



Expect continued economic decline in 2020

Mariano Browne

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OWTU demands UWI staff backpay

CARISA LEE

Two months after a judgement was given for workers attached to the University of the West Indies (UWI) to be paid their backpay, no monies have been received.

According to President General of the Oil Field Workers' Trade Union Ancel Roget, the payment period was between 2011-2013 for the daily paid workers and 2012-2014 for the monthly paid workers.

He said from November 2nd to now, the expectation was that workers get their salary increase and retroactive pay as the collective agreement settlement was long overdue.

"We have had Christmas, we have had New Year's and we still don't have a definitive date when the workers will receive their money," Roget said.

The unionist said since the court made the judgment, the university and the line Minister Anthony Garcia should have ensured that the workers were paid.

He called on Garcia and the Minister of Finance Colm Imbert to intervene so workers can get their money.

"We are at a point where our patience is running thin," Roget said.



President General of the OWTU Ancel Roget leads members of his team out of the office of the principal of UWI, St Augustine Campus after negotiations, yesterday. PICTURE ABRAHAM DIAZ

The workers and the union gathered at the university yesterday to state their position in relation to outstanding wage negotiations. Roget said after a meeting on January 7 with the university's management, they ensured that a deadline would be met but now it's in the hands of Garcia and Imbert.

"It is our information that the Minister of Education and Minister of Finance have this judgement before them but (are) still refusing to honour it," he said.

He said if payment is not made soon there is no telling what the workers' next move would be and whatever they decide the union would support them.

"If it means that something has to happen, for

something to happen for the workers to get their payments, the union is standing firmly behind," Roget said.

Roget said the ruling was for a bargaining period dated over five years ago and what could have been done with monies owed then cannot be done now.

"In 2020, the value of the dollar is much less than that and these days it continue to be much less by the day," he said.

Roget said negotiations for two collective bargaining periods was outstanding and asked the media to pay close attention in the upcoming days as the OWTU continues to fight for justice for the working class.

The union then held a private meeting with the UWI workers.

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