



ARTUZ SPECIAL BULLETIN

Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe

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Editorial

TRADE union rights are human rights and are protected as such by human rights treaties.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and other agreements cover freedom of assembly and of association, workers' rights to collective bargaining, and workers' rights to information and consultation.

By committing themselves to ensure that trade union rights can be exercised, States recognize that a free and vibrant trade union movement is a pillar of democracy and an indicator of a nation's progressive development.

By respecting freedom to form unions and bargain collectively to the workers they employ as public servants, States implement the fundamental labour standards they committed to respect through their membership to the International Labour Organisation.

Providing institutional, transparent and democratic channels for negotiation to teacher unions nurtures a serene education context. Emerging issues have a forum to be addressed constructively in a legal and bi- or tripartite framework.

In the education sector, social dialogue and collective bargaining can assist effectively in enhancing pedagogic practice, improving learning outcomes, education sector planning, recruitment and retraining strategies.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining is in fact an instrument that can lead to more effective and efficient services and to decent working conditions that respect the dignity of all education stakeholders.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining holds advantages, not only for workers, as a means of ensuring decent working conditions, motivation, social recognition and respect, but also for the core principles of public governance and quality of services provided to the public.

It in this vein that we feel the government must be seen to be serious to guarantee that teachers have a collective voice by among others:

- Ratifying the ILO Conventions 87 and 98, on top of Conventions 151 and 154;
- Ensure that teachers, in both the public and private education sector, have the fundamental right to form unions and to negotiate working conditions and quality of education;
- Ensure that collective bargaining is institutionalised
- Respect collective agreements in full, also in times of economic crises

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News

ARTUZ President remains on remand

By Moyo Alan

Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) president Obert Masaraure has served nearly three years on remand for allegedly plotting the January 2019 protests.

Masaraure was arrested on January 20, 2019 and charged for allegedly plotting to unseat President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government in the #ShutDownZimbabwe protests.

Masaraure is still appearing in court on remand.

He is answering to charges of subverting constitutional government as defined in Section 22 of Criminal Law (Codification & Reform) Act.

Last week, Harare Magistrate Dennis Mangosi further remanded Masaraure to 2 December 2021.

In response, the AZRTUZ president said this is "unbelievable."

Magistrate Mangosi once again entertained the 23rd frivolous application by the State to keep me on remand for a subversion case emanating from the January 2019 protest's. 3 solid years on remand state just claiming to be preparing indictment papers.

Remanded to 2 December 20212," Masaraure tweeted.

Prosecutors claim that Masaraure was part of pro-democracy campaigners who in January 2019 plotted to overthrow Mnangagwa's administration from power.

He returns to court on 2 December where a ruling on his application for refusal of further remand will be handed down. Lawyers representing Masaraure have argued that he has been on remand for too long and hence should be set free.

ARTUZ on 2022 Annual Budget

Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ is eagerly waiting for the announcement of the 2022 budget. The Union hopes fiscal authorities change tact and focus on investing in inclusive growth than saving for executive luxuries.

The Minister of Finance, Professor Mthuli Ncube, the high priest of austerity, has been pre occupied with saving the little resources we mobilise as a nation without investing in social services and capital goods which are critical for sustainable long term growth.

ARTUZ posits that, if Zimbabwe continues on the trajectory of abandoning social services it is destined to become a failed state in the long term. The nation will not survive if we do not educate our people and fail to attend to their health needs among other basics which sustain the lives of our people. Life expectancy will continue drop, infant mortality rates will keep rising, uneducated youths will increase drug abuse and our nation will become a society of desperate and hungry citizens.

Creating jobs is an urgent issue. Under utilizing the labour of millions of our able bodied young people is one of the reasons why our national cake remains small. The demand for social protection is high in a context

of scarce resources because of failure to create jobs. The 2022 budget should speak to ways of enhancing capacity utilization, efficiently harnessing our production factors including our labour, land, capital and entrepreneurship skills.

The 2022 budget should set the tone of building a production driven economy that is pro-poor and devolved. The wish for donor funds and foreign direct investment should not be the major thrust but harnessing our resources through value addition and diversification. The nation should exploit available resources and intensify production guided by disciplined and efficient state planning.

The Union reiterates that it is not a luxury or a waste to invest in social services including paying civil servants a living wage. The nation should take care of the human resources because it is the engine for economic growth. To that end Union still demand pre-October 2018 salaries for teachers.

We look forward to a budget which meets all internationally agreed thresholds on spending for services.

