

Pledge. President Museveni to support carpentry groups



Promised. President Museveni (right) speaks to a group of carpenters at a roadside carpentry at Abayita Ababiri on Entebbe Road in Wakiso District on his way to Entebbe yesterday. The President made three stopovers where he pledged support towards the different carpentry groups and also urged them to institute focused leadership that will enhance the objectives of their businesses. PFU PHOTO

Demanding pay. The teachers have missed June and July salaries. They have warned government not to expect any service delivery.

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KAMPALA. At least 50,000 primary and secondary school teachers have either not been paid or have received only half salary in the last two months.

Through their umbrella body, the Uganda National Teachers Union (Unatu), the teachers have warned government not to expect any service delivery when they have failed to facilitate them.

Mr James Tweheyo, the Unatu general secretary, said 41 districts have been affected with their teachers now struggling to make ends meet.

He said the majority of their members have bank loans which they have defaulted on and instead of going to classrooms, are now looking elsewhere for survival.

"Nearly 50,000 teachers have not been paid. In some districts, you find the teachers have received their salaries but the head teacher has not. Remember this is a person supposed to supervise the teachers but now he will spend the entire term moving from office to office pursuing his salary," Mr Tweheyo said.

"Banks have imposed penalties on those with loans and by the time their salaries come, all the money is deducted. Where do you expect service delivery in all this? Even if you force them to go to classrooms, they will not teach because their minds are distracted by thoughts of how to repay these loans," he added.

Mr Tweheyo questioned the criteria the Ministry of Finance is using to pay the teachers, saying that some of the staff at the same workstation have missed their salaries while others have been underpaid.

For example, some teachers in

50,000 teachers miss salaries for two months

Lamwo and Omoro districts have been underpaid, while those from Agago and Kiboga have received only part payment.

Those in Yumbe, Ntungamo, Koboko and Kumi districts have not been paid at all. There are also some instances of over deductions in Rubirizi.

Mr Jim Mugunga, the Finance ministry spokesperson, yesterday admitted there could be some people who have not been paid but he blamed the anomalies on district accounting officers who fail to submit the requisite information in time.

He said some chief administrative officers delayed to submit returns for accountability which affects workers in those particular local governments while other civil servants have failed to verify their personal data with the ministry.

"We are in the process of weeding out ghosts. We cannot send money if the accounting officers have not submitted the returns. There are also local governments which have not yet accessed the ministry's monetary transfer system, especially the new districts," Mr Mugunga added.

The Ministry of Education permanent secretary, Mr Alex Kakooza, yesterday said because the teachers' payroll was decentralised, they cannot now tell whether their teachers have been paid or not.

"The Ministry of Finance sends money directly to districts. The only thing we can do is to write to Finance

DISTRICTS THAT HAVE NOT YET PAID TEACHERS

No.	District	Status	No.	District	Status
West Nile Region			Basoga Region		
1.	Yumbe	Not yet	23.	Jinja Municipal	*
2.	Koboko	*	24.	Iganga	*
3.	Adjumani	*	25.	Kamuli	*
4.	Pakwach	*	26.	Bugiri	*
Eastern Region			Teso Region		
5.	Butaleja	*	27.	Kumi	*
6.	Vibale	*	28.	Kumi Municipal	*
7.	Namisindwa	*	29.	Bukedea	*
8.	Kapchorwa	*	30.	Kaberamaido	*
Western Region			31.	Katakwi	*
9.	Kabarole	Partly paid	Southern Region		
Northern Region			32.	Sembabule	*
10.	Gulu	*	33.	Rakai	Starting from June
11.	Pader	*	34.	Kalagala	Hrs not paid
12.	Kilgum	*	35.	Lyantonde	*
13.	Lira	*	Karamoja Region		
14.	Agago	Partly paid	36.	Napak	Not yet, some teachers have been deleted)
15.	Lamwo	Under paid	South Western Region		
16.	Omoro	Under paid	37.	Isingiro	*
Central Region			38.	Rubanda	*
17.	Buvuma	Hard to reach allowances not paid	39.	Kanungu	*
18.	Kiboga	Partly paid	40.	Rubirizi	Over deductions
19.	Luwero	*	41.	Ntungamo	*
20.	Mukono	*			
21.	Mukono Municipal	*			
22.	Lugazi	*			

and establish what has happened," he said.

Mr Tweheyo attributes the rampant problem of teacher absenteeism to persistent salary delays, which the ministry has been grappling with the incident standing at

24 per cent in the last five years.

His worry is that should government fail to solve the problem urgently, the situation will worsen and continue to undermine the quality of education that is already threatened by a high-pupil teacher ratio.