



NUM NEWS

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

MASSACRE OF JOBS CONTINUES

DIAMOND INDUSTRY TO CUT TOTAL WORKFORCE BY ALMOST HALF

De Beers has announced the butchery of almost half of the jobs on its major diamond mines in what they term costs cutting. The shocking announcement came while the NUM was still to decide on the date of a strike over wages and conditions of employment. Over 4 000 jobs are to be chopped off in an industry which employs about 8 000 workers. The diamond bosses plead poverty attributed to the world economic recession which affects the consumption of diamond commodities.

Negotiations between NUM and De Beers have already started mainly dealing with the retrenchment packages, workers have to receive before joining the massive pool of the unemployed blacks in South Africa. Operations affected are Premier, Finsch, Kimberly mine (KMD), Koffiefontein and Kleinzee in Namaqualand. At the new mine of Venetia in Northern Transvaal production has been reduced without cutting jobs. Geology has not yet taken a decision. Figures of workers due for retrenchment per mine are:

Premier mine - 1 519, Finsch - 693, KMD - 384, Koffiefontein - 563, and 913 at Kleinzee.

The ailing gold mining industry alone has massacred over 150 000 jobs since 1987. Coal industry added 20% on the already heavy casualty list. With the new job cuts by De Beers bosses, the situation has become a real national crisis demanding total radical approach by the state, mine bosses and labour.

Taking into account the meagre retrenchment packages given to victims of this mining crisis the social impact on their dependants is one of condemnation to starvation. The social time bomb has already been planted in the midst of South African society and unless all major parties treat the situation as such the explosion is inevitable.

The future looks bleak as mineworkers are dumped due to redundancies.

