

Minera Santa Cruz's production stopped because of another conflict with the workers

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10/15 – 10:30 – After the long conflict during the month of September, which stopped production at the San José-Huevos Verdes mine in Perito Moreno, on Tuesday a new labor strike was initiated because of layoffs at the plant. This time (unlike what occurred last month) AOMA intervenes in the negotiations with the mine operator.

At this time, the San José-Huevos Verdes mine is at a standstill because of a conflict provoked by a group of workers who were involved in a labor strike on September 22nd and which resulted in the management of Minera Santa Cruz sanctioning some of those workers and dismissing others.

Contrary to what occurred on that occasion, where a group of independently organized workers were acting without the involvement of their labor union (AOMA), this time the labor union is negotiating with the mining company. In fact, last night there was a meeting between the parties, which is in recess until today, intended to resolve the fundamental issue that has halted production at the Perito Moreno mine for the past 72 hours.

AOMA announced that, faced with the decision of the Minera Santa Cruz company to sanction a group of independently organized workers involved in the serious incidents occurring on the premises of its San José mine between the 22nd and the 24th of September and which led the company to file a criminal complaint against said workers in the court of Las Heras on October 6th, the Santa Cruz branch of the Mine Workers Association of Argentina (AOMA), which is headed by Javier Castro, decided in a meeting to initiate a labor strike while they negotiate with the company to lift the sanctions.

The incidents that led to the current situation began on September 22nd when a group of independently organized workers, acting outside and independently from the labor union to which they belong, seized the San José mine thereby ignoring the mandatory dispute resolution process imposed by the provincial Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

After seizing the mine, the independently organized workers carried out a series of unusually violent acts both against senior staff and co-workers who refused to join them, these actions resulted in the aforementioned criminal complaint made by Minera Santa Cruz against these independently organized workers in the court of Las Heras, which complaint alleges threats, bodily and real property harm, and unlawful restraint.

According to a source at Minera Santa Cruz, “out of respect for the workers who were assaulted and in order to maintain civilized living conditions, and after identifying with certainty the instigators of the riots, the company decided to sanction them according to their level of responsibility, and although Minera Santa Cruz respect a workers right to strike, we repudiate the illegality of this strike and will not endorse violence that puts at risk the security of our employees”.

The local AOMA group seeking negotiations with Minera Santa Cruz was joined on Tuesday afternoon by Héctor Laplace, the general secretary of the national AOMA, who has been negotiating a solution to the conflict. At this time the negotiations are in recess and the parties will meet this afternoon in an attempt to reach a definitive agreement.

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