

Kenya Airways recruits pilots as strike bites

By [George Obulutsa](#) and [Duncan Miriri](#)

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Kenya Airways is recruiting new pilots and has started disciplinary action against its pilots who are out on strike, its CEO said on Monday. The airline had warned its striking pilots they could be dismissed if they do not return to work immediately as industrial action over pay that began on Saturday has led to the cancellation of dozens of flights and left thousands of passengers stranded.



A passenger reacts after her Kenya Airways flight was cancelled during a strike of Kenya Airways pilots, organised by Kenya Airline Pilots Association (KALPA), at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya November 7, 2022. REUTERS/Monica Mwangi

As the strike entered its third day, CEO Allan Kilavuka said that as of Monday afternoon, 23 pilots had shown up for work and the airline had restored a fifth of its daily network operations.

The pilots are striking over a dispute on pensions contributions and settlement of deferred pay, and the airline, one of Africa's biggest, has said the industrial action was costing it at least 300 million shillings (\$2.5m) a day.

Kilavuka said the airline would not hold talks until pilots returned to work.

"We have said before that we are ready to talk. Now time has changed. We want them to first go back to work with immediate effect before we can have any discussions whatsoever," he said. "In any case... we have already started disciplinary action and we have already started recruiting new pilots. So those who are still interested in working with Kenya Airways should very quickly report back to work with immediate effect."

Murithi Nyagah, the general secretary of the Kenya Airline Pilots Association (KALPA), which represents about 400 pilots, said the striking pilots would go back to work when their demands were met.

Their union said in a statement that it had sent a revised proposal to Kenya Airways on Monday afternoon and was awaiting a response from the airline's management. "The plight of our colleagues and passengers is not lost on us ... we remain committed to finding an amicable solution," Nyagah said.

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