



cNumsa workers (top) on the streets in Elandsfontein in solidarity with their public sector comrades, while workers protest outside parliament (left).

Unions suspend longest public sector strike

On 29 June, after the longest public sector strike in South African history, and with unprecedented solidarity action by private sector workers, members of 17 public sector trade unions called off their industrial action.

The unions issued this statement:

'The Public Service trade unions, after full consultation with their membership, have unanimously agreed to call off the strike action which began on 1 June 2007.

'We pay tribute to all our members who displayed such self-sacrifice and

heroism in their four-week fight for an improvement in their salaries and working conditions. This strike is historic - a turning point in the lives of public-sector workers.

'We congratulate all 17 unions for maintaining an unprecedented level of unity and cohesion. We have consistently worked together and rebuffed all attempts by the employer and the media to create divisions. This combination of unity and militancy means that never again will

the employer dare to treat us with the callous indifference they have displayed in the past and during this dispute, until they were forced to

compromise when confronted by the militancy and determination of their workforce. They will never again dare to talk of unilateral implementation of pay deals.

'The strike will also have inspired other workers to demand that their employers improve their wages and working conditions and given them confidence that they can fight and win.

The majority of unions have agreed to sign an agreement based on the employer's offer of 22 June 2007. Others are still consulting their members to obtain a mandate.

Others, in the education sector, are not prepared to sign and will be engaging with the government further.' ●

