

Zim casualty doctors join strike

Zimbabwean casualty doctors have joined their colleagues in a strike. Most junior doctors at major city hospitals have been on strike since 1 December over their depreciating pay and poor working conditions. But casualty services have been still operational till now.



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On Christmas Day the government suspended 550 striking doctors, which lead to remaining doctors withdrawing their services.

The bulk of those suspended are junior doctors, who make up the majority of doctors in the country - understood to be less than 1,000 in total. The suspension was supported by a high court ruling which on Saturday declared the strike illegal.

"The findings of the court, in terms of Section 107 of the Labour Act, are as follows: Having listened to both parties' submissions, the court found that the collective job action embarked on by the respondents (Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association) and its members on December 1 2018 is unlawful," the ruling read.

According to a statement by the country's Health Services Board (HSB), the doctors have effectively been blocked from going to hospitals or to perform any work-related duties for the next two weeks.

On Wednesday, doctors running the casualty ward at Harare's Parirenyatwa Hospital said they too were withdrawing their

services.

In previous strikes, army medics have been called in to fill the breach, but it's not clear what will happen in this case.

“Following the suspension of some of our colleagues, we as Masvingo (province) Government Medical Officers hereby notify our employer, HSB, ministry of health and child care, we are withdrawing our services with immediate effect,” said the doctors in a statement.

The action by Masvingo-based doctors was followed by doctors in other provinces who sent the same notification.

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