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DEMOCRATISED TRANSPORT LOGISTICS AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

PRESS RELEASE

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DETAWU TAKES UP LABOUR MINISTER'S CHALLENGE

Democratised Transport Logistics and Allied Workers Union (DETAWU) has decided to take comments made recently by Minister of Labour Thulas Nxesi about the weakened strength of trade unions as a challenge.

A fortnight ago, Nxesi blamed weakened trade unions for the violence that has been wreaking havoc in the trucking industry since 2018. Nxesi said if shop stewards were effective, the hiring of foreign nationals at the expense of locals would have been long dealt with.

The minister is clearly passing the buck given that his department is responsible for formulating labour policy and has been found wanting on this particular issue. It was only late last year that the labour department along with the Department of Home Affairs was said to be developing legislation that will address the employment of non-South Africans in all sectors of the economy.

Nonetheless, DETAWU has to admit, albeit grudgingly, that there is an element of truth to what the minister is saying. Take, for instance, the National Bargaining Council for Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI) only accounts for 23% of the total workers in the sector. Within the bargaining council itself, only the employers meet the requisite 50% threshold while labour has been struggling to fill its quota for years.

Turning to the shop floor, Nxesi is correct in saying effective shop stewards would have sounded the alarm before the hiring of non-South Africans over locals reached crisis level. However, it is crucial to point out that many trucking companies are owned and run by union bashers, who do whatever it takes to ensure workers do not organise themselves. These same employers prefer to hire foreign nationals with the sole intention to exploit them. These unscrupulous individuals flout the industry's main collective agreement, paying workers a pittance while making them work longer hours than the law allows.

Unionised workplaces, on the other hand, have to contend with shop stewards who have had little to no training because the reality is, shop steward training has been scaled down over the years due to the costs involved.

Taking all this into consideration, DETAWU has decided to take Nxesi's comments as a challenge and launch a nationwide recruitment campaign aimed at swelling its membership, making it a much stronger trade union. Aptly dubbed, *Operation Khula DETAWU*, the campaign will run for the next 36 months. The bold undertaking aims to grow the union's membership,

enabling it to be represented within the bargaining councils of the sectors it organises including road freight, private security, passenger bus, contract cleaning, and road tolling.

Operation Khula DETAWU is set to be launched at the union's Johannesburg headquarters this coming Saturday, 17 April, at 10 am.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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