

Strike: 35 workers, pensioners die in Ondo

From **Bamigbola Gbolagunte**, Akure

ABOUT 35 pensioners and workers in the employment of Ondo State Government have died due to non-payment of pensions and salary by the government, the organised labour has said.

The state chapters of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) said their members die daily, as they could not afford to cater for their needs.

The workers are currently on strike due to non-payment of their five months salaries by the government.

Chairman of the JNC, Mr. Sunday Adeleye said the 35 dead persons, comprised 23 public servants and 12 pensioners, adding that they all died due to lack of money for medication and feeding. He added that some of them died due to anxiety on how to meet their family responsibilities. Adeleye said the labour accepted the blame for starting the strike too late, saying they should have started the action earlier but for the agreement with Governor Olusegun Mimiko on the matter. He said: "We are tired of stories. We know where the money is. The government should mop up all the money either ecological fund, capital projects fund and all monies to pay our salaries. Our people are dying."

"If the situation should persist beyond Friday, we may not be able to guarantee what may be the consequences."

"We know the accounts where the money is. We are only being cautious because we believe the government is still our own. With the information at our disposal, we are not negotiating one or two months salaries. We must be paid, at least, three months salaries before we can go back to our duty posts," Adeleye said.

Buhari condoles with Ghanaian