



DATE: 31/08/2022

**To all Media Houses**  
**Press Release**

**TELECOM WORKERS TO EMBARK ON STRIKE**

Ghana's telecommunications system will be left on autopilot as telecom workers embark on an indefinite nationwide strike from Monday 05 September 2022, until the following non-negotiable demands are met:

1. Immediate recall of all targeted members of TIP whose contracts have not been renewed by these employers by mere association with the Union and other Union leaders who are part of the current Joint standing negotiation committee and sub-committee negotiating the 2022 CA and salary increment.
2. Immediate payment of Golden handshake to all our members whose contracts have ended with Reliance and have not been renewed.
3. Joint signing and submission of a letter to NLC referring the salary negotiation and pending items in the 2022 CA to compulsory or voluntary arbitration after over six weeks of declaring a deadlock.

The Telecom and IT Professionals Union (TIP), made up of telecom engineers and technicians who manage the key technical operations for the telecom operators, has served notice to the National Labour Commission (NLC) and their employers to embark on strike action in response to the direct attack by the employers at the leadership of the Union (From National, Regional and Branch) that has threatened the very existence of the Union and its members.

The move by the Union is in response to employers' decision not to renew the contract of targeted members of TIP and Executives across the National, Regional and Branch levels. These reps are also part of the current Joint Standing Negotiation Committee or Sub-Committee negotiating the 2022 CA and salary increment with the employer which has reached a deadlock.

According to the Union, these four employers; Linfra Ghana Limited, MP Infrastructure Ghana Limited, Reime Ghana Limited and Reliance Personal Services who are subcontractors and employment agencies of Huawei Technologies on the managed service operations of MTN, Vodafone and AirtelTigo, have refused to sign a joint letter with the Union to refer to the pending issues that all parties have declared deadlock on since July 2022. The pending items are as follows:

- a. Determination of the Principal employer and the role of the principal employer in the employment relationship.
- b. Provisions to re-negotiate to restore equilibrium in the CA.
- c. Severance.
- d. Professional Subscription Fees.
- e. Workload and Working Tools (Laptops, Mobile phones, Data bundle and airtime and Pickup vehicles).
- f. Proposed Forty-five (45%) salary increment for 2022.

In a letter dated 10th of August 2022, the Union reported the deliberate delay and refusal by the employers to sign the joint letter and the targeting of key Union members and reps for non-contract renewal to the NLC and appealed to NLC to intervene.

In another separate letter to the employers, the Union gave the employers 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 to pay all entitlement including the Golden handshake due to all the affected workers whose contract would end on 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2022 but would not be renewed else the Union would advise it, members, accordingly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. In the same letter, the Union also appealed to the NLC to:

1. Proceed to court to enforce its arbitration award of 19 March 2020 on Golden handshake and subsequent directives and rulings to the employer to comply which they have refused, in accordance with section 172 of the labour law 2003, Act 651.
2. Place perpetual injunction on the execution of the current notice of non-contract renewal by Reliance to all Union members until all that is due to the workers is paid in full.
3. A perpetual injunction on Linfra Ghana Limited, MPI Ghana Limited and Reime Ghana as principal employers not to advertise or replace these workers currently outsourced to them through Reliance Personnel Services Limited until this matter is settled by the NLC.
4. An Injunction on the current principal employers of Reliance workers these namely, Linfra Ghana Limited, Reime Ghana Limited, MPI Ghana Limited and Huawei Technologies not to replace any of these workers outsourced or directly engaged from Reliance Personnel Services Limited, who are members of the Union from their positions until the 2022 CA negotiation has been concluded and signed.
5. An injunction on further termination of all Reliance Staff outsourced to these principal employers until this matter pending with NLC since 2021 is fully settled and all entitlement fully paid to the workers.

In NLC's letter of response to the Union dated 12th of August 2022, the NLC directed ONLY the Union to Stay any intended action on the 2nd of September 2022 but fail to direct the employer to do same with regards to the non-contract renewal of over 100 Union members and targeted executives.

Clearly, we are left on our own to take the necessary **ACTION** to deal with these unfair labour practices and conduct that threatens the very existence of the Union from the same employer mandated by law to protect the interest of their workers which includes the right and freedom of association.



Ahead of the 2022 CA negotiation, the Union in their earlier letter dated 2nd February 2022, gave the NLC, Ministry of Communication and Digitalization, Ministry of employment and labour relation and other relevant stakeholders four (4) weeks ultimatum to bring finality to a matter of unfair treatment of outsourced workers on MTN, Vodafone and AirtelTigo Managed service operations” due to the disguised employment relationship that seems to hide who the actual principal employer of these engineers and technician and allied workers, pending before the NLC since 2019 before the Union proceed with the 2022 CA negotiation with the employers. The Union sought amongst other reliefs:

1. A declaration and confirmation of the telecom operator (s) as the principal employer (s) of these workers because they are the end-user and direct beneficiary of the service provided by these outsourced workers, who work directly on their premises and interact on daily basis with managers and supervisors of the telecom operators to discharge their work at the various NOCs and cell sites of the telecom operators, as per international best practices and per ILO Convention and Recommendations on Contract labour.
2. That Huawei Technologies is NOT a licensed telecom operator and service provider and does not own the equipment or infrastructure that these workers operate and maintain daily to provide the telecom services and therefore CAN NOT be the end-user or direct beneficiary of these services provided by these workers. That the role of Huawei at its best can only be described as an agent or managing partner for these licensed telecom operators and service providers (MTN, Vodafone and AirtelTigo) and therefore Huawei should be removed from the employment relationship. And
3. That the employment relationship should not go beyond the employee, the employment agency/subcontractor, and the principal employer. And that there should be a proper and clear line of authority and communication channels guiding this relationship going forward.

Unfortunately, the NLC failed to make rulings on these reliefs sought by the Union, and the effect is the delay and dragging of pending items in the 2022 CA, the Union and the immediate employers have declared deadlock pending the employers' cooperation to submit a joint letter to the NLC for arbitration.

We strongly believe that the Union's resolve to identify and define who the principal employer is and their roles as far as workload, working tools, health and safety and severance pay to these workers is the reason for the mass target and intimidation of the Union members and executives for non-contract renewal and payment of their due Golden handshake which is an arbitration award granted in favour of the Union and its members in 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 by the NLC.



We wish to use this opportunity to call on the entire fraternity of Organize labour to join us in this fight against the abuse, exploitation, and intimidation of most workers by these so-called employers and agents in the telecom Industry.

As Pastor Martin Niemoller said.

“First, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

We are again calling on all Ghanaians, Civil society groups and those mandated by law to protect the Ghanaian interest to join us in condemning these unfair labour practices and intimidation tactics being deployed by these multi-national companies and their agents to weaken and destroy the workers' front for fighting against this disguised multiparty employment relations in the Telecom Industry to bring some improvement in the working condition of the hard-working Ghanaian engineers, technicians and all allied workers.

Signed and Dated 31/08/2022.

ISRAEL EDEM AGBEBOR  
(GENERAL SECRETARY OF TIP)