

South West VOICE ONDO STATE

By Dayo Johnson, Regional Editor, South West

MEMBERS of staff of the 39-year-old Ondo state-owned Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, RUGIPO, have lamented the continued refusal of the state government to pay 10 months salary arrears.

The institution was founded by former civilian governor of the state, Chief Adekunle Ajasin.

As at the last count, 10 members of staff of the institution, including academic staff, have reportedly died while many are presently on admission at the Federal Medical Centre FMC, Owo.

The death toll was said to have risen from six between May and June this year to 10 as at the last count.

This has been attributed to the 10 months salary arrears, allowances and cooperative deductions of over N430m owed by the state government.

The affected staff of the institution include: the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic, ASUP; Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Polytechnic, SSANIP and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic, NASUP.

We're dying of hunger—ASUP chairman

The Chairman of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic, ASUP, in the institution, Rafiu Ijawoye lamented that members of staff are dying of hunger and starvation on a daily basis.

Ijawoye said: "The academic staff had been going to classrooms on empty stomachs.

"Many lecturers have been thrown out of their residences due to inability to pay their rents. Others can't feed their families, even many treks from their homes to teach students in classes and also trek back home after fulfilling their daily assignment.

"Members of the academic workforce are dying of hunger and this is why we are appealing to Governor Rotimi Akeredolu to come to our aid to save us from death and starvation as stomach infrastructure is very important."

Lamenting that his members can no longer work under the present condition, he said: "Academic staff, who are an important part of the school's workforce are dying slowly. We have lost ten members of the



TEN MONTHS SALARY ARREARS: Rufus Giwa poly staff lament

union to the cold hands of death.

"We are witnessing decaying infrastructure in the school while ongoing projects are being abandoned.

"There are also inadequate lecture rooms, acute shortage of accommodation and none availability of seats in lecture theatres. There is hopelessness in the school and this is also being felt by other state-owned institutions whose monthly subvention and other financial benefits are not provided."

Poly authorities explain delay

Meanwhile, in a circular issued by the Management of the institution and signed by A O Ikumapayi for the Director, PR & P, on behalf of the Rector, Idowu Boniface Ologunagba dated June 28 apologised to the entire workforce and the polytechnic community for the delay in the payment of June salaries to the workers saying that it was "due to a stalemate on the allocation of funds to all the states in the federation."

But frowning at the misinformation and misrepresentation of the management on the position of payment of salaries, the union called for the retraction of the circular and query "which month will suffer the delay in payment of salaries, what are the steps are taken to liquidate same, measures put in place to

ensure prompt payment of workers salaries and what has been done to pay cooperative deductions and its interests."

Death of staff

Efforts to speak with the institutions Public Relation Officer, S. O Ojo proved abortive as he was not civil in his approach when contacted for comment on the pitiable development in the institution.

However, a depended source in the institution said that the deaths of the staff were mere coincidence and had nothing to do with the non payment of outstanding salaries.

But staff in the institution

punctured this submission arguing that the death of both the academic and non-academic staff of the institution was avoidable deaths and should be hung on the neck of the council and management.

The staff said: "The death of Messrs Matt Kuma Agbenyo, Akintoye Ayodele, Arodu Ibitayo, Khadiri Jimoh and Mrs. Abiodun Segun could have been averted if they had money to take care of themselves.

"Agbenyo and Ayodele were academic staff from the Building and Science Laboratory Technology

departments while the three other deceased were members of the Non-Academic Staff Union, NASU."

Reacting to the spate of deaths, the chairman of the governing council, Alabi was quoted to have agreed that "the management owed its workforce but argued that, that could not have led to the death of the members of the staff."

"I was so sad when I heard the news, to say I was devastated, was an understatement, particularly because those were some of my best employees."

Rep commissions 16 projects in Ijebu Constituency

THE lawmaker representing Ijebu Ode/ Odogbolu/Ijebu North-East Federal Constituency, Mr. Odeneye Kehinde Olusegun, recently embarked on the commissioning of over 16 projects across Ijebu Central Federal Constituency.

This is in fulfilment of his promises to continue to empower his constituents and constituency in terms

prospective JAMB CBT center at Imoru among others project.

The commissioning, which was witnessed by many including community, traditional and religious leaders, party faithful, was acclaimed to have impact on the lives of all the citizenry most especially in the educational sector.

In his remarks,

