

**Publication:** THE NEW AGE  
**Title:** Labour strike continues at copper producer  
**Publish date:** 10 May 2017

## Labour strike continues at copper producer

MONTSHO MATLALA

THE labour strike over wage hikes at copper producer Palabora Mining Company in Phalaborwa entered its seventh day yesterday with tensions mounting.

Workers affiliated to Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) downed tools last Wednesday demanding among others a 12% hike for 2017, 11% for 2018 and 10% for 2019 as well as housing and other work-related benefits.

But wage negotiations, which started in March deadlocked as the employer offered 8% for 2017 and 7% increases for 2018 and 2019.

Company spokesperson Lydia Radebe confirmed that the strike was legal and protected.

“However, some of the striking employees have resorted to illegal activities such as blocking and preventing nonstriking employees to report to work.

“The strike is still on and the negotia-

tions between the unions and our management are also ongoing,” Radebe said.

She said the company had 4700 employees including permanent, temporary and contractors and that about 600 could be taking part in the strike.

Amcu could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The situation remained tense at the mine yesterday with claims by some sources that nonstriking workers were held hostage overnight on the mine premises.

“People could not go home last night and are still on the mine because some strikers would not allow them. They are not underground but on the premises,” a source said yesterday.

Police were monitoring the situation but were nervous to prevent some ugly situations, claiming they feared another Marikana type of situation.

The mine spokesperson could not confirm the hostage-taking claims but said they would investigate.

*montshom@thenewa.co.za*