

PWU to govt: Workers will not accept 4% increase

■ ST GEORGE'S

THE Public Workers Union (PWU) in Grenada has told the Grenada government that its members will not be accepting a 4% salary increase under the new collective agreement that is due to come into effect on January 1 next year.

The current collective agreement, which went into effect on January 1, 2023, expires on December 31 this year and it is not known if the PWU and other public sector unions have submitted new proposals to the government for consideration.

Over the past negotiating cycles, the government has paid an average four per cent increase per annum to unionised public sector employees.

But PWU president, Daisy Hazzard, has warned that the union will not be accepting for per cent increase for its members.

'In 2025 we will not beg for bread, in 2025, as your president, I don't have to brawl with the government in the streets for a just and fair increase. I am letting it be known, today we are drawing a line in the sand, the FRA is not our busy, don't tell us about it,' said Hazzard who assumed the leadership of the union in March this year and is currently the only female trade union leader in the country.

The Fiscal Responsibility Act, which was in 2023 repealed and replaced with the Fiscal Resilience Act (FRA) mandates that the government cap salaries and wages to a certain percentage of the total budget.

Over the years this has allowed the government to use this legal measure to contain the amount of increases that are agreed to during negotiations. Before 2023 it was nine per cent and after 2023 it was increased to 13%.

Addressing Labour Day celebrations on Thursday, Hazzard said that the PWU's negotiating team will not accept the four per cent increase in the new agreement.

'The Fiscal Responsibility Act that government love to push down our throats and for decades only four per cent, what they find four percent mark on somebody face, what do they believe that 4% is public servants name, we are not taking four per cent in 2025 for 2026 and 2027,' she said.

'So you can come with your FRA, you can and tell us what the IMF say, we hear you, but what we will say to you is this, find a name to call it, find a way to disguise it, you disguise so many other things and you spend government money recklessly as if a piggy bank break for every other thing that you want to do but when it comes to paying workers you shoving down the FRA cap in our throat,' she told workers and dignitaries at the celebrations.

Meanwhile, the president of Grenada Trades Union Council (GTUC), Andre Lewis is warning that the current industrial relations climate is under pressure with 'clouds starting to feel heavier with possible threat of bad weather.'

Lewis said that the bad weather can be avoided if the government does not allow itself to be influence by those anti-union, anti-worker elements that are forever bent on fighting and seeking to exploit the working class.

'This government continues to exploit the workers by violating section 29 subsection 5 of the Employment Act,' said Lewis, who represents the Labour Movement in the Upper House of Parliament.

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