



Z A P U
ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLES UNION



8 Rudd Road, Northend, Bulawayo

Tel: +263292888680 Mobile: 0771 577 637 / 0786 703 263 / 0784 240 585

www.zapu.org

ZAPU speaks on Zimbabwe's health crisis

By Dr Themba Bulle, ZAPU Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare

The Zimbabwe health system is in a crisis. In the last year there have been alarming reports regarding Zimbabwe's health system. Cats have been seen in wards at Chitungwiza Central Hospital. Baboons have wrecked havoc at Gwanda Provincial Hospital breaking windows and roofs. Pregnant women sleep on floors and provide their own water and food at some Maternity Mothers' Shelters.

On Sunday 02 March 2025, the Deputy Minister of Health and Childcare, Sleiman Kwidini, acknowledged to Parliament that nearly 300 infants and 54 women died due to complications during childbirth in January 2025. Shortages of essential medication and medical equipment have recently been experienced at Zimbabwean hospitals. Recently, at a major hospital in Zimbabwe, a woman who was involved in a road traffic accident, had her injured arm set in a cardboard box with tape as an improvised arm sling to support the arm.

At the United Bulawayo Hospitals (UBH) another patient also experienced a lack of arm slings and had to provide their own. This patient also heard patients at the UBH screaming due to lack of pain killers. Patients at the UBH and other hospitals supply their own medicines and medical equipment.

The late Gogo Rose Nyathi, a Bulawayo celebrity, human rights activist, social media influencer and a vendor on Bulawayo's 5th Street, had to fork out more than \$1,400 for medical treatment before being treated. She needed financial and material assistance from local and diaspora-based Zimbabweans.

The [Afrobarometer](#) 2024 health service delivery survey told us what we already know – that Zimbabwe’s health accessibility, health staff adequacy, health affordability, medical drugs availability, maternal care, ambulance services, medical equipment and health infrastructure are poor, and that the Health Care User (HCU) Satisfaction in Zimbabwe was low at around 50%.

The political instability in Zimbabwe has negatively impacted the health system. It has affected many of the key health performance indicators. Poor economic management has resulted in reduced revenue for the Ministry of Health and Child Care. There has been major political and economic emigration which has dwindled the Zimbabwe health workforce.

Better fiscal and monetary policies, managing inflation, reducing unemployment, a progressive tax system, removing corruption, equitable distribution of resources and revenue and removal of sanctions (when the time is appropriate) will see the economy grow, generating money for the health system. Zimbabwe can then have a user fee free health system (which is internationally advocated for lower economic developing countries).

Health education integrating into the national education curriculum can raise awareness about health issues and promote healthy behaviour from a young age. This helps in disease prevention. Generally investing in education and vocational training equips the workforce with the skills needed for a modern economy.

Please note that good governance and good health financing are the two major determinants of a good health system. We hope the Zimbabwean government takes note and implements the above.

Zimbabweans deserve a better public health system that is universal, decentralised and free.