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## Bayelsa set to check ghost workers in civil service

BY SAMUEL OYADONGHA, Yenagoa

**P**ERMANENT Secretaries and Heads of extra ministerial departments in the Bayelsa State Civil Service will

henceforth be responsible for staff verification to check cases of ghost workers in the service.

The move is part of renewed strategy to tackle the twin problem of over-bloated civil service and what the govern-

ment described as the unacceptable high wage bill of the state.

Apart from the incidence of ghost workers in the state civil service, it was learnt, there are other related problems ranging from people who receive salaries they do not deserve; people holding multiple employment, as well as full-time students; the under-aged and people clearly beyond retirement age having their names in the nominal roll and receiving salaries. At a meeting with Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries on re-organisation in the civil service, Governor Henry Seriake Dickson, lamented that these problems have shot up the monthly wage bill of public servants alone to a staggering N5.4 billion.

The trend, according to the governor, has gravely undermined the capacity of the state government to carry out its statutory functions.

The governor, who said the huge bill of about N5.4 billion was unacceptable, said the Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Agencies, Parastatals and Departments would be held responsible for salaries paid to staff in their respective ministries.

## Suspected kidnappers kill SSS officer in Edo

...as CP vows to fight crime

BY SIMON IBEGBULEM, Benin City

**T**HE Edo State Police have vowed to partner with socio-cultural groups in the state with a view to combating kidnapping and other violent crimes in the state.

This comes as suspected kidnappers shot dead an officer attached to the Edo state Command of the State Security Services (SSS) who went on a rescue mission around Lucky Way, Ikpoba Hill, last Monday. Over six officers of the SSS have lost their lives in the past six months in the state while battling kidnappers.

The new Edo CP Olayinka Balogun who spoke yesterday when he received members of the Oghomwan Mandate Group, a socio-political organization in the state led by its chairman, Sunny Aguebor, noted that policing the state effectively would require the

assistance of socio-cultural groups, adding that it would be difficult for crime to thrive if the police are given the desired information.

While admonishing members of the group to operate within the confines of law, Balogun assured of the readiness of the command to curb crime in the state.

Earlier in his address, Aguebor lamented what he described as the insecurity situation in the state and urged government at all levels to find solution to the problem. "Our involvement in politics is to broaden dialogue and catalyze masses participation in the democratic process of our state.

"Bearing in mind that Edo state is in an election year, we humbly crave your indulgence to sensitize your officers and men to take proactive measures in curtailing political nuisances who derive pleasure in causing mayhem to nourish interests," he stated.

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