

# **Nigeria: Labour seeks Buhari's intervention over minimum wage**

Tuesday 24 September 2019, by [RAMOREI Koketso](#) (Date first published: 16 August 2019).

**Organised labour unions on Thursday asked President Muhammadu Buhari to help resolve the dispute over the N30,000 new minimum wage.**

The union and the federal government again failed to reach an agreement over the payment of the new minimum wage at a meeting in Abuja on Wednesday.

However, both parties will resume negotiations in Abuja next week.

According to the Punch Newspaper, "the labour unions insisted on their demands while government negotiators refused to improve on their proposals."

"We maintained our earlier position and demand at the meeting. Government negotiators were not ready to move from their position also. We have (been) told to package our position and their own proposals and send to their principal (President Muhammadu Buhari) to look at the difference," the Punch Newspaper quoted its source as saying.

The Chairman of the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission, Richard Egbule, said labour's demands would significantly increase the total wage bill, hence the government would not accept labour's proposed salary adjustments.

Responding to the claim, Secretary of the Joint National Public Service Negotiating Council, Alade Lawal, said the government "was trying to force labour to accept its proposal," adding that such would only make workers poorer.

## **Background**

President Buhari signed a new minimum wage into law in April 2019 but its implementation has been stalled over disagreements between the unions and government representatives.

THISDAY newspaper earlier reported that the federal government had proposed, in addition to the adjustments of the minimum wage of those who are already on level one to level six to reflect the new minimum wage, a consequential salary adjustment of N10,000 per month across the board for all the harmonised salary structures to ensure equity.

This gave rise to the additional cost implication of N158.8 billion per annum, which has already been captured in the 2019 budget.

However, labour leaders were reportedly displeased that officers on level seven to 14 would also get an additional 30 per cent of their salaries, while those on level 15 to level 17 would have 25 per cent of their current monthly earnings added to their salaries.

PREMIUM TIMES on Monday reported how the Nigerian government attributed the delay in the implementation of the “Consequential Adjustment” of the N30,000 new minimum wages to the unrealistic demands of labour unions.

Mr Egbule had explained that the current demand of the labour unions would unduly raise the total wage bill, adding that the government could not accept the proposed salary adjustments.

However, the National President of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria, Bobboi Kaigama, said the union’s stance is that the committee on special adjustment should be fair to all categories of workers.

According to him, the government is offering 9.5 per cent for salary grade levels seven to 14 and 4.5 per cent for level 15 to 17 “which is very insignificant.”

[Koketso Ramorei](#) is a journalist and news editor of SADC News with years of experience in a number of genres including sports, politics and community reporting. He has worked for a numerous publications including The Citizen Newspaper and is a former editor of a Johannesburg-based off-campus publication called The Waldorfian Times.

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