going to resolve the problems we have."

She was speaking at a media briefing yesterday.

The city hopes its recovery plan will take one month.

In terms of the agreement, workers were expected to return to work yesterday evening. Pikitup will make a one-time payment of R750 to all Grade A and B workers, but this amount might be discussed during this week's negotiations.

Trish Hanekom, chairwoman of

Settlement will be ironed out in next three days

the Pikitup board, said the R750 payment is meant to ensure that there is equal pay for equal work and equal tenure.

"That is what is going to happen over the three days, commencing tomorrow, to ensure that any disparity that there might be as an organisation is resolved," Hanekom said.

In case a salary agreement cannot be reached by Wednesday, Dumisani Dakile, the provincial secretary of Cosatu, said "depending on the nature and extent of differences or disagreement" involved, parties will discuss other possibilities.

He said it was possible the workers would either go on strike again, or work with the CCMA.

Hanekom said even in the "very unlikely event" that an agreement isn't reached by Wednesday, there will be no stoppage on Thursday.

Nonceba Mbilini, provincial secretary of Samwu, said if there is no agreement, Samwu "will reserve our rights as a union... we will communicate the decision to the parties involved to say... these are the steps

we need to take."

And because workers were on strike for such a long period of time and because of the "no work, no pay" principle, deductions to salaries would be made in instalments, 50 percent of the deduction would be deferred and the remaining two instalments of 25 percent will be deducted in May and June.

Dakile said some may wonder how the strikers would financially recover from not working for a month. Regarding the deductions, Mfikeo said the parties involved recognised the workers needed to make an income.

Samwu members went on the strike on March 9 demanding wage increases and the dismissal of Pikitup managing director Amanda Nair. It was often violent and companies hired to help clean up the trash had to do so in secret and at night to avoid being attacked by striking workers. About 4 000 workers are facing disciplinary action for their involvement in the strike.

Regarding allegations of corruption by workers surrounding Nair, Mfikeo said an investigation is ongoing of "about 18 transgressions" which have not been made public yet.

Hanekom said "Samwu has raised some issues" that are being investigated.

Mfikeo said contracted service providers will clear backlogs in the city to ensure that uncollected refuse is gone by the end of the month.

The agreement comes after weeks of waste piling up on Joburg's streets, which created health hazards, including a rat increase. In response to the strike, Pikitup increased its refuse collection rates.

@OliviaExstrum

ANC weighs up letting Zuma go



NEVER FORGOTTEN: Limpho Hani, widow of slain SACP leader Chris Hani, lays a wreath to commemorate the 23rd anniversary of Hani's death in South Park Cemetery, Boksburg, yesterday.

PICTURE: ITUMLENG ENGLISH

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ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe has admitted that the party's leadership may be facing "a watershed" moment after the damning Constitutional Court ruling on Nkandla.

He also revealed how debates among senior leaders on the current issues "go to the extreme and (have) become polemical". This comes after the meeting of the ANC's extended national working committee, which was attended by 80 national executive committee members to discuss President Jacob Zuma's fate after the Concourt ruling that he failed to uphold and respect the constitution.

Yesterday, Mantashe insisted that the party would not "succumb" to the opposition's call for Zuma to fall because "we can't follow the programme of the opposition forces. It's unheard of that ANC MPs would vote for that impeachment (of Zuma in Parliament last week), it will not happen. The ANC must process these things and take its own decisions," he said, speak-



CRITICAL OF LEADERSHIP: Chris Hani in December 1991. PICTURE: REUTERS

ing at the 23rd commemoration of the killing of former SACP general secretary Chris Hani in Boksburg yesterday.

"The most important thing about that is how we take this process forward, without being seen to be succumbing to the pressure of opposition forces. Nobody takes advice from his own enemy."

"Advice from the enemy is poisonous. But it doesn't absolve us from looking into our own behaviour."

Mantashe warned ANC members about speaking out "negatively" in public that they were "inflicting wounds on ourselves and we are going to bleed".

Mantashe said the ANC had gone through difficult periods over

its 104 years of existence, from past presidents Sefako Makgatho, Pixley ka Isaka Seme to Albert Xuma.

While he said the ANC would humble itself before the people and its structures that wanted to influence and persuade the party on the current crisis, Mantashe warned the children of former exiled leaders called Masupatsela all older than 14 years, against using their faction as a title.

"There are no Masupatsela that are over 14 years, so we must show them the ANCYL (ANC Youth League). They must go to the branches of the ANC and be members in order to influence it from there," Mantashe said.

He also brought into sharp focus the extent of divisions in the party's leadership meetings convened to tackle the recent controversies surrounding Zuma's administration recently.

He admitted that many people believed Hani would be disappointed at the state of the ANC today. "My own view is different... that Chris (Hani) would be at the heart of the battle to save the movement from both the offensive

form of opposition forces and the bleeding from our own goals that are very costly to the ANC. He would be fighting factionalism that pushes us to the extremes.

"You find people that say Zuma must go and others saying we are protecting Zuma. Both extremes are wrong. There is no duty in the ANC to protect and defend only Zuma. Ours is to ensure that Zuma takes refuge in the organisation because in the course of defending the ANC, he is also defended."

The ANC was weighing the consequences of letting Zuma go, he said. The question of corporate capture posed a real threat to the national democratic revolution, Mantashe said, adding that when people lose trust and confidence in the party, anything it does creates a lot of "noise".

SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande recalled how Hani had strongly criticised ANC leadership in 1969 which led to a "watershed" conference in Tanzania, which allowed the ANC to renew itself in the 1970s. "Neither the Ruperts nor the Guptas are the solution," he said.

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