

Oshiomhole, other Ex-NLC leaders, Factions Meet Over Crisis
Edo Heritage
Politics And Government

LAGOS — EFFORTS at resolving the protracted crisis in the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, will continue today in Abuja as Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State and other ex-labour leaders led by pioneer President of the congress, Alhaji Hassan Sumonu, meet with factional leaders of NLC.

The meeting, Vanguard gathered, was earlier slated for Benin City, Edo State on Monday, but was later shifted to Abuja today.

While Mr. Ayuba Wabba leads one faction, Mr. Joe Ajaero leads the other.

Since the factionalisation of NLC following the disputed outcome of its National Conference on March 12, 2015, and following the election of factional executives by the aggrieved affiliates on March 20, 2015, there have been two failed attempts to reconcile the warring groups.

The National Industrial Court, NIC, has equally in a ruling on June 24 urged the factions to reconcile before next October adjourned date.

Some of the factional leaders have blamed perceived insincerity on the part of organisers of the reconciliation process and other factions as the major reason for the failure of the earlier meetings.

At press time, efforts were still being made to convince one of the factional leaders to attend the meeting as he had earlier vowed not to attend any further reconciliation meeting where participants would not be “sincere to state the facts as they are.”

One of the veterans told Vanguard that he hoped that a peaceful resolution of the matter was achieved saying, “ we cannot continue to have a divided movement especially this time. We hope the parties attend the meeting with open mind and will be

ready to put the interest of labour above personal interest because it is the Nigerian workers and masses that are suffering from the crisis while the state is the major beneficiary. The matter should have been resolved since but some of the gladiators have not shown enough commitment to peace. We are hoping they will realise the futility of the continued factionalisation of the Congress. We expect all the factional leaders to be prepared to make sacrifices in the interest of the movement.”

It would be recalled NLC broke into faction following the declaration of former President of Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria, MHWUN, as the elected President of Congress, as some aggrieved affiliates including Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, NUPENG, and National Union of Electricity Employees, NUEE, rejected the outcome of the election and held a parallel conference in Lagos on March 20 to elect their own leaders.

While rejecting the result of the March 12 election, the aggrieved group, claimed the whole process was skewed towards achieving pre-determined outcome.

Pioneer General Secretary of NLC and the Returning Officer of the rescheduled election held at the Eagle Square, Aliyu Dangiwa, who announced the results of the election by 12.47 am on March 14,, said Wabba, who was then the Treasurer of NLC, scored 1,695 votes to defeat his challenger, Comrade Joe Ajaero, General Secretary of NUEE and one of the then three Deputy President of NLC, who got 1,400 votes.

But the aggrieved unions, which also included another former Deputy President and General Secretary of the National Union of Textile, Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria, NUTGTWN, Comrade Issa Aremu, at a briefing, declared the election inconclusive, claiming the results were declared even when they were not signed by the contestants in line with the stipulations of the NLC Constitution.

But General Secretary of NLC, Ozo-Eson, had faulted the claims by aggrieved unions, describing the unions and individuals behind it as “a group of individuals driven by inordinate ambition.”

In a statement, he said among others, “The processes leading to the elections and the elections themselves were manifestly transparent, incontestable and unimpeachable. All the contestants and their delegates voluntarily lent and submitted themselves to the electioneering/voting processes. At no time, from the commencement of the accreditation of delegates to the voting, counting of votes and announcement of results, was any a complaint raised or lodged.

“Congress therefore finds it necessary to advise that individuals should resist the temptation to be used as agents of factionalisation or destabilisation of the Congress. The Congress is bigger than any of us.”