

KENYA MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, PHARMACISTS & DENTISTS UNION (KMPDU)

Wartime Briefing: Preemptive Legal Strategy and Strike Compliance

Speaker: Dr. Davji Bhimji Atellah, Secretary General

Audience: Kiambu County General Membership & Striking Medics

Date: June 2025

Location: Kiambu County, Kenya

Colleagues and Striking Comrades,

Let us make one thing absolutely clear from the very beginning: we will not isolate individual grievances and treat them as isolated branch matters. We will not look at any single county issue and say, "Let them handle that alone." What is the fundamental basis of this union? The bedrock foundation of our unity is that when any single employer tries to destroy us, when one individual in power decides to violate the law, trample upon our Constitution, and disregard our hard-won Collective Bargaining Agreement, we stand as an impenetrable wall and we all stand firm to say "No" to that oppression. That is what defines us, and that is exactly what we are going to do here in Kiambu.

We do not see this industrial action as an empty threat, because we have no business issuing hollow bluffs. But while we are on the ground waging this war, we must be ruthlessly effective. We must ensure that those individual doctors who are treating this serious labor struggle lightly—those who are attempting to secretly sneak back to work under the table—are identified and actively pushed out of our clinical spaces. Furthermore, we must address the replacement medics that the county executive is frantically trying to hire to break our lines. We will manage them exactly the way we perfectly executed our strategy at Kenyatta National Hospital during the national action. When KNH hired emergency contract doctors to bypass our picket lines, we didn't fight them. We told them: "Go ahead, take that one-year temporary contract." But the moment they stepped inside, we sat them down. We unionized them, and we told them: "We are going to force the state to structurally escalate your contract terms from eighty thousand shillings to three hundred and twenty thousand shillings in this exact file." We convinced them, they walked out with us, and when the time came to negotiate an end to that strike, our absolute bare minimum was that we would not return to work until those temporary contract doctors were integrated under the right, permanent, and dignified terms. We forced the state's hand, and we protected everyone.

"We applied the exact same model in Kakamega when our weakest point was the locum and contract doctors. We looked them in the eye and told them: We are asking you to walk out not out of selfishness, not just for individual promotions or study leaves, but because you deserve basic professional dignity. You are a doctor, and a doctor must have dignity. We replicated this in Meru, we did it in Kisumu, and we will do it right here in Kiambu."

It is an insult to the entire medical fraternity that a consultant who has served dedicatedly in Nyeri for seven years, or in Meru for eight years, is forced onto the streets just to fight for their rightful promotion to Job Group Q, while the county administration turns around today to offer raw, temporary contracts to outsiders in that very same job group. That blatant disrespect is exactly why we have no choice but to fight.

Comrades, you must know that your leadership has executed a sophisticated, preemptive legal plan for this strike. We knew exactly how these county administrations would react. We knew that rather than resolving the issues, they would wait until the final minute and run to a judge to secure an emergency strike suspension. But we outmaneuvered them. Every single clause regarding promotions, locum pay, mortgages, and insurance that we embedded into our current strike notice mirrors the exact, legally binding demands of our 2024 national notices. Because the county has spent over a year continuously violating those court-adopted terms, we preemptively sued them for contempt of court. We presented a history of four distinct violations before the same judge. Consequently, when the Kiambu administration rushed to court last week to beg for a suspension order, the court denied them an audience altogether. The judge saw their record of continuous violation and threw them out. We are legally ahead of their machinery, we are remaining ahead, and if necessary, I will impanel additional senior counsels to reinforce this case.

I want to share that I held a high-level briefing with the executive leadership this morning. We are refusing to let our struggle be minimized into abstract statistics. We are going to humanize this data. I want the specific names of every single doctor in Kiambu who is suffering from career stagnation. If a doctor has been trapped in a single job group for years without progression, we want that specific record documented in black and white. We are going to share that humanized data directly with the Ministry, with Public Service, and we will present it clearly in court. When the county politicians stand before cameras to lie that they have resolved our grievances, we will show the reality of who has actually been left behind. This is a matter of cold, verifiable fact, not a matter of political convenience.

We must recognize the pattern of maladministration we are dealing with. First-time governors routinely bury their heads deeply in systemic dysfunction, trying desperately to recoup the immense personal fortunes they squandered to fund their political campaigns. That is exactly why we are facing severe structural crises here in Kiambu, why we fought in Kakamega, and why we are fighting in Nakuru. Seasoned, second-term governors understand what it actually means when KMPDU calls a strike. They know it is not a waste of time, nor is it a hollow political

stunt, and that is why they actively move to implement agreements rather than allowing their health systems to collapse.

We will stand firm, and we will stand with Kiambu County until every single one of our demands is completely delivered. At the end of this dispute, we will be friends with this Governor—not through the convenience of subservient begging, but from a position of absolute mutual respect. They must learn that they cannot trample upon a Kenyan doctor. Our ongoing negotiations are being led directly on the ground today by Dr. Bill, Dr. Geni, and our legal team. I promise you that every offer, every progression, and every single step of these discussions will be communicated directly to you on the floor before any strike is called off. There will be no closed-door deals.

I urge you to shed your fear. I noticed that many of our colleagues appeared anxious when facing the media cameras or speaking out in public. Remember this truth: it is entirely out of that silence and fear that every dictator and every immoral administrator succeeds. When you confront these politicians face-to-face, you realize they are deeply weak and fundamentally terrified. They have immense personal fortunes to protect because they live by misappropriating public resources. When we confront them as one unyielding, collective voice and say, "We are tired, and the right things must be done," they will capitulate.

Stand firm, stay united, and let us win this war together.

Dr. Davji Bhimji Atallah

Secretary General, KMPDU

VIVA KMPDU! VIVA!