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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **UNTU SUSPECTS SABOTAGE IN CABLE THEFT INCIDENT AT TRANSNET ENGINEERING UITENHAGE PLANT**

The United National Transport Union (UNTU) calls for an urgent and comprehensive investigation into the shocking cable theft incident at Transnet Engineering's Uitenhage Plant over the 2024 festive season. The estimation is that this incident will cost Transnet close to a R1 million in repairs. This does not include the additional financial losses in production time, which is unacceptable considering the Entity's current financial challenges.

UNTU strongly questions whether this was a deliberate and targeted act of sabotage. The theft occurred between the 20th and the 23rd of December, immediately after the plant closed for the holiday season. What heightens our suspicions is the precision with which the thieves operated. They selectively stripped critical heavy-duty cables across multiple workshops and for no apparent reason, smashed computer servers, adding to the damage. Alarming, our own inspection on Monday revealed no signs of forced entry, further supporting our suspicion that this was an inside job aimed at destabilising Transnet Engineering.

The incident also raises serious questions about the effectiveness of private security services contracted to protect critical infrastructure. Despite the millions of rands spent on these services, the thieves seemingly accessed the premises stripped heavy-duty cables from various workshops and operated over several days without triggering alarms or any action from security. This is a gross failure to safeguard Transnet's assets. Adding to our frustration, UNTU previously requested that Transnet install security cameras at the Uitenhage Plant following a cable theft incident at a substation during the festive season in 2023. However, Transnet failed to implement this critical security measure, leaving the plant vulnerable to further incidents. This negligence is deeply concerning, given the recurring nature of these crimes and the financial and operational losses they cause.

UNTU views this brazen act as treasonous and firmly believes it is time for the Government to classify cable theft at State Entities as an act of treason as it has a dire ripple effect on our economy. Heads must roll, and those responsible must face the full might of the law.

We are also dismayed by the lack of urgency from Transnet Management, who have yet to provide substantial updates on the investigation. The incident was discovered on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, yet no significant progress has been reported.

UNTU demands a thorough and transparent investigation into this incident ensuring that no stone is left unturned. The security company's failure to act must also be scrutinised. Transnet cannot afford to let incidents of this nature to continue without consequences.

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**Issued by UNTU Media Liaison and Communications Officer, Atenkosi Plaatjie, on behalf of Acting President Scott De Koker and Acting Vice President Ndira Fingita. For UNTU press statements, contact Atenkosi at 067 994 7081 or email [atenkosi@untu.co.za](mailto:atenkosi@untu.co.za).**

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UNTU is a registered Trade Union with the Department of Employment and Labour in terms of the Labour Relations Act (LRA). UNTU holds the majority representativity (50% + 1) at Transnet SOC Ltd, PRASA, Railway Safety Regulator, MSP(a subsidiary of SAMSA) and Tolcon.