

Mbah reverses sack of 20 water corporation staff

2 By Dennis Agbo

GOVERNOR Peter Mbah has reversed last week's sack of 20 staff of the Enugu State Water Corporation, who were disengaged by the Governor's Special Personal Assistant on Water and Waste Management, Mr. Andreas Gebauer.

Gebauer, an Austrian, had last week sacked the 20 staff in the commercial department of the corporation for alleged non-performance and inability to meet a monthly revenue target of N5 million from water supply subscribers in the state.

Consequently, one of the affected staff, who was a Director in the corporation and who had put in 34 years of service, Mr. Christopher Abonyi, died two days after he was sacked from service.

Addressing the protesting workers of the corporation, yesterday, Chairman of the Nigeria Labour

Congress, NLC, Fabian Nwigbo, and his Trade Union Congress, TUC, counterpart, Ben Asogwa told the workers that Governor Mbah has ordered the reinstatement of the disengaged workers.

Asogwa said: "On interaction with the governor, we found out that the sack was not the governor's directive, he was not even aware of the sack and he directed that everybody should go back to their work. The governor said everybody should maintain peace and tranquility and improve productivity."

Reacting to the development, the state Commissioner for Water Resources, Dr. Felix Nnamani said Gebauer's sack action was not officially communicated to him and only heard about it in the media.

Nnamani said: "There are civil service regulations, there is the Head of Service who is the administration head of all the civil servants and if any civil servant is found wanting, there are procedures

● *As Enugu residents bemoan high cost, scarcity of water*

that should be taken before extreme measures; so the unilateral sack of the workers is unknown to the ethics of civil service.

"I urge workers to calm down, it's regrettable that one of them died two days after he was dismissed and I say condolences to his family, but I'm confident that the governor will do the needful because he is here to build people and not to destroy and he detests injustice."

Contacted the Public Relations Officer of the corporation, Mr. Romanus Ugwu said the protesting staff have all gone back to duties while awaiting a formal letter withdrawing the purported sack of the 20 workers.

Enugu residents bemoan high cost, scarcity of water

Meanwhile, some residents of the Enugu metropolis have expressed discontent over the scarcity and rising

cost of drinking water in the state capital despite the promises by the state government, according to the News Agency of Nigeria.

They said tanker drivers had increased the price of water. The price of sachet water (pure water) in the city had also spiked. They said the impact of the government water project was yet to reach most of the areas.

A resident of Meniru in the Awkunanaw area of Enugu, Simon Umeadi, said he bought a 500-gallon tank of water for N7,000 last year.

"But the price increased to N8,000 in January and on midday, I bought it N9,000, and the water will not even last up to one week," Umeadi explained.

"Honestly speaking, the rising cost of water is giving me serious concern. Whether the tanker drivers are just increasing the prices on their own or there is a problem somewhere, I don't know," he said.