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# Opposition Leader Aubrey C. Norton's Address on Teachers Ongoing Strike

 by **Admin** — February 29, 2024 in **News**





Leader of the Opposition Mr. Aubrey Norton

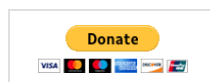
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My fellow Guyanese,

I address you regarding the ongoing teachers' strike that has persisted for the past (24) days. It is imperative that I clarify our stance on this matter, particularly in light of the fact that some are suggesting that the opposition has not raised its voice enough on this issue.



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extension, the future of our children. Education is the cornerstone of progress, and the dedication of our teachers is indispensable to the development of our nation. Our teachers must be adequately paid and operate in a comfortable student and teacher friendly atmosphere.

It must be recalled that on 6th February 2024, the day after the strike commenced, the Opposition in its Press Release said: “the Coalition stands firmly with the teachers of Guyana during this crucial time...”. We have limited our statements on this matter until now, not out of apathy or indifference, but out of a sincere desire to prevent any misconceptions regarding the nature of this strike.

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Contrary to the assertions of some, our restraint does not signify a lack of concern for the teachers, the inability to engage the government, or our unwillingness to address this issue comprehensively. We have abstained from vociferous public discourse precisely because we do not wish this vital

issue to be caught in partisan political conjecture.

Unlike Jagdeo when he was in opposition, we consider this issue too important to be dragged into a partisan political squabble, and instead chose to allow the teachers to have their say in



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obvious that this impasse will continue and as such we have chosen to make this statement both to underscore our support for the teachers and call the PPP/C government to task for its hard and unconscionable stance in not engaging with the teachers through their Union for the greater good.

The government may be thinking that they don't want to show weakness and must hold out against all comers but let me be clear – this is not a time for one upmanship... Our teachers are suffering, our children are suffering, the vendors who work around the schools are suffering, the transportation workers who transport our students and teachers are suffering, every parent who has a child is suffering, all our people are suffering because this government considers itself above the people and refuses to understand that they are there to serve rather than to dictate and we condemn this intransigence by the government in the harshest terms possible.

It is a matter of public record that during our tenure in government, when faced with a similar situation, the APNU/AFC government acceded to the demands of the teachers. This was not weakness or merely a political manoeuvre, but a recognition of the invaluable contribution of our educators to the development of our society. We understood then, as we do now, that investing in education is investing in our nation's present and future.

It is regrettable that the current regime has allowed this impasse to endure for so long, despite the availability of the oil revenues as referenced by the recent trillion-dollar budget. Clearly, for this administration, roads are more important than people. Cheddi Jagan, a leader who stood for the rights of the people, must be turning in his grave. There is no doubt that monies are available to pay teachers and all public servants and the suggestion that the cost of raising salaries for teachers cannot be considered is untenable. Our children should not be held hostage to political brinkmanship. The

longer this strike persists, the greater the harm inflicted upon the most vulnerable members of our society.

Government should note that by their actions they are creating the conditions for all public servants to consider whether they too should come out on the picket line, because as the cost-of-living skyrockets wages have not kept up. The poor are getting poorer as the rich thrive. And we all know who the rich are in this country.



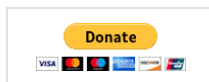


revenues that rightfully belong to the people of Guyana will be utilized to uplift all segments of society, fostering a more just and prosperous nation for generations to come.

In conclusion, let us not lose sight of the urgency of this moment. Our teachers and all public servants deserve better, our children deserve better, and our nation deserves better. Together, let us work towards a brighter future, where the promise of Guyana is fulfilled for all its citizens. It is now patently obvious that if we want to see change, we have to come together and change this government.

Together we stand, divided we fall.

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