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## Eskom shuts 2 x Xstrata Furnaces



**Rustenburg** – According to a company official, Eskom requested mining company Xstrata to switch off two furnaces to save power (Monday, February 13). Xstrata spokesman Songezo Zibi confirmed that approximately ten days ago, Xstrata shut off two of its six furnaces at its Rustenburg smelter following a request by Eskom. “We responded to a request to help stabilise the reserve margin in the national electricity grid,” Zibi said.

“These two furnaces are undergoing maintenance. The length of time depends on the extent of maintenance required and may last for several weeks.” The two furnaces were due for scheduled maintenance during the winter months. “We have decided to move the scheduled maintenance of the furnaces forward, thereby assisting State-owned power utility Eskom to reduce the electricity demand on its supply-constrained grid,” Zibi added.

However, Xstrata and its joint venture partner, Merafe Resources, would be able to meet all their second quarter contractual obligations, said Zibi.

Xstrata’s other furnaces at Wonderkop, in North West, Lion, in Limpopo and Lydenburg, in Mpumalanga were still operating at normal capacities.

## Anarchy! This is WAR...

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With no end in sight to the month-long strike, Bob Gilmour told the Platinum Weekly that the current level of security was insufficient. It is impossible for the majority of the workers to resume operations. Early on Thursday morning, an angry mob gathered close to 1 shaft, intimidating and assaulting people trying to get to and from work. Cars were vandalised and the no 9 road towards Freedom Park were barricaded.

A policewoman was hit against the head by one of the stones thrown at the police vehicles. She was treated at a local clinic and discharged. Furthermore, at around 8am the crowd torched the satellite police station in Freedom Park. The police arrested several people trying to loot shops in the area. At around 10am, the crowd started looting shops and a bottle store close to hostel no 8. Reinforcements were called in and it took a small war to get the upper hand over the crowd.

In Bapong, the other side of Rustenburg (close to Brits) another three cases of malicious damage to property was reported after three trucks were damaged. These incidents occurred Wednesday night and early Thursday morning. People were also intimidated not to go to work on Thursday morning. Police are monitoring the situation that is tense but quite at present.

This comes after community members complained about employment opportunities at the local mines. Again there is a strong element of

local unrest. Add to that the power struggle between NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) and the AMCU (Association of Mine Workers and Construction Union), and it leaves you with a perfect recipe for disaster...

“If this had been a normal strike over a wage issue, it would have been solved long ago already.

There is something else being played out in the background,” Gilmour said. “The fact that it has been going on for four weeks and the intimidation level increasing as we try to rehire, does indicate a more serious problem,” he added. “This has gone beyond a strike. We’ve got to stop this intimidation and give people a chance to apply for their jobs and get back to work,” Gilmour said.

The Police issued a stern warning to those who have resorted to lawlessness. “They will be arrested and as individuals, they will have to answer before the court of law for their actions,” Brigadier Ngubane exclaimed.

Outgoing Implats CEO David Brown, who was delivering his last set of results after 14 years with the company, said the key issue of the current labour unrest which was confronting the company, had been the emergence of the AMCU as a rival to the long-established NUM. Brown condemned the high levels of intimidation and said the company needed to ensure that there was an adequate police presence in the area to break the cycle of intimidation.

Most of the people involved in the civil disorder that had broken out in the area were not the company’s employees. “This has spread to the local informal settlements and other villages around the mine area,” he added.

The impact of the strike resulted in a loss of 60 000 oz of platinum, equating to R1.2-billion in revenue.

## “Enough is Enough!” Angry residents confront drug lords

**Rustenburg** – This was the battle cry for residents living in Rustenburg North on Friday, 10 February 2012 – a decisive day that saw them teaming up with their ward councillor Anthony Phologane to challenge the drug lords and prostitution rings that are slowly taking over the area. Before the confrontations, Cllr Phologane addressed the community members in the presence of the Executive Mayor of Rustenburg Cllr Mpho Khunou. “We are a mining community here in Rustenburg North, and we need to have a safe environment when people are going to work in the early hours of the morning,” Cllr Phologane said. He further added, “We are saying enough is enough! The moral fibre of our community is under threat; even the drug pedlars threaten us with violence! We do not feel safe in Rustenburg North anymore, and we are not happy that some members of the SAPS might be corrupt and on the payroll of these people who are selling drugs to our children.”

After the meeting, members of the community, who were accompanied by Public Safety officers, confronted the owners of a notorious tavern and demanded the closure of the facility.

“This tavern should be shut down; due to it corrupting our children. Our kids are buying drugs and at night here are

usually a lot of prostitutes within the vicinity of the tavern. “We are here to close the tavern today,” screamed one community member, who was wielding a knobkerrie.

The Nigerian nationals who run the tavern attempted to block the community but were eventually overpowered by the heavy police presence and the determination of the locals. With the orders of the mayor, the tavern was locked up and is unlikely to open its doors to the public again. “We now have to make sure that other areas that have become havens for prostitutes and drugs are also closed down. We will not rest until our community is safe for our children again,” Cllr Phologane said. This safety cleaning campaign was led by the Rustenburg Local Municipality in conjunction with the SAPS, the Community Policing Forum, the Greater Rustenburg Ratepayers associations and the Zinniville Ratepayers



Association. The intention was to combat crime and to assist the community of Rustenburg to fight all kinds of social ills in their immediate environment.