Alert: Schools violating children’s right to basic education

The Zimbabwe Peace Project has noted that several government schools sent children home on the first day of school over outstanding school fees. The ZPP visited at least 14 Primary schools in Harare and Mashonaland Central provinces where children had been sent back home.

Section 75 of the Constitution says every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to a basic State-funded education, including adult basic education. The constitution implores the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within the limits of the resources available to it to achieve the progressive realisation of the right set out in subsection 1.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education told the media that school authorities were not supposed to send children home but find other ways to engage parents to pay the outstanding fees.

Some school heads have defied this directive from the ministry and were sending children home yesterday in violation of the children’s rights guaranteed by the constitution.

While schools cannot fulfill the right to basic education without adequate resources, they still need to take reasonable steps to ensure that the right of children to basic education is not violated. One such way is to arrange payment plans with the parents.

Of the 14 schools that sent children home only two, Seke 7 Primary School and Tamuka Primary School were entering into payment plan agreements with the parents of the affected children while the other 12 did not take any steps to ensure that the right of the children to education was not violated.

The ZPP urges government and school authorities to uphold the constitution and also urges parents with affected children to seek legal advice if the schools fail to take reasonable steps not to unnecessarily violate the rights of children. The ZPP also urges citizens to take up their cases with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to ensure the rights of children are protected.

ZPP is a Non Governmental Organization that was founded in 2000 by a group of faith based and human rights NGOs working and interested in human rights and peace-building initiatives. ZPP has become a vehicle for civic interventions in times of political crises. In particular, ZPP seeks to monitor and document incidents of human rights violations and breaches of peace.

If you are concerned about acts of violence in your community, ZPP encourages you to get in touch with us on Hotline and WhatsApp numbers

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