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[Weekend](#)
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One feared dead as police, students clash in Kogi

From Ralph Omololu Agbana, Lokoja

AT least, one person was feared dead and several others injured as police yesterday in Lokoja clashed with protesting Secondary School students, who marched to the Kogi State Government House to protest the non-payment of the salaries of teachers and other civil servants by the state government.

The mayhem was part of the public rage over the on-going staff audit exercise embarked upon by the state government for which over 10,000 civil servants have lost their jobs.

The mob later in the day set up bonfires at strategic parts of the state capital while the police responded by firing live ammunitions resulting in the death of an unidentified victim of stray bullet.

In compliance with the directive of the Joint Public Service Negotiating Council, workers, yesterday, commenced an indefinite strike in protest of non-payment of their salaries and alleged indiscriminate removal of names of civil servants from payment vouchers and what they referred to as high handedness of Messrs Sally Tibbot, the consultant engaged by the state government to conduct staff audit exercise aimed at eliminating ghost workers from the civil service.

Thousands of the students, drawn from Bishop Crowder Memorial Secondary School, Government Science Secondary School, Bishop Delis Secondary School, Moslem Community Secondary School and Government Day Secondary School, all in Lokoja were irked that their teachers are to proceed on strike again barely a month after they called off a strike that lasted 4 months due to government's insensitivity to their plight.

The students noted that a situation whereby government would continue to treat teachers with contempt and remain insensitive to their plight was no longer acceptable to them and would not tolerate anything that could lead to the teachers embarking on another strike, saying they have been on the receiving end of frequent face-offs between government and teachers in the state.

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