



## **Press Statement MTN Must Respect Workers Rights**

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Today, Tuesday, July. 10, marks the second day of the picketing of MTN offices nationwide by the Nigeria Labour Congress and its civil society allies

This press statement is intended to explain the reasons for this action as well as debunk the false information being fed the public by MTN that our members have been unruly in prosecuting this action which is intended to divert attention from the real issues

MTN Nigeria since it commenced operations in Nigeria, in clear violation of extant national and international labour laws, especially ILO Conventions 87 and 98 has denied its workers the fundamental principles of the rights at work

It similarly indulges in other anti-labour practices such as casualisation for nearly all types of work, fixed- term contract work for Nigerian workers, worst forms of precarious work, etc.

It is on record that the Nigeria Labour Congress on several occasions protested to the MTN and government about these unwholesome practices.

October 7th last year during the World Decent Work Day marked a watershed in these protests as NLC briefly picketed their Maitama office, Abuja.

In response to this action of NLC, MTN reached out to NECA (Nigerian Employers Consultative Association) which brokered a meeting.

However, due to inexplicable reasons, MTN opted out of the negotiations to the chagrin and embarrassment of NECA.

Thereafter every effort by NECA and NLC to get MTN to the negotiating table failed.

Frustrated, NECA pulled out of the negotiations.

Subsequent efforts by NLC yielded no response either. Left with no other choice, NLC served MTN notice of a picket in line with the provisions of the

law. This action commenced across the country yesterday, Monday, July 9, 2018.

And in prosecuting this picket, our members have been peaceful and orderly.

We have not destroyed the property of MTN and we do not intend to do so as that is not our objective anyway. There is no doubt we are clear about our objectives and we shall not allow anything distract us. We are responsible workers and we are alive to our duties and responsibilities.

Even when MTN sponsored members of a private security company (with which it works) to attack and injure some of our members, we resisted the option of a proportionate response.

The Falomo police have in their custody one of the attackers and an ID card of one of the assailants.

MTN therefore instead of resorting to cheap blackmail and propaganda should do the needful, give to Nigerian workers in their employ, their rights to freely associate, and hold an opinion as guaranteed by the 1999 Constitution, the Labour Laws and Conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO.

It is equally important to explain that Nigeria is the only country MTN refuses to allow workers to unionise.

In South Africa where the company comes from, workers are unionised. Indeed, our counterparts in South Africa are worried that we have allowed this matter to linger for so long as MTN may choose to try to impose similar conditions on them.

In Ghana, workers are unionised as in every other country MTN carries on business.

It is important to point out that MTN makes over 60 per cent of its global money in Nigeria.

Why then must it be so disdainful of our laws and people.

However, it's acts of impunity are not entirely new.

Nigerians may recall it was the same MTN in clear breach of national security that imperiled the lives of our security personnel in the Northeast over which it was fined.

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**We insist that companies, no matter how rich or powerful must obey the laws of the land.**

**We insist they must treat Nigerians fairly and decently.**

**No one should be above the law. Let all Nigerians know we are committed to this operation. We have the will and the means to sustain it.**

**Finally, we commend the Nigeria Police so far for their exemplary conduct. We single out for special commendation the police in and around Falomo, Lagos.**

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**Comrade Ayuba Wabba, *mni*.**  
**President**

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