

Interdict to shorten leash

**STAFF REPORTER AND
CORRESPONDENTS**

THE LABOUR Court has granted the State an interdict prohibiting workers in essential services from participating in the public servants strike.

The interdict also aims to prevent workers, such as nurses and teachers, from intimidating or assaulting non-striking employees and members of the public. It also aims to prevent the damage of any property belonging to the State or the erection of obstructions to any state property.

Government spokesman Themba Maseko welcomed the interdict saying that "the country has witnessed unacceptable behaviour such as the disruption of schools, prevention of medical staff from performing essential health treatment of desperately ill patients, prevention of citizens from accessing hospitals and clinics and the intimidation and assault of learners who were trying to continue with their studies".

He said that anyone who committed any acts of criminality during the strike would be prosecuted and that dedicated courts had been set up to deal with cases of transgressions related to the strike.

In reaction Cosatu has reiterated its full support for the strike.

"We insist that the government should urgently return to the bargaining council with a new offer which can be negotiated and put to members, so that the dispute can be resolved and the strike ended as soon as possible," Cosatu national spokesman Patrick Craven said.

"Cosatu regrets the disruption to public services and any violent incidents or damage to property, and maintains its insistence that all action during the strike must be con-

ducted in a peaceful, disciplined and lawful manner, and condemns acts of intimidation or violence by anyone," Craven said.

Cosatu president S'dumo Dlamini said that they did not condone acts of violence by strikers, but said the striking public servants were being provoked by management and police officers.

Meanwhile, the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie (SAOU) noted with deep regret that Afriforum resorted to "a search for cheap publicity" by applying for a court order against the union.

President of the SAOU, Jopie Breed, said that the application stated that members of the union were guilty of intimidation and violence against learners and education staff, as well as being responsible for damage to property.

"The SAOU is an absolute exponent of the principle of the protection of the rights of learners and parents in cases where such rights have been infringed upon. To accuse the SAOU of such transgressions is ludicrous and insulting. We challenge Afriforum and Solidarity to prove that the SAOU has made itself guilty of such transgressions," he said.

"We can come to no other conclusion that this act is tantamount to opportunism and cheap publicity. The mere fact that the SAOU was not afforded any opportunity to prepare itself for contesting the application, as well as that the media were informed prior to the application to ensure their presence during the proceedings, testifies to this," he said.

Breed said the SAOU regards this act as reprehensible and view it in a very serious light as it could have serious implications for the continued relationship with Solidarity and Afriforum.