

## Warrap parliament keeps away from police protest over salary cut

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September 7, 2012 (JUBA) - Members of the organised forces in South Sudan's Warrap State have refused to collect their monthly salaries, accusing the government to have unjustifiably and excessively cut their salaries, local officials and state legislators told *Sudan Tribune* on Friday.

"Organised forces have refused receiving their salaries because they have been severely affected by the cut in the budget as part of austerity measures, which the government rolled out this year as part of the economic strategy to deal with financial gap, created by closure of the oil", Ariec Mayar Ariec, a member of the Kuacjok based Warrap State Legislative Assembly said on Friday.

South Sudan stopped oil production in January as part of a transit fee dispute with Khartoum. Before the shutdown oil profits constituted 98% of the government's income.

Ariec said the house was not able to intervene in the cut because it is something beyond their mandate and therefore decided to refer it to the central government for "a quick fix" solution.

"Senior members of the organised forces have approached the house to invalidate the decision. We looked at it as a house but found out that it was something behind the state powers. It is something we cannot handle as a house. The state government cannot do much to address it because the cut has been done in Juba. Accounting officers are saying they are only acting on instructions", the state legislator explained.

The lawmaker identified units of the organised forces adversely affected by the budget cut as the fire brigadier and wildlife forces but made no mention of police and prison units.

Warrap has been plagued by political tension involving state governor Nyandeng Malek and members of the state parliament, complaining that South Sudan's first female elected governor had failed to show her ability to manage the state of affairs since she ascended to the executive office in 2010. Several attempts to remove her from the office have failed although the house voted to impeach her in 2011.

While the political momentum for her removal from the office has been diffused by the intervention of the central government, accusations about her adopting divisive policies have continued. Members of Bongo minority group in the state last month protested against their exclusion in the cabinet.

There have also been reports of cattle theft in parts of Warrap as well as banditry, sectional fighting and clashes between clan members.

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