Sector	Agreement	Target
Social protection	Social Policy for Africa (2008)	4.5 percent GDP
Healthcare	Abuja Declaration (2001)	15 percent government expenditure
Water and sanitation	Ethekweni Declaration (2008) Sharma El Sheik Commitment (2008)	1.5 percent GDP
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Agriculture	Maputo declaration (2003)	10 percent government expenditure
Infrastructure	African Union Declaration (2009)	9.6 percent GDP

Zimbabwe has an acute shortage of schools, shortage of teachers, deplorable infrastructure, and skills deficits among others. The learners who are living in abject poverty have a right to state funded education,

including provision of learning materials, sanitary wear and meals. Committing 20% national expenditure will be a step in the right direction to address these challenges.

Daily Updates

Updates on 12-Days of Action for Pre-October 2018 salaries.

Despite government denials, the 12 Days of Action paralyzed the invigilation of the examinations.

Last week, most practical subjects were supposed to be written but teachers stood firm on their demand for an invigilation allowance by not invigilating.

This resulted in learners doing practicals on their own without supervision or invigilating because of the adamant stance taken by government and the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC).

Headmasters were most affected as they had to control and supervise several writing classes of up to 60 students resulting in chaotic scenes at schools.

Reports reaching ARTUZ are that some students were left with no option but to abandon their practical as they could not access examination material because there were no invigilators.

Threats:

We note with concern the ongoing threats and harassment of teachers who have joined the 12-Days of Action. ARTUZ teams have been able to attend to cases and defend teachers.

Our message is clear that we will propagate the 12 Voices of the marginalized and will continuously push for sincere dialogue and reform from government until our demands are met.

Until the pre-October 2018 salary of US \$540 is restored and ZIMSEC pays teachers Invigilating allowances, this voice says: **ALUTA CONTINUA!!!!**

Kariba:

Teachers in demonstrated their commitment and power during a Continuous Assessment Learning Activity (CALA) workshop where they openly waved placards and denounced the treatment of teachers by the government of Zimbabwe.

The action was decisive and to the point with teachers showing how they are not pleased at all by the lack of will from the employer.

Unity

“Teachers of Zimbabwe now is the time is to unite with the citizens of Zimbabwe to speak decisively and we encourage our beloved citizens to listen to our Education Radio and within the same framework add their own voices.”

In Pictures



2022 Government Budget Perspective

The annual national budget statement for the year 2022 presented by the Minister of Finance Professor Mthuli Ncube on the 25th of November was presented amidst desirous anticipation, hope and keen interest by workers and citizens in general. The statement was made at a time when incomes and wages continue to be eroded by inflation and with acute deficits in funding for social services such as health, education, water and housing.

There has been hope that the annual economic growth of 7.8% projected for the year 2021 by the government would translate into meaningful change in the livelihoods of the average person and that the change would find its logical expression in the budget statement. Frustrations with the continued talk of budget surpluses-0.2% (2019), 1.7% for 2020 anticipated to be calmed with the redirection of funds where they are needed most in the social services where the situation is dire.

The statement reinforced government's commitment to neoliberal policies. The fiscal policies remains strongly directed towards maintaining high taxes, achieving fiscal stability, and cash budgeting. Despite repeated commitments to end RBZ quasi-fiscal commitments the government continues to trample on the independence of the RBZ which has culminated in the taxpayer assuming a RBZ generated debt of US\$3.3billion. The Public debt overhang is a staggering USD\$13.75 billion. The taxpayer remains overburdened by odious debts negotiated by elites.

For the coming year 2022, a total budget of Zw\$927.6 billion has been allocated for all government expenditure. The budget will exceed expenditure by Zw\$76.5b (1.5%) of gdp. Employment costs including pensions and interest payments have been allocated Zw\$340%, 40.% of revenue. Before the appointment of Mthuli Ncube as Finance Minister the wage-bill amounted to over 80% of government revenue.

The former AFDB Vice-President and Chief Economist achieved this through the strangulation of workers by devaluing the currency inline neoliberal structural adjustment tenets. The median wages for government workers are Zw \$18000 and the lowest paid teacher earns \$21000 inclusive of housing and other allowances.

As a result of both the fiscal and monetary policy distortions, inflation continues to eat away at the disposable incomes of workers and working people. The current unemployment rate of 58% entails a massive erosion of wages and that the current allocation of \$340 billion is small and insignificant in improving the condition of workers.

The huge disparity between nominal wages and real wages can only be

Budgetary allocation for social services has been significantly less than the recommended targets that would ensure the country's progressive realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063. The deep cuts in social expenditure entail the continuation of poverty, inequality, deprivation, and the failure of the government to achieve higher scores in social indicators such as life expectancy.

