

Kenyan government doctors sign agreement to end strike

By [George Obulutsa](#)

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Kenyan public hospital doctors on Wednesday, 8 May, signed a return to work agreement with the government meant to end a strike that started in mid-March, union and government officials said.



Doctors and medical practitioners under the Kenya Medical Practitioners Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) participate in a demonstration to demand payment of their salary arrears and the immediate hiring of trainee doctors, among other grievances, in Nairobi, Kenya, 16 April 2024. Reuters/Thomas Mukoya/File Photo

The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU), which represents more than 7,000 members, went on strike on 15 March to demand payment of their salary arrears and the immediate hiring of trainee doctors, among other grievances.

Television footage showed the union's officials and senior government officials shaking hands after signing the documents.

"We have signed a return to work formula and the union has called off the strike," Susan Nakhumicha, the minister of health, said.

The doctors' arrears arose from a 2017 collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the union said. Doctors were also demanding the provision of adequate medical insurance coverage for themselves and their dependants.



Kenyan doctors strike over pay and training extends into third week

George Obulutsa and Duncan Miriri 3 Apr 2024



"One thing we must assure everybody, every doctor, every person that the rights of workers as enshrined in the collective bargaining agreement that is signed is that it is sacrosanct, we will always endeavour to protect that," Dhavji Atallah, KMPDU's secretary general, said.

He said the hiring of interns demand was still pending in court, but it was agreed they would be posted within 60 days.



Beds are prepared inside an ICU ward without patients, as doctors and medical practitioners under Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) continue with their strike to demand payment of their salary arrears and the immediate hiring of trainee doctors, among other grievances at the Kiambu Referral Hospital, Kenya, 23 April 2024. Reuters/Monicah Mwangi/File Photo

The government had said it cannot afford to hire the trainee doctors due to financial pressure on the public purse.

The Kenyan health sector, which doctors say is underfunded and understaffed, is routinely beset by strikes.

A strike in 2017 lasted three months, and some doctors in individual hospitals downed their tools at various times during the Covid-19 pandemic to protest lack of personal protective equipment and other grievances.

The end of the strike will provide relief to those seeking services, especially following heavy rains and flooding that has killed 257 people since March, and displaced 293,661 people.

"We will wish they can go back in the next few minutes because we really want our health to be back on track," said Muthomi Njuki, the governor of Tharaka Nithi County, citing cholera cases that have arisen in some parts of the country.

Another group of health workers, clinical officers are still on strike.

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