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## Ondo strike: 2 workers die, another caught stealing

— 2nd June 2016

...Industrial action paralyses govt activities

From Bamigbola Gbolagunte, Akure

**ON** the first day of its industrial action, two members of the Ondo State civil service have died owing to inability of the state government to pay salaries for five months, the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) said on Wednesday.

Chairman of the JNC, Mr. Sunday Adeleye, told newsmen in Akure, yesterday, during monitoring of workers' to the strike called by the NLC and TUC as a result of delayed salaries.

Adeleye added that another worker was caught stealing garri in Okitipupa town, Okitipupa Local Government Area of the state last week.

Some workers at the offices of the state's Board of Internal Revenue and the Local Government Service Commission at Alagbaka, Akure, who opted not to participate in the industrial action, which commenced on Wednesday, were flogged and chased out by the monitoring team. Also, yesterday, government activities were paralysed in the state as a result of the strike.

Workers in the employ of the state government boycotted their offices, schools and hospitals, in compliance with the directive of the leadership of the NLC and the TTUC.

NLC Chairman, Mrs. Bosede Daramola told newsmen that the strike will continue until the state government honours an agreement reached with labour to pay two out of the five months outstanding salaries.

The NLC chairman, who monitored compliance of workers to the strike, said they were not ready to shift ground on the indefinite strike, which commenced on Tuesday.

But, the state government, in a statement issued by Commissioner for Information, Mr. Kayode Akinmade, appealed to the striking workers to resume work and continue negotiation with the government.

Akinmade said the economic crunch in the country had affected the economy of all the states of the federation, hence the inability of the government to pay its workforce.

He said implementation of the recommendations of the 2014 national conference would solve the economic problems confronting the country.

Akinmade urged prominent Nigerians to prevail on President Muhammadu Buhari to ensure full implementation of the recommendations.

Meanwhile, Ondo State chapter of All Progressives Congress (APC) has commended labour unions in the state for embarking on strike to press home their demand, describing the action as long overdue.

Director of Media and Publicity of APC in the state, Mr. Steve Otaloro, in a statement, said workers have suffered greatly in the last five months due to non-payment of their salaries. He attributed the inability to pay the workers to wasteful spending on the part of the government. The APC spokesman also challenged Governor Olusegun Mimiko to account for the bailout fund given to the state by the Federal Government.

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