

5 college staff die in Abia over salary arrears

— 4th May 2018

Chuks Onuoha, Umuahia

Three trade unions in Abia State College of Education (Technical), Arochukwu (ASCETA) said they have lost five of their staff members to hunger and sickness due to non-payment of salaries and other allowances by Abia State Government in the last one year.

The leadership of the unions which disclosed this in a statement in Umuahia, yesterday, said scores of others were “sick unto death” as they cannot afford food and medicare.

The unions which include Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU), Senior Staff Union in Colleges of Education in Nigeria (SSUCOEN) and Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), lamented that the worst part of the problem was that while other institutions in the state were being paid, ASCETA was excluded.

They stated that the staff who died were currently owed for eight months. Apart from that, they were said to have been denied of the new salary structure which took effect nationwide since 2011.

According to the the unions, under a “dangerous, degrading and discriminating policy introduced by the Commissioner for Finance, Obinna Oriaku, no subvention has been given to ASCETA in the last three months while other institutions got theirs.” The unions who wondered whether Governor Okezie Ikpeazu is aware of the policy, called for its immediate reversal. They said it was an irony of fate that while other institutions had been regularly embarking on strike, the staff of ASCETA have remained largely peaceful and wondered why they were being punished for their loyalty.

In their statement signed by Dr. Joseph Kanu (COEASU), Agoha Franklin (SSUCOEN) and Dan Nwosu (NASU), the staff pleaded with the governor to clear their eight months arrears of salaries to stop further deaths, which they said were imminent.

“We don’t want to believe that some government officials want all of us dead. If not, why release subvention to Abia Poly and Abia State