

BY PHILIP WAFULA

KAMPALA. The case of two sacked employees of the Southern Range Nyanza Limited (Nytil), a textile manufacturer based in Buikwe District, has been referred to the Industrial Court for final determination.

The dispute, now before the Industrial Court of Uganda sitting in Jinja City, stems from the termination of Mr Wycliffe Wamembo and Mr Julius Webisa in December last year, who claim victimisation after they demanded accountability in the workers' savings association.

The decision to have the labour dispute referred to the Industrial Court follows the failure of the two warring parties to agree through mediation before a labour officer in Njeru Municipality, pursuant to Section 3(1) of the Labour Disputes (Arbitration and Settlement) Act, 2006.

"After a lengthy discussion, the two parties failed to agree. Guma & Co. Advocates insisted that the termination was unfair and unlawful, but the respondent also insisted that the termination was lawful because all the legal provisions were followed," Mr Geoffrey

Sacked Nytil workers' case referred to Industrial Court

Mpata, the Labour Officer, ruled.

He added: "It is therefore desirable that the court determines and disposes of the dispute because the two parties have failed to agree before the Labour Officer."

According to the labour officer, the Industrial Court will now determine whether the termination of the two employees was unfair or not, whether they are entitled to relief, and what other remedies are available for them.

The two former employees, who worked in the quality control department, were dismissed after disciplinary proceedings in which management cited "gross insubordination" and "fundamental breach of obligations" under the Employment Act.

According to company records, the duo had been transferred to the garments department effective October 16, 2025. Management maintains that they declined to comply with what it describes as a lawful and reasonable instruction, prompting disciplinary action.

However, the dismissed workers argue that the termination was unlawful and amounted to retaliation for their role in pushing for reforms within the Southern Range Nyanza Workers' Association Sacco, which reportedly has about 2,000 members.

Mr Wamembo previously said the Sacco had operated for more than a decade without holding elections or annual general meetings, and that members were denied access to financial records, including passbooks.

Mr Webisa petitioned the Inspectorate of Government and the Uganda Human Rights Commission to investigate alleged corruption and labour rights violations linked to the Sacco.

The spokesperson of the State House Anti-Corruption Unit, Ms Mariam Natasha, earlier confirmed receipt of the petition, saying investigations had commenced but declining to provide further details.

Failed mediation

The matter was initially reported to

ACCUSATION

The two former employees, Mr Wycliffe Wamembo and Mr Julius Webisa who worked in the quality control department, were dismissed after disciplinary proceedings in which management cited "gross insubordination" and "fundamental breach of obligations" under the Employment Act.

the Njeru Municipal Council Labour Office on January 27, 2026, through Guma & Company Advocates, who represent the dismissed employees.

In a letter dated February 19, 2026, Njeru Municipal Labour Officer, Mr Geoffrey Mpata, said a notification of complaint had been issued to Nytil, urging both parties to seek an amicable settlement.

In her correspondence to the labour

office, Nytil Human Resource Manager, Ms Joanitah Nakaweesi, stated that the termination was "a direct and necessary consequence" of the employees' refusal to accept a transfer based on operational needs.

However, the company engaged in direct negotiations with the complainants before the mediation session held on February 13.

Ms Nakaweesi added that the company was prepared to defend its position before the court.

"Discipline at the workplace must be maintained, since without it, no sustainable operations can be sustained," she wrote.

Under Ugandan labour law, remedies for unfair dismissal may include reinstatement, compensation, or payment of terminal benefits.

The outcome of the case is expected to test the boundaries between managerial authority to transfer staff and employees' claims of victimisation linked to whistleblowing and union-related activities.