

## Over 10 000 teachers resigned in 2020

NewsDay by Garikai Mafirakureva

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Courtesy Image

Photo courtesy ZIMTA

THE Progressive Teachers Union in Zimbabwe (PTUZ) yesterday claimed that more than 10 000 teachers around the country resigned from the profession in the months of September to December 2020.

PTUZ president Takavafira Zhou in a statement said that the number of resignations was expected to double by January 2021.

Currently, Zimbabwe has around 136 000 teachers and around 4,6 million learners.

Zhou said the mass exodus of teachers was due to government's failure to address their salary issues after they demanded to be paid US\$520 per month or the equivalent.

He said some of the teachers that resigned preferred to work as artisanal miners, while others preferred to be vendors or to work in neighbouring countries.

"Another driving force has been failure by government to prioritise the health and safety of teachers. Several teachers have decided to protect themselves and their families by leaving teaching. With the quantum leap of COVID-19 cases among teachers and pupils, there is danger that the resignation rate might exceed 20 000 by January 2021," Zhou said.

"Worse still 99,9% of all remaining teachers have mentally resigned from the profession although they physically remain at their stations. This is a dangerous scenario for any profession and calls for urgent intervention by government in order to stabilise the situation and guarantee quality public education and skills revolution as envisaged in Agenda 2030," he said.

The PTUZ said teachers were unable to send their own children to school and cannot trust the salary negotiations by government and the Apex Council which they viewed as “treacherous”.

“Teachers have fallen from grace to grass because of government’s failure to restore their salary’s purchasing power parity pegged at US\$520-US\$550. The challenge in the education system also calls upon all teachers across the teacher unions’ divide to bury their differences and fight together as brothers and sisters for status restoration,” the PTUZ said.

Primary and Secondary education minister Cain Mathema refuted the statistics by the PTUZ saying he does not have such information.

“I am hearing that for the first time. I don’t know where he is getting his figures. I haven’t received such a report at the moment. I don’t belong to his organisation anyway, so I am in the dark. Maybe he knows better,” Mathema said.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/12/over-10-000-teachers-resigned-in-2020/>