

Jonglei State demands South Sudanese be paid in US\$

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August 8, 2012 (BOR) - The government of South Sudan's Jonglei State has given the United Nations and local Non Governmental organizations (NGOs) a deadline to start paying employees in hard currency, in line with an order by the state's Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development.

The move comes in response to the devaluation of the South Sudanese Pound, introduced last year after the country's independence from Sudan. Leaked World Bank documents obtained by *Sudan Tribune* earlier this year warned that South Sudan's economy was on the verge of collapse.

In January South Sudan shutdown its oil production as part of its post-secession disputes with neighbouring Sudan. The two countries agreed a new oil deal at the beginning of August but the shutdown has deprived the young nation, which has some of the worst development indicators in the world, of 98% of its income and a much needed hard currency.

A series of austerity measures have been introduced and attempts made to increase non-oil revenues and tax collection.

Inflation dropped from 74.1% in June to 60.9% in July, according to official data but the country. Before the oil shutdown inflation stood at 47.8% but rose to a record high of 79.5% in May.

In a move apparently to counteract the recent rises in the cost of living Jonglei State Minister of Labour and Public Services, Rachael Nyandak Paul, wrote a letter to all companies, foreign NGOs, international and UN agencies on 2 August instructing them to begin paying South Sudanese staff in US dollars by 20 August.

Despite 'kindly' requesting them to 'comply with this order' she warned that if they failed to do so 'the law will take its cost'.

According to Paul 'reference to the circular No 8/2012 letter dated 26/5/2012 from Central government, the state Ministry of Labour Public Service and Human Resource Development is complying with the order from National Ministry of Labour Public Service and Human Resource Development in Juba.'

The minister added that they were asking national staff to be paid in the same manner as international staff, referencing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 23/2, which states that: 'Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work'.

The minister also warned the United Nations, NGOs private sector that they employee rights must be observed and the practice of terminating contracts ceased.

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