

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & MEDIA RELATIONS

PRESS STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

Government on doctors' strike

Government wishes to remind members of the Ghana Medical Association (GMA) that their current strike action is illegal and their claims in the media that government is refusing to abide by the ruling of the National Labour Commission (NLC) are false.

The GMA needs to be reminded that like all other labour unions and associations, the NLC's ruling on the matter of interim market premiums on March 27, 2013, adopted the payment schedule drawn up by the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC).

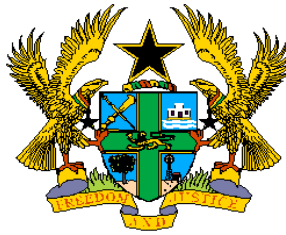
The schedule as agreed and ruled by the NLC is as follows:

- May 2013: Payment for 4 months [January to April 2012]
- July 2013: Payment for 4 months [May to August 2012]
- September 2013: Payment for 4 months [September to December 2012]

The demand by the doctors, represented by the GMA, for a one-off payment of their arrears instead of the installment payments as ruled by the NLC is in contravention of Section 158(1) of the Labour Act (Act 651) which provides that "the decision of the arbitrator or a majority of the arbitrators (NLC) shall constitute the award and it shall be binding".

While government will continue to play its responsible role in this and other matters, it also demands from its stakeholders like the GMA a level of partnership that contributes to building our beloved country, rather than derailing it.

The distortion of facts and issues that are brought before us for discussions cannot be allowed to continue especially when members of the GMA working in government hospitals have been regularly paid their salaries.



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The other issues that have been tabled by the GMA are:

- Non-implementation of the Award of the NLC dated 4th Nov. 2012 leading to payment of the wrong market premium - they claim that FWSC should have paid the market premium using the 2012 basic salary.
- Non-payment of conversion difference leading to lower SSNIT contributions.

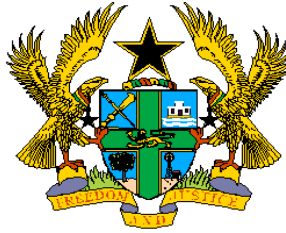
On the first point (as has already been announced by the Ministry of Information and Media Relations), Cabinet has approved the Market Premium Guidelines, which provides that the 2013 Market Premium should be based on the 2012 basic salary.

The GMA is very much aware that the second issue has been placed before the Technical Post-Migration Implementation Committee, a Committee that was set up by the Public Services Joint Standing Negotiating Committee.

The Presidency has directed the Ministry of Health to ensure that all previously announced remedial measures are fully activated and implemented to guarantee the citizenry a right to proper medical care during the period that the doctors remain on their illegal, unfounded and insensitive strike so as to avoid the death of innocent Ghanaians even as the doctors continue to draw on their salaries.

The public is also reminded that NHIS cardholders can access health facilities at the various private and mission hospitals and clinics across the country.

NHIS cards are not only eligible in government establishments but can be used in private clinics and hospitals that accept the cards. A list of these health facilities will soon be published in the newspapers.



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Government uses this opportunity to, once again, sound a clarion call for all hands to be on deck. We need the contribution of each sector to ensure a wholesome and productive Ghana but Government is also fully prepared to protect the weak and vulnerable in the land, to ensure equitability of the single spine structure and to prevent any distortions thereof. This is necessary for the future stability of this nation.

HON. MAHAMA AYARIGA (MP)

MINISTER FOR INFORMATION & MEDIA RELATIONS

[April 10, 2013]