

The Anti-Privatization Forum Calls Upon Communities to Support the Striking Workers at Shoprite Checkers

As in the recent months the Anti-Privatization Forum (Gauteng), a Gauteng community-based organisation, has been calling upon all communities to support the striking workers at Shoprite/Checkers. APF has demonstrated support to the striking workers by picketing with them and joining their actions in solidarity with the exploited workers who happen to be members of our communities.

The majority of the workers at Shoprite/Checkers are women who are coming from our townships and taking care of working class families and children. These women work under dreadful working conditions and are paid starvation wages by the Shoprite/Checkers bosses.

The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) demands the greater of a wage increase of R300 or 10 percent, as well as improved working conditions. Shoprite is offering R265. In a context where retail chief directors are earning 223 times more than workers, Shoprite's refusal to accede to the demands of workers is a clear demonstration of arrogance. As a way of increasing its profits, Shoprite is one of the retail stores that continue to employ a big number of casual labour.

The two months long strike needs to be strengthening by the union, the striking workers and communities. All of us must ensure that 52 000 workers at Shoprite are on strikes. This would hit hard on the profits of bosses.

Communities have an important role to play in ensuring that the workers' demands are met. Our strongest weapon is to boycott Shoprite/Checkers. In other words, we are appealing to the communities not to buy from Shoprite and its related store. A successful boycott of Shoprite will reduce the profits of the bosses. This will then compel the bosses to meet the demands of workers.

As an organisation that is struggling against all forms of social and economic injustice, we strongly argue that the struggle of Shoprite workers is also ours. These workers are coming from our communities. They are not earning enough money. They spend their wages on paying for exorbitant schools fees and basic services such as water and electricity. Our struggles for access to basic services is also part of the struggle against the bosses at Shoprite who refuse to grant a wage increase to workers who are coming from our working class township. Our one struggle is a struggle against the capitalist system which continues to oppress the workers, the working class communities and women.

We are calling upon all communities to join the closing of the Eloff Street Shoprite Checkers outlet on Friday at 12H00 in support of Shoprite/Checkers workers. We can start by ensuring a successful boycott of Shoprite in the townships like the one in Soweto Dube that was successfully closed by workers and community members. The boycott has to spread to all the towns and cities in the country.

A united working class shall never be defeated!

Boycott Shoprite!

For more information contact the APF: 011 339 4121 or Silumko 072 173 7268

