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Starvation, disease killing pensioners in Imo – NUP

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By Chidi Nkwopara

OWERRI — The Chairman, Association of Retired Permanent Secretaries of Imo State, Chief Hyacinth Onyekwere, has cried out for help, as hunger and disease is depleting their ranks.

Chief Onyekwere, who made the lamentation while addressing the press yesterday in Owerri, also disclosed that “from November 2011 till date, 12 retired permanent secretaries have died as a result of non-payment of their stipends to enable them feed and buy their medications.”

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He expressed shock at the way “the state government is intentionally dehumanizing retired civil servants by refusing to pay them their pensions.”

Onyekwere recalled with grief that only a paltry fraction of a month’s pensioners entitlement was recently paid, out of between 16 to 70 months owed different categories of pensioners.

On the use of traditional rulers in the administration of pension matters, Onyekwere regretted that Sub Treasurers who possess the expertise have been relegated to the background.

Contributing also, the State Chairman of Nigeria Union of Pensioners, NUP, Chief Gideon Ezeji, fumed that over 30 percent of pensioners were omitted during the last payment exercise.

“As at October 2016, the state government is owing civil service pensioners 20 months pension, retired permanent secretaries 20 months, retired primary school teachers 30 months and retired local government pensioners 21 months,” Ezeji said.

Continuing, Chief Ezeji said that Imo Broadcasting Corporation pensioners are owed 40 months and Alvan Ikoku College of Education 75 months, before it was taken over by the Federal Government.