

The National Pension Commission (PenCom) has stepped into the dispute over delayed pension increases and wage awards for retirees in Lagos State, following a protest by affected pensioners in Ikeja.

The pension regulator said on Monday that it had opened discussions with the Lagos State Government and the Lagos State Pension Commission (LASPEC) to resolve concerns surrounding the implementation of approved adjustments for retirees under the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

The intervention followed a protest by members of the Nigeria Union of Pensioners and other CPS retirees at Lagos House and the Lagos State House of Assembly, where the pensioners demanded the payment of pension increases, wage awards, outstanding arrears and other benefits. The protest reportedly turned tense after police officers fired tear gas to disperse some of the demonstrators.

Reacting to the development, PenCom said it understood the concerns of the pensioners and remained committed to ensuring that retirees receive benefits legitimately due to them. The commission said its engagement with the Lagos State Government and LASPEC was focused on the administration of pensions under the CPS, including extending appropriate adjustments to retirees who qualify.

PenCom, however, explained that implementing pension increases was not an immediate process, as it involved determining eligible retirees, calculating the applicable adjustments and actuarial liabilities, as well as identifying the required funding. It added that relevant data and instructions would also have to be provided to Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) and other pension operators responsible for implementing the adjustments.

Despite announcing the ongoing engagements, PenCom did not give a specific timeline for when the affected retirees would receive the pension increases and wage awards.

The commission said the resolution of the matter would require cooperation among the Lagos State Government, LASPEC, PFAs and representatives of the pensioners. "PenCom will continue to work with the Lagos State Government, LASPEC, PFAs, and representatives of pensioners toward a transparent, orderly, and sustainable resolution of the issues," the commission said.

The regulator also reaffirmed its responsibility to protect the interests of pension

contributors and retirees and ensure compliance with applicable pension laws and regulations.

Under the CPS, retirement benefits are funded through contributions accumulated in individual Retirement Savings Accounts and managed by licensed PFAs, while PenCom regulates and supervises the pension industry.

For participating state governments, the payment of pension liabilities and implementation of approved benefit adjustments depend partly on the fulfilment of their funding obligations.