

ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

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PRESS RELEASE

SUBJECT: NRZ RETRENCHMENT – A CLEAR CASE OF VICTIMISATION

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has received with sadness the news of a pending retrenchment of about 1400 employees of the National Railways of Zimbabwe upon completion of the so called forensic audit.

The ZCTU will be watching the developments keenly as we strongly view the exercise will be used to 'exorcise' the company of active trade unionists and their leaders perceived to be trouble causers. The exercise smacks of serious traits of victimisation of workers who recently went on a strike over unpaid wages and salaries. Workers are being targeted at the expense of an incompetent management without business acumen.

The NRZ board chairperson Larry Mavima is barking at the wrong tree as the root cause of NRZ problems are a public secret – **mismanagement, militarisation and political interference**. The railway entity recently appointed Lewis Mukwada to be its substantive General Manager after he failed interviews for the same position. Mukwada's appointment confirms serious management deficiencies within the NRZ board and the responsible ministry by expecting an incompetent individual to make practical business decisions. It is common knowledge that NRZ has vast investments within and outside the country which if they had been well managed would have transformed the NRZ into a world class transporter.

If management claims that NRZ lost **\$250 000-00** dollars a day during the 78-day strike period then it means it is viable as it can realise close to \$3 million per week therefore it cannot surely fail to pay workers. Workers are owed over **\$68 million** in outstanding salaries spanning for more than 16 months which is tantamount to forced labour and modern slavery while management enjoys huge perks and benefits.

The retrenchment threat is utter hypocrisy because the NRZ can afford to be up to date with all its statutory obligations while painting a bleak picture when comes to workers' salaries. The parastatal's priorities are misplaced towards funding partisan activities at the expense of its core business and playing to the dictates of government's plans to cut jobs in compliance with the demands of international money lenders to qualify for lines of credit. The ZCTU will not take lightly such naked threats to workers' by a government and its conduits to sacrifice workers instead of owning up to their shortcomings.


JAPHET MOYO
SECRETARY GENERAL
29 JUNE 2016