

Two feared dead as policeman shoots Nasarawa workers

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Umar Muhammed, Lafia

Two workers of the Nasarawa State Civil Service were feared dead while five others sustained various degrees of injury when an officer of the Nasarawa State Police Command shot at protesting workers during a visit by the national leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress to the state.

The National President of NLC, Mr. Ayuba Wabba, stated this while briefing journalists at the police clinic on Friday in Lafia, the state capital, where four workers who were shot at were receiving treatment.

He said the incident took place at the Nasarawa State Government House while the leadership of the organised labour

was negotiating with the state government over the 50 per cent salary deduction of workers in the state.

Wabba said that of the four workers, one was killed, another was unconscious, one was receiving treatment, while the fourth victim had been treated.

He gave the name of the dead worker as Ali Ubugadu, a staff member of the Ministry of Education.

The other victims were: Mr. Musa Saliyu, a staff member of the Finance Department, Doma Local Government Area of the state, who survived with gunshot wounds; Mrs. Salamat Mohammed, a judicial worker critically ill; and Mr. Rabi Mohammed, a journalist for Nigerian Newsday, a state-owned media outfit, was unconscious.

Our correspondent gathered that a police officer was also attacked during the mayhem.

The NLC president said, "It is really an unfortunate situation where workers were attacked with maximum force. You can see one dead and three critically ill. These were workers who were protesting for their rights. Their salaries were cut by 50 per cent without following due process by the state government and they were protesting in a very peaceful manner.

"In fact, they escorted us to Government House where we were going to have the meeting to resolve the issue, but the police opened fire on them. That is most unfortunate."

Wabba called on the police authorities to do everything possible to fish out the officer responsible for the shootings and disengage him.

Failure to do so would lead to the organised labour embarking on a nationwide protest against police brutality, he said.

He however called on workers in the state to remain calm and be law-abiding as the national leadership of the union would do everything possible to safeguard their rights.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Abubakar Bello, said the police would investigate the incident.