

ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

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PRESS RELEASE

SUBJECT: National Railways of Zimbabwe strike

THE Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions is disturbed by the inaction of the National Railways of Zimbabwe management to address a crippling workers strike over non-payment of salaries.

NRZ workers have not been paid for the past 14 months and management seems unconcerned as it is not directly affected because it is cushioned by their hefty salaries and perks which the sweating ordinary workers are not fortunate to benefit from. The same management enjoys a lot of benefits ranging from fuel, school fees and holiday allowances when the same workers are not even paid their meagre transport allowances to see them to work.

Payment of salaries is a right and not a privilege and the NRZ management needs address the issue urgently to cushion the workers and their families from the biting poverty that has plagued them while management is sitting pretty.

Trade unions in the railways have previously engaged the Minister of Transport Joram Gumbo and Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko over the outstanding salaries but the two have proved to be clueless on how the issue could be solved.

The ZCTU also notes that the problem of non-payment of workers in government parastatals is now a culture when the same parastatals splash huge amounts of money bankrolling partisan activities of patronage ignoring their core business. It seems the resources to run parastatals are available but they are being misappropriated. Recently the Grain Marketing Board, another parastatal was forced by the courts to pay workers after a four-week demonstration at its headquarters.

The ZCTU urges the government to intervene and avert hunger as the NRZ is supposed to transport grain to avert starvation as the country has been hit by a severe drought. The government also needs to employ capable individuals to run these parastatals and safeguard the remaining jobs for the economy to grow. Lastly workers' rights are human rights and employers need to understand that workers are economic beings who do not survive on manna from heaven.

Japhet Moyo
Secretary General
6 April 2016