**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 521**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 26 March 2016**

**QUESTION PAPER NO: 4**

**DATE OF REPLY:**

**Prof N M Khubisa (NFP) to ask the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services:**

1. In view of the recent protracted strike by post office employees around the country, (a) how many post offices were part of the strike and in which provinces and districts are the post offices located and (b) how many employees in the post office joined the strike;
2. What are the relevant details of the grievances complained of by the post office employees, inter alia, salaries and working conditions;
3. Whether the specified grievances have been finally resolved; if so, what is the nature of resolutions and or settlement reached?

**NW620E**

**REPLY**

**SAPO has advised me as follows:**

There has been no recent strike at SAPO, the last strike was in 2014.

(1)(a) 851 Post Offices (including 13 mail centres) were closed across the country at the start of the strike. In the third and fourth week 634 post offices (including 14 mail centres) and 714 post offices (including 9 mail centres) were respectively closed. The closures were mostly in the Gauteng Province followed by Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. These were mainly in; Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban. The closures in other provinces were sporadic in nature.

(b) A total of 4656 employees were reported to be on strike. However the level of intimidation and violence that was experienced during the strike led to more employees not being at their workstations during the strike due to fears of intimidation and violence.

(2) The details of the grievances included:

1. Back pay for the 2014 salary increases
2. Casual employees requesting full time employment with full benefits
3. Permanent Part time employees (flexible labour contracts) requesting full time employment
4. Equal work for equal pay
5. The 588 employees that were previously dismissed due to illegal strike but then re-employed in 2013 after agreements between SAPO and labour Unions demanded re-instatement of full benefits

1. The Minister established the National Leadership Forum at SAPO in October 2014. This was used as a platform to re-establish the engagements between representatives of the organised labour and SAPO management with the Department attending as an observer. SAPO workforce forums were subsequently established and settlement agreements reached with labour representatives taking into account SAPO’s financial situation. These agreements included:
2. Back pay for 2014/2015 salary increases
3. Conversion of casual and permanent part-time workers to permanent full time employees
4. Equal pay for work of equal value
5. 2015/2016 salary increases

Of the above agreements, the conversion of the temporary employees (casuals and flexible labour contracts) to permanent employees started in 2014 in a phased-in approach but was stopped due to financial constraints. Other settlements agreements were not honoured altogether due the entity’s continued constrained cash-flow position as the entity battled to recover financially post the strike action.