

ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

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PRESS RELEASE

RE: DOCTORS' STRIKE: FAILED MINISTER PARERENYATWA MUST RESIGN

THE Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) is greatly disturbed by the government's lack of seriousness in resolving its dispute with the striking doctors. The continued strike by the doctors is causing untold suffering of ordinary Zimbabweans as it has paralyzed operations at state-run hospitals.

What is more worrying is that for the past 15 years or so, doctors have been striking almost every year without their issues being addressed. The strikes have become an annual event, and the government has been failing to find a lasting solution.

In the latest action, the doctors have been on strike for two weeks over their poor conditions of service. They are also demanding that the government must fulfill its promise made four years ago to increase their on-call allowance as well as provide sufficient drugs and equipment at the public hospitals.

The strike has seen the closure of almost all central hospitals, children's units, provincial hospitals and cessation of emergency life-saving procedures throughout the country. We note with concern that patients are being turned away from government hospitals as the few doctors who have remained at work are failing to cope.

The ZCTU observes with sadness that Zimbabwe's public health system has deteriorated significantly over the years under the stewardship of Minister David Parerenyatwa, who has almost become a career Health Minister. The Minister has failed and should be man enough and call it quits.

We also demand that government should, as a matter of urgency, address the needs of striking doctors in order to avoid further loss of lives. It should find a lasting solution to this perennial problem otherwise we will be faced with the same problem of doctors going on strike year after year.

Japhet Moyo
SECRETARY-GENERAL