VERSION 2 | THE WORKERS' PERSPECTIVE

WHAT WORKERS LOST WHEN THE BUSES WERE SOLD

Transport relief and the priorities of a workers organisation

Before a worker earns a day's pay, that worker may already have paid to reach the workplace. Transport is a recurring deduction from the value of wages. This is why the sale of buses provided for transport relief, with proceeds applied towards a TUC secretariat, deserves a direct explanation to the people whose hardship justified the intervention.

A secretariat can support representation. It can reduce rent and improve member services. But its value must be demonstrated alongside the transport benefit surrendered. Workers are entitled to ask why relief for their journey became funding for an organisational building, and whether anyone asked them which need should come first.

Start with the worker's benefit

The government's CNG programme was publicly presented as an affordable-transport intervention. A responsible assessment should therefore begin with the worker: which routes would have been served, what fares would have been charged and how much could passengers have saved? Without those measures, it is easy to celebrate an asset while overlooking the service it was intended to deliver.

Consider a clearly illustrative example, not an estimate of this fleet: saving one worker ₦500 on each of 22 working days would preserve ₦11,000 a month. The actual benefit would depend on routes, fares, capacity and reliability. The point is that small daily savings can have meaningful household value. That value belongs in the decision, even though it does not appear as a building on a balance sheet.

Difficulty operating buses called for a plan

Drivers, maintenance, insurance, parking and fuel access cost money. Workers would not benefit from a fleet that deteriorated in a depot. It was therefore reasonable to examine operating capacity. The question is whether leadership explored credible ways to deliver the service before selling the vehicles.

A professional operator, an independently supervised partnership or a lease tied to affordable fares might have offered options, subject to the allocation conditions. Were such models assessed? If rejected, why? Members deserve the comparison, including the secretariat's costs and savings, rather than an expectation that owning property settles the argument.

Members deserve a voice before approval

NEC/NAC approval cannot replace an explanation to members. Representatives should bring informed judgment to a proposal, ask difficult questions and test the consequences for those they represent. The record should show which body approved the sale, what information it received, what alternatives it considered and whether required consents were obtained.

If the approving body cannot demonstrate this scrutiny, concern about rubber-stamp governance is justified. Unanimity alone does not prove that concern, just as a resolution alone does not prove good governance. The minutes and supporting papers must show whether worker welfare was genuinely examined.

Our dues should reflect our priorities

Permanent residence at Transcorp and the bulletproof vehicle make spending priorities part of this discussion. Members should know who paid, what the costs were, what need justified them and what less costly options were assessed. Where union funds bore the expenses, those choices must withstand the same scrutiny that leaders apply to government expenditure.

Security can be necessary. Official accommodation can be necessary. Yet a long hotel stay should be assessed against suitable leased accommodation, and a security vehicle against a documented risk

assessment and procurement process. Before welfare assets were sold to finance a secretariat, what did leadership do to reduce the cost of its own operations?

Information should not depend on a quarrel

Ajaero publicly questioned the 90 buses on 2 November 2026. Workers should not have to wait for leaders to disagree before receiving a complete asset account. TUC should publish the dates of receipt, approval, sale, expenditure and member notification. That chronology should settle the concern about a disclosure delay exceeding a year.

Where earlier disclosures exist, make them accessible. Where reporting failed, acknowledge and correct it. Silence is not proof of a hidden motive, but inaccessible information makes confidence harder to sustain. A member should be able to ask an ordinary question about collective resources and receive an ordinary, documented answer.

Representation depends on confidence

The TUC name carries a promise that workers' interests will guide its decisions. An unexplained change from transport relief to property investment puts that promise under pressure. The consequence may be disengagement, distrust of dues administration and reduced willingness to support collective action. These are risks leadership should address through evidence and service, not dismiss as disloyalty.

Osifo's presidential responsibility includes explaining the choice and correcting any established failure. His former leadership of PENGASSAN creates an association in members' minds, but responsibility for the TUC transaction should be assigned according to involvement. Workers gain nothing from confusing the institutions or replacing financial scrutiny with personal abuse.

What workers should demand now

Publish the allocation terms, sale approvals, independent valuations, buyer details, proceeds and full application of funds. Reconcile any operating support separately and disclose the secretariat's contracts and payments. Commission an independent review of authority, value and member impact, then publish a timetable for remedies based on the findings, including transport provision where required.

The promise our new union must keep

Our new union should publish budgets and quarterly accounts, audit annually, control leadership expenses and consult members on major disposals. Donated resources must retain their agreed purpose unless a properly authorised change is made. Members must have access to records and protection when raising good-faith concerns. Training should be judged by better service and stewardship, with the same rules applying to founding officers.

A worker should be able to see how collective resources improve working life. Show us the account, explain the choice and restore confidence through measurable benefit.

EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

Help build our new union, where members can question decisions and hold leaders accountable. Express your interest in being part of our new union at **https://save-union.org/interest.html**.

Public context: Federal Ministry of Information, 29 September 2024; Pi-CNG programme reporting; TheCable, 2 November 2026. Transaction and expenditure details follow the account provided to Save the Union.

Sources: Government announcement | Programme reporting | Television exchange report