

Union's response: Aubrey Tshabalala, general secretary of the Communication Workers Union:

The e-mail expresses the feeling of the worker and how brutal the employer MTN is to its workers. The issue of casual workers at MTN has been [a] thorny issue between CWU and MTN relationship. Communication Workers Union signed an agreement with MTN [to] convert workers into permanent position[s] in 2015. In addition, there was a bill sign[ed] into law in 2015 that said after 3 months a worker must be permanent.

It was CWU again taking the employer to CCMA in 2016 on the same matter and won the case. The employer continued to exploit workers and converted them particularly in isolated areas, i.e. store where there are casual workers only or not union footprint. The recent case of 11 workers is a demonstration on how the employer plays a divide and rule tactic. Its alarming that a[n] organisation that is led by the self-proclaimed progressive individual like Godfrey Motsa has the most regressive approach on workers in particular those who comes from the previously disadvantage background. These workers are concentrated in your Stores, Warehouse, Repair Centres and Call Centres earning lowest salaries in the company facing explorations and fear of being retrenched.

In this current financial year MTN has 4 set of retrenchments in 4 departments and planning others in the near future. The refocus on [the] store's business model by MTN sounds good at face value. However, it has all the ingredient[s] of outsourcing and retrenchments, the employer claim that they want to give previously disadvantage[d] communities to own their stores, and workers in general. If you interrogate their plan, it becomes clear that there's no intention of empowering workers based on their criteria and financial requirements. Secondly, they make it clear that they intend to sell some store[s] in Gauteng where a majority of casual workers are based. In other words they're running away from their responsibility of converting these workers into permanent positions. It's not only about being on a permanent position, but it goes with benefits that are attached to these positions, thus includes but not limited to medical aid and pension fund.

CWU will be on the roadshow to consult with its members on the action that needs to be taken. We take into consideration that we had stretched the law to its limit and therefore embarking on massive rollout action could [be] an answer if the employer fails [to] respond positive on these issues.