

Two feared dead as LG workers protest unpaid salaries

From Usman A. Bello, Lokoja

Two persons were yesterday reportedly killed, while several others sustained injuries as Omala council worker protest over unpaid salaries.

Daily Trust gathered that the workers stormed the council secretariat at Abejukolo, headquarters of the council, demanding payment of their salaries.

According to a source, the workers demanded the payment of their salaries as well as the sack of the liaison officer of the local government, Aminu Atabor.

They alleged that since Atabor resumed office in June, the workers have suffered untold hardship due to non payment of salary.

It was gathered that the protest which started on a peaceful note became uncontrollable when the policemen who were drafted to curtail the protest, arrested six of the protesters, Godwin Noah, Paul Wada, Mohammed Bamidele, Jacob Audu, Alilu Shehu and Mohammed Ademu and took them to force headquarters in Lokoja.

According to the source, as soon as the news of the arrest filtered into the town, youths under the aegis of Omala Youth Network, barricaded all the major roads leading to the town, demanding the release of the men. The source said it was while soldiers were dispersing the youths that two persons were allegedly killed. He added that many motor cycles were vandalized in the process.

But reacting, the liaison officer, Aminu Atabor, denied the allegation, saying nobody died and nobody sustained injuries. He further stated that the protest was not over unpaid salaries.

He alleged that the protesters are not staff of the local government, "but idle youths who were hired by politicians to cause crisis in the state".

When contacted, the police officer in charge of the operation, Zannah Muhammed, confirmed the arrest of some of the protesters, but maintained that nobody was either injured or killed during the protest.

He added that the matter was resolved at the palace of the traditional ruler of Omala Local Government.