

OVER 500 TEACHERS DIE IN ONE YEAR - UNATU

By Sarah Nabakooza

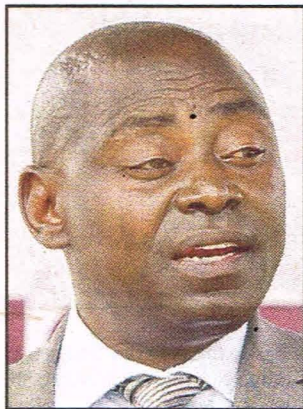
The education sector is under mounting pressure after the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) reported that 535 teachers died between January and December 2025, highlighting worsening conditions in the profession and persistent underinvestment in the sector.

UNATU revealed that 412 of the deceased were male teachers, noting that the figures reflect only union members and do not capture the full scale of teacher attrition in the country, which also includes retirements, resignations and early exits from service.

CONTINUOUS LOSSES

The union's General Secretary, Filbert Baguma, said the education system is struggling to cope with continuous losses in the teaching workforce that are not matched with timely replacements.

He made the remarks during a high-level engagement for increased funding between



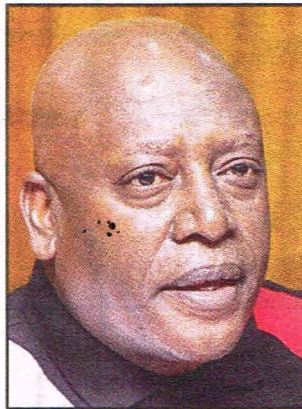
Baguma

UNATU and legislators, held on Friday at Fairway Hotel.

Baguma warned that staffing gaps are becoming a structural challenge for schools nationwide.

"Whenever this happens, the replacements should be timely," he said, adding that delays in filling vacant positions leave classrooms unattended and overstretch available teachers.

He further observed that the education system is under increasing strain due to



MP Ssewungu

declining investment, which has affected infrastructure, staffing levels and overall learning conditions. "We have seen a decline in investment in education," he said, pointing to weak funding as a root cause of systemic challenges affecting learning outcomes.

DECLINING ALLOCATIONS

Dennis Sinyolo, the Director of the Education International African Regional office, said Uganda remains far below the

internationally recommended education funding benchmark.

"Uganda has unfortunately not met the international threshold for education financing, which is 20% of the national budget," he said.

Sinyolo noted that funding levels have dropped significantly in recent years, weakening the Government's ability to invest in teachers, infrastructure and learning resources.

"This unfortunately puts Uganda at the bottom," he added, urging the Government to gradually restore funding to at least previous levels before progressing toward the international target.

URGENT STRUCTURAL REFORMS

The Shadow Minister for Education, Joseph Gonzaga Ssewungu, said the quality gap between rural and urban schools continues to widen due to inadequate investment in public education.

He argued that many government schools are struggling with insufficient staffing and funding which

forces parents to desperately seek for alternatives in private institutions or to supplement public education costs.

Ssewungu called for urgent structural reforms and increased budgetary support, warning that underfunding is eroding the foundation of Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education.

"A nation that seeks progress through education must fight corruption by strengthening government institutions in the sector," Ssewungu said, stressing that weak systems and mismanagement continue to undermine service delivery.

IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR

In the draft national budget for the Financial Year 2026/27, presented to the National Resistance Movement caucus by Finance Minister Matia Kasajja at State House Entebbe, the Government prioritised the education sector as part of its broader human capital development agenda.

The proposed allocation aims to strengthen access, quality,

and equity in education delivery at all levels.

Under the plan, the education sector has been allocated sh4.98 trillion within the sh11.378 trillion human capital development envelope.

The funding will support both recurrent and development expenditures across primary, secondary and tertiary education, with a focus on improving learning outcomes and addressing staffing gaps in public institutions.

TEACHING STAFF WAGE

A key component of the allocation is wage enhancement for teaching staff, including primary school teachers, secondary arts teachers, and instructors in Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTJET).

The proposed phased salary adjustment forms part of a broader sh1.16 trillion wage enhancement package across the public service, aimed at improving remuneration and retention of critical personnel.