

Patrollers Deployed to Schools During COVID-19 Exploited by the Education Department

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On 2 June 2020, patrollers were deployed to different schools as part of the government's plan to re-open schools. The newly employed patrollers were happy that they finally would be able to put food on the table, only to spend the past three months without pay.

The patrollers had signed a contract that stated that they would work nine-hour days from 07:00 to 16:00. The contract also explained that they would not work on weekends nor have to work night shifts.

But shortly after the contract was signed, a notice was shared from the Department of Basic Education explaining that patrollers would now work 12-hour working days from 06:00 (in the morning) to 18:00 (in the evening). It also explained that the new terms of employment would include weekends since they were guarding the school.

Anna (38), and Fikile (23) are patrollers at Zamokhanyo Primary School. Fikile said that, "We tried to call the person who is responsible for patrollers at the local police station. When they did answer, they said that the matter is no longer in their hands and the school can use us however they want. [They said] that we must just do as we are told."

To date, the patrollers' contracts have not been renewed and they still have not been given a new contract to sign up until now, even as we approach the December holidays. But they have forced patrollers' to work six-to-six without pay for the past three months.

The school in question has hired four patrollers made up of three women and one man. The male patroller has been tasked with the night shift.

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