

Bread delivery to continue amid strike

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File photo: African News Agency (ANA)

Cape Town – Premier, the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturer and owners of Blue Ribbon bread in Salt River, has assured customers that an ongoing strike will not affect operations and the distribution of its products.

Disgruntled employees affiliated to the Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) downed tools on Wednesday to demand a 10% wage increment and R48 Fawu funeral cover.

The peaceful picket turned violent the following day, with police firing rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse the crowd.

FAWU's legal officer, Mhleli Mbana, said four people, including a union official, were injured and two were arrested.

"They were all discharged on Sunday, except one who was shot in the chest. He is still in Groote Schuur. One was shot in the mouth, while two were separately shot in the arm and ear.

"The two people arrested on Thursday were released yesterday after we went to the Woodstock police station and asked to see what charges they had been charged with and where they would appear.

"We discovered that no case had been opened, and when we asked to see the police official who had booked them, so that we get answers on how they spent four nights without charges, no one knew who booked them," Mbana said.

He said the initial demand of 10% and funeral cover was changed when the company rejected their offer and counter offered 8% up until 2021.

Premier FMCG group strategy and marketing executive Siobhan O'Sullivan confirmed that employees at its Salt River operations had embarked on a protected strike due to a wage dispute, but said workers at the adjacent wheat mill had embarked on an unprotected strike.

"Premier has offered a fair, sustainable and above-inflation wage increase to employees, but this has been rejected by the union," she said.

On Thursday, a striking employee was injured by rubber bullets when the police intervened to restore calm.

A non-striking employee was shot late on Thursday night. The police are investigating both matters.

"There has been some intimidation of employees, resulting in more joining the strike," O'Sullivan said
