

Teachers in ZIMTA have resolved to put more pressure on their employer, the government, in demanding for accountability and transparency on issues to do with their remuneration and the betterment of their conditions of service.

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During a thematic committee meeting meant to proffer evidence and solutions to the ongoing problems associated with teachers' poor remuneration and the ever worsening poor conditions of teachers, the call was to ensure that workshops and advocacy campaigns to force government to provide resources would be carried out.

Speaking during the meeting, some teachers claimed that apart from receiving poor salaries, and operating in some appalling conditions where they had to make do with overcrowded accommodation in schools, they also faced intimidation from unnamed high ranking officials within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, who clandestinely asked them to shun or resign from trade union activities, or posts for unknown reasons.

In response to the teachers' plight, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), President, Mr Justin Mutasa, who was motivating the deliberations on improved salaries and working conditions for civil servants, reminded all teachers that they had a Constitutional right to join trade unions and assured them that "they should fear not because their protection was guaranteed".

It was immediately after this evidence was proffered by teachers, who cannot be named for fear of victimisation, that ZIMTA undertook to campaign against anti victimisation of teachers who are members of trade unions and also to fight the anti- trade union agenda being allegedly propagated by the said officials within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

Presenting evidence during the thematic committee discussions, teachers unfortunately said they had become victims of price increases, multi -party democracy issues, the fragmentation of the labour movement but most importantly low wages and salaries , which were peculiar to teachers , alone.

Apart from demanding accountability, the teachers resolved to also demand accountability in terms of public expenditure by the government and if need be, to establish budget tracking mechanisms that would assist them in investigating government expenditure.

Teachers are amongst the lowest paid civil servants in Zimbabwe, this is despite the high levels of accountability and professionalism that is required from members of the teaching force, a situation that ZIMTA is working hard to bring to a logical level.