

Transnet's port, rail operations normalising after strike

By [Nelson Banya](#)

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State-owned logistics company Transnet on Tuesday said its freight rail and port operations were returning to normal service after a 12-day strike that throttled commodities exports and impacted Africa's most industrialised economy.



Container ships are seen outside the harbour in Cape Town, South Africa, October 17, 2022. REUTERS/Esa Alexander

Transnet agreed a three-year wage deal with majority labour union United Transport and Allied Trade Union (Untu) on Monday, paving the way for most of its employees to return to work.

In a statement on Tuesday, Transnet said it had started implementing recovery plans across its freight rail and port operations.

"Employee attendance is up across the board, averaging between 70% and 80%, with more employees expected to return over the next two days," Transnet said.



Transnet agrees 3-year wage deal with majority labour union

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The unions had demanded a wage increase above South Africa's year-on-year inflation rate, which was 7.6% in August, but Untu signed an agreement for a 6% raise during the current year, with subsequent increases of 5.5% and 6% in the next two financial years.

UNTU general secretary Cobus van Vuuren told Reuters that most of his union's members were back at work on Tuesday.

"From a legal perspective, when the majority union has signed an agreement which states that this agreement is applicable to all the bargaining unit employees, it is applicable to all bargaining unit employees," van Vuuren said.

The minority union at Transnet, the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu), which did not sign the wage deal, accused Untu of "betrayal" for agreeing to a below-inflation increase.

Satawu spokesperson Amanda Tshemese told Reuters the union was still consulting its legal team on the next steps.

"We will be able to communicate once the legal team has advised us," she said.

The strike hobbled Transnet's freight rail and port operations, costing mineral and agricultural commodity exporters millions of dollars daily.

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