

# PORT CHARGES...

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Ubani also accused the NSC of not consulting with relevant stakeholders on the implication of its directive before issuing it.

The union said it would be wrong to blame the high cost of doing business at the nation's seaports on the terminal operators.

According to the MWUN, poor access roads to the port which gives rise to higher cost of trucking goods in and out of the ports; presence and practice of illegal tolls/extortions by various agencies operating in the ports both legally and illegally; activities of some customs men and officers which also add to the operational cost of ports; effect of congestion giving rise to demurrage and additional increase on the cost of clearing goods in the port; and delays in effecting custom examination and the attitude of most customs officers as lords who must be worshipped by agents rather than serving the needs of the customers as diligent civil servants all contribute to the high cost of doing business at the nation's seaports.

"The Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria feels seriously aggrieved by the consequences of your directive as manifest in the refusal of our employers (i.e. Terminal Operators and Stevedoring Contractors) to negotiate the Dockworkers Condition of Service which is due for re-negotiation this year, 2014.

"Our members the Dockworkers have become restive and may resort to self-help action nationwide with effect from Monday 17th November 2014 if the Terminal Operators still refuse to negotiate on the grounds of being incapacitated by the directive.

"While humbly soliciting the Honourable Minister's prompt intervention on this issue, we by copy of this letter to Shippers' Council demand for immediate withdrawal of this biased directive to allow for search for a collective solution to the issue," the union stated.

Shippers and port  
17 Nov 14  
P.D.