

NAMDEB DIAMOND MINERS LAUNCH STRIKE AFTER TALKS FAIL

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Workers at [Namdeb](#), the [diamond company](#) owned jointly by the Republic of Namibia and De Beers, have been on strike since Saturday, the Namibian reports. The action is said to cost the firm nearly a million dollars a day.

Last-minute efforts to avert the strike by Deputy Labor Minister Alpheus Muheua managed to postpone the action, but ultimately were for naught, with the union representing the miners rejecting the firm's last offer.



De Beers Namdeb mining trucks

The Oranjemund MUN union's branch secretary Mathew Nangombe explained that Namdeb had proposed a 10% salary increase for all workers, but the miners were demanding that wages increase by 15%. Likewise, the workers called for a 14% housing allowance, but Namdeb was only willing to pay for an 8.5% housing allowance.

The two parties also differed over medical coverage, with workers expecting the company to agree to pay between 80% and 100% of costs, but Namdeb only agreeing to pay 70% of costs. Concerning the workers' demand that Namdeb pay 85% of their children's school fees, the firm outright refused to pay for any. Nangombe claims that most of the miners' paychecks are spent on medical fees and school fees, according to the Namibian.

Namdeb company secretary Libertha Kapere said the firm could review its medical aid policy, but that such a review process would take an entire year. Kapere's counter-offer in this regard took the form of a one-time payment to each worker of about \$500 to cover medical bills.