



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **MALADMINISTRATION IN KZN SCHOOL NUTRITION DEPRIVES MORE THAN TWO MILLION LEARNERS FOOD**

The Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal has blundered and demonstrated incompetence in their procurement processes for their failure to deliver food items for school nutrition on the reopening of schools after Easter holidays.

Since reopening of schools, more than 2 million pupils in more than 5 000 schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal were deprived their food and were subjected to harsh learning conditions. They had to attend lessons on empty stomachs and thus could not focus on their studies. Principals had to dismiss learners, close schools prematurely and disrupt normal teaching and learning programme. About 5 400 schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, most of which are rural, and township located (Quintile 1-3) benefit from National School Nutrition Programme. The programme seeks to alleviate poverty and attract children of school-going age to attend school and reduce school dropout rate. In turn, the programme also provides business opportunities to small and medium enterprises to benefit as suppliers of foodstuffs.

NATU was inundated with enquiries from school principals-asking about the non-delivery of food items after the newly appointed 'suppliers' reported that they did not receive food from the collection points. The Department terminated the contracts of food suppliers at the end of March 2023, and they awarded this 'tender' to one service provider. 'New suppliers' were directed to collect food items from identified nodal points, on arrival at these points some received small packs of food items and others were not allocated and reported to their allocated schools empty-handed.

NATU recalls that last year the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education presented about R1,7 Billion budget allocation for school nutrition, committing to ensure that all pupils enrolled in beneficiary schools will continue to receiving their daily plates. It is therefore inconceivable and disgraceful that the department has failed pupils of the province and let them starve for three consecutive days of school reopening. Some of these learners rely entirely on this programme due to poverty in their households. We therefore condemn this unaffectionate act demonstrated by our provincial government. We pray that the school nutrition system be restored without delays and ensure proper procurement and supply of food occurs with minimal glitches.

"We urge the Department to resolve the pandemonium on school nutrition expeditiously. This act is not only thoughtless but annul many efforts undertaken to eradicate poverty in our communities. Pupils need to eat for them to concentrate on their studies. They must reinstate the original procedure of food and allocate one supplier to each school," concluded NATU President Mr S.V. Malinga.

**ISSUED BY NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION  
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