FAWU Wins Interdict & Challenges SAB Retrenchments

South African Breweries, a subsidiary of Anheuser-Busch Inbev, has been conducting large scale retrenchments for nearly five consecutive years eroding job security and benefits of many members gained through years of collective bargaining struggles between the parties. On May 29 2025, the company notified FAWU of its retrenchment proposal affecting 233 employees despite retrenching 64 just prior to that.

The company claims this would increase productivity and streamline operations. The union, however, noted that forklifter drivers have been redesignated as checker operators and a dispute subsequently arose around the administrative duties of these employees. FAWU also raised concerns over SAB's lack of information during consultations. While the union requested more information regarding the company's rationale, the restructuring and the review document, the company was vague and unwilling. Consultation meetings proceeded at lightspeed with the first meeting held in June, two held in July and the last meeting held in August 2026. By the end of August SAB dismissed 159 employees.

FAWU believed the company did not engage in meaningful consultation process as required by the S. 189 process in the Labour Relations Act and applied for an interdict to halt the process.

In October 2025, the Johannesburg Labour Court ruled in favour of the union highlighting the importance of procedural fairness, an effective notice period, a meaningful consultation process that acknowledges the role of a trade union.

The court subsequently granted FAWU relief allowing for further consultation and information disclosure.