



## **SAFTU CONDEMNS SHOOTING OF SIMUNYE WORKERS FORUM MEMBERS**


The South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) **is angered by the criminal and senseless shooting of workers belonging to Simunye Workers Forum (SWF) and two by-standers, in Germiston on Saturday, 24 June 2023.** In a statement issued on Sunday, SWF and Casual Workers Advice Office (CWAO) said that workers had marched to Golden Bakery to request letters so that they can apply for work permits with Home Affairs.

In a clear attempt to intimidate the workers and their representatives, the intransigent employer threatened to shoot the workers and proceeded to shove one of the leaders. Seemingly, the employer went ahead with their plan to shoot, as shortly after his engagement with the representatives, the shooters opened fire on the workers and randomly at by-standers, injuring critically a total of 5 people.

From the statement, it is clear that the employer is not just senselessly being hostile to workers. The employer is being hostile to the workers because they dared organise themselves into a trade union and began defending their rights and advancing their socio-economic interests.

Trying to circumvent the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and other labour statutes that monitor exploitation, employers have resorted to use some immigrant workers on the basis that they can trump their rights. Quite often, they succeed. So, when these workers are being organised means that employers cannot exploit and abuse them as they usually do. Hence the frustration.

SAFTU is angered that even in the democratic dispensation where workers' rights to form and join trade unions is enshrined in the constitution, workers are still harassed and intimidated by employers. It is even shocking that workers were shot at with live ammunition, clearly with the intention of killing them and instilling fear and intimidation in the rest of other employees.



Further, we condemn this seemingly criminal behaviour of the employer at Golden Bakery. In concert with SWF and CWAPO, we demand that:

- The employer hands over the video footage to the police for further investigations. If the Golden Bakery refuses or destroys the footage, they must be charged with impeding justice.
- The neighbours in the area must avail their video footage for the police.
- If the manager at Golden Bakery is found to be linked with the shooting, they must be arrested and sentenced to long-time in jail.
- The shooters must be arrested soonest, and be sent to jail.

Statement issued on behalf of SAFTU by the General Secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi:

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