

Salary cuts: Unity state labour ministry supports government decision

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October 10, 2012 (BENTIU) – The Ministry of Labour and Public Service in South Sudan’s Unity State says it strongly supports the state government’s decision to initiate a 25% salary cut from all civil servants as part of the country’s austerity measures.

South Sudan lost 98% of its revenues in January when it stopped oil production in January. A deal to resume exporting South Sudanese crude through Sudan was signed in September but it is likely to be at least three months until production resumes.

In an interview with *Sudan Tribune* last week, Abraham Tut Machar, the director general in the state Labour and Public Service ministry said the issue of salary deductions, was a decision from the state government, which needs to be supported.

The Unity State Council of Ministers, two weeks ago, instructed the finance ministry to implement the salary reduction of government employees; a move that attracted criticism from civil servants in the state against the labour ministry.

The majority of government employees *Sudan Tribune* interviewed largely blamed labour and public service ministry officials for remaining silence over the matter.

Machar, however, said the decision taken by the council of state ministers was aimed at ensuring that none of the employees are omitted from the list of civil servants when payments are made in the state.

He also, warned those linking the government’s decision to corruption acts, saying the newly instituted salary deduction was part of this year’s state budget, which he stressed has been affected by the austerity measures.

The issue of austerity measures is not only affecting civil servants alone, but constitutional post holders in the new nation, Machar emphasized.

The labour ministry’s director general, however, said they have no idea whether the government would in future refund the money cut from civil servants, adding that such a decision can only be taken by council of state ministers.

“Indeed it will depend according to the council of ministers resolution, they are the one passed the decision to be implement by the ministry of public services and finance, is the one to decide whether to returned these money back to the owners or not, the council of ministers have the right to decide on this issue,” he said.

South Sudan’s economy has suffered severely during the oil shutdown. The new agreement could see the young nation resume oil production soon, with its largest petroleum company already targeting up to 180,000 barrels per day.

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