



NEHAWU STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE UNSCRUPULOUS BEHAVIOUR OF NUPSAW IN MISLEADING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS ABOUT OUR STRUGGLE FOR THEIR PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT

MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday April 09, 2026

“Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.” - Amilcar Cabral

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] strongly condemns the unscrupulous behaviour of NUPSAW on misleading Community Healthcare Workers about our struggle for their permanent employment.



NEHAWU @ Labour Court fighting for the permanent appointment of CHWs

As NEHAWU, we normally don't respond to non-sensical diatribe but on NUPSAW, we take an exception. Recently, we have observed a nuisance obsession of NEHAWU by this fly-by-night opportunistic union. They have been issuing misleading newsflashes and statements to community healthcare workers about the progress of their permanent employment and in their desperation have resorted to lies about NEHAWU.

We are not surprised by the desperation and jealousy shown by NUPSAW in an attempt to divide workers and mislead Community Healthcare Workers. Hence, we will expose their lies and the claim of easy victories.

The struggle for the permanent employment of Community Healthcare Workers has been a struggle that the union has championed for years without the involvement of NUPSAW. This struggle has been intertwined with the struggle for health transformation and introduction of the National Health Insurance [NHI].



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As NEHAWU, we have always understood the importance of CHWs in the holistic transformation of healthcare system as they are the first line of support between the communities and various health and social development services.

They empower communities to make informed choices about their health and psychosocial wellbeing and provide ongoing care and support to communities.

We must remind the public and CHWs at large, that it is this opportunistic NUPSAW that in 2018 had opposed discussions at Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council [PHSDSBC] on the absorption of the CHWs until they were forced hence the signing of Resolution 1 of 2018.

As NEHAWU, we signed PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2018 because it was a stepping stone towards a greater goal in the standardization of remuneration for CHW's in line with the call for the national minimum wage at the time.

It is ironic that today, the same union that had opposed discussions at the PHSDSBC on the permanent employment of CHWs would suddenly be in the forefront of telling lies about NEHAWU and claiming easy victories about the struggle for the permanent absorption of CHWs.

It is NEHAWU in 2019 that declared a dispute when the employer was not willing to permanently employ CHWs and had failed to finalise the modalities meant to facilitate permanent employment of CHWs. The dispute eventually gave rise to the National Strike of Community Health Workers. The question that must be asked is where was this opportunistic NUPSAW then?

Equally, in 2024, the red revolutionary union took the employer to the Labour Court to review an arbitration award that had ruled against our application to force the employer to appoint CHWs permanently because they failed to demonstrate justifiable reasons why CHWs are kept in recurring fixed-term contracts.



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Indeed, in January 2025, the Labour Court delivered a landmark ruling in NEHAWU's favour, declaring that all Community Health Workers must be deemed permanent employees. This was as a result of NEHAWU's persistent campaign to secure permanent employment for Community Health Workers.

Since the landmark judgement, progress has been done in employing permanently CHWs, with more than 20 000 CHWs permanent employed from the initial 27 000 that was presented in parliament by the Minister of Health. We have been hard at work trying to finalise the appointment of the remaining 16 000.

The union will be meeting urgently with the Minister of Health to address matters pertaining the permanent appointment of Community Healthcare Workers. Equally, the union will be consulting with lawyers on the intention of taking the Department of Health to court over its non-implementation of the court order and the implementation agreement.

Furthermore, we will be convening a national meeting in the week of the 13th of April 2026 to consolidate our position and agree on the way forward. The union, post the national meeting will embark on membership meetings to give feedback to Community Healthcare Workers.

Lastly, we reiterate once more that the union shall continue fighting for the permanent absorption of all Community Health Workers irrespective of job description because we know that they have all been classified as CHW's for years. The union wants full employment benefits for CHW's which are enjoyed by other public servants. We are also pushing for token of appreciation for those CHW's that will be retiring or their ages are above the threshold as stipulated in the public service act and its legislations.

This is a fight we shall not dare falter until the bitter end. Community Healthcare Workers must not be misled by fly-by-night opportunistic unions such as NUPSAW.

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