

KBC strike ends, sack order withdrawn

Nairobi: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) employees called off their six-day strike on Monday, 5 March 2012, after a crisis meeting with information minister Samuel Poghisio and his permanent secretary, Bitange Ndemo.



Speaking after the five-hour meeting, Poghisio said no employee would be sacked or victimised for absconding duty since last Wednesday when the strike started.

He also said the ministry would ask the treasury to pay Sh490 million owed to the workers in arrears.

"I have listened to them and in a way they had issues that we have agreed to address. This has ended the strike and people are expected to resume duty," he said.

"I do not know where the issue of victimisation arises from when people are going back to work... unless some employees had issues carried over on discipline," he added.

He said that employees on contractual terms would be given an opportunity to apply for permanent jobs within the next three months. The minister said that job advertisements which appeared in newspapers on Monday had been overtaken by events.

Poghisio said that there would be an audit in all departments at the state broadcaster that has been dogged by claims of attracting incompetence and entertaining ghost workers.

Poghisio said, "Some of these artists (temporary employees) were doing work which could be done by people actually sitting in the offices but this will be dealt with in the audit."

Managing director, Waithaka Waihenya earlier on Monday said a thorough vetting process awaited the workers when the returned to work.

He told Capital News that a workload analysis has already been commissioned to look into the competency of workers there and the capacity needed.

He said the restructuring was expected to trim down staff numbers and improve efficiency at KBC.

Waihenya urged temporary staff to take advantage of the situation and consolidate their positions at the state broadcaster.

"For the temporary employees, this is your chance to formalise your status here. Others have lapsed contracts and it is also a good chance for us to do a work load analysis and say whether we require all these people," he said.

He said the restructuring was expected to trim down staff numbers and improve efficiency at KBC.

Workers at the state broadcaster had downed their tools for the sixth day on Monday, demanding a 500% pay hike, better allowances and an overhaul of the ageing company.

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