Resources were allocated for BEAM-\$4.1B, Radio, Television, and Online Education during COVID-19-\$100m, Personal Protective Equipment for Schools-\$1billion, schools rehabilitation. An indication to recruit 10 000 teachers was made but no fiscal commitments were made.

Taxes

The most shocking is thelevyoncelphones, a flat fee of USD50, which is retrogressive in that it stymies alefortstowarddigitalinclusion.I am concentrating on promoting virtual learning through ICTtools. ICT tools also have the potential for economic growth if used properly across sectors. This should be escrapped.

Governmenttaxes are mainly derived from Vat (24%), corporate income tax (18%), personal income tax (17%), and intermediate transaction tax (ITC) contributions. The increase in the tax rate from Zw\$1000 to Zw\$2500 upon which the in come bra cket of \$2500 1 to Zw\$60 000 is taxed 20% is retrogressive. This is the bracket that most underpaid workers fall in and it means further reduction of their starvation wages.

Retirement

The package calculated on the total consumption poverty line remains small because, upon retirement, workers expect a meaningful package that reflects their years of hard work in the civil service and provides them with financial stability.

Industry

A meagre \$3.9 billion was allocated for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. The Industrial Development Corporation was allocated Zw \$1 billion, and Ziscosteel was allocated Zw \$1 billion, reviving its subsidiaries. The poor foundation of the industry highlights the tragic weakness of the industry. Neoliberalism and degeneratenationalism inform progressive industrialization programs. It is clear that government has no plans for reviving the industry.

Agriculture

Agriculture was allocated Zw \$144 billion, 12.8% of the budget, thus surpassing the Maputo Declaration (2003) of 10%.

Climate Change

A sum of Zw \$54 billion was set aside in the budget statement as a setaside for climate change programs, including Pfumvudza. There is a need for funding of alternative renewable energy projects and incentives for those who start renewable energy projects.

The budget statement failed to articulate how significant it is to budget in an inflationary environment where prices and costs are always changing.

The big businesses are protected since they have access to subsidized auctions through the DutchAuctionSystem, but the average worker who does not own the means of production has no access to subsidized auctions through the US dollar.

Budgetary Allocation for Social sectors			
Sector	Allocation	% of Total Budget	Expected Commitment
Education	\$124b	12.8%	20% Dakar Declaration
Healthcare	\$117b	12.2%	15% Abuja Declaration
Housing	\$10b	1.0%	9.6 Africa Union
Social Protection			
Labour and Social-Welfare	\$10b	1.0%	4.5% Social Policy Africa
Higher & Tertiary Education	\$35b	3.5%	

addressed by the restoration of the USD \$540 wage for teachers, including an annual bonus. According to the fair-wage hypothesis, which is based on research out in the labour market, poorly remunerated workers tend to be unmotivated and their productivity as a result declines overtime.

Gender Based Violence

Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) has expressed concern over various challenges faced by female colleagues at their workstations and homes and likened their trials to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The ARTUZ made the remarks after joining the world to commemorate the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence (GBV) running from November 25 to December 10.

This localised theme for this year's commemorations is: Gender-based Violence: creating safe spaces for women.

The global theme is: Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now.

“ARTUZ notes with concern the challenges faced by female colleagues due to toxic domestic situations. As women within the labour movement, we condemn any effort made to restrict women from claiming their labour rights. Any threat to a woman trying to exercise her right to freedom of association and assembly is a form of GBV,” the ARTUZ said.

“As ARTUZ we condemn the threats offered by males married to our female teachers. The spouses should allow the women to exercise their constitutional rights in unfair labour practices. The spouses are forcing the females to report for duty fearing that they will lose their jobs.

“It is against this background that the ARTUZ Gender and social welfare desk wishes to advise and educate the males to let the women exercise their rights both at home and at work.”

The ARTUZ also lamented that the teaching profession has seen an exodus of male teachers leaving the profession with women who are left with no option but to remain in the profession for various reasons, mainly marriage.

“As a union, we are against this treatment from the husbands who should be offering solidarity to their spouses.

“It is our belief as to the Gender and Social welfare desk that gender equality will eliminate GBV as women and men will be having equal opportunities and treat each other equally at workplaces, at home, and everywhere globally.”

Meanwhile, the ARTUZ will hold this year's 16 Days of Activism against GBV at the Matopo national park, Matabeleland South on a date to be advised.

