

## South Sudan Finance Ministry rejects restoration of allowances, justification and implication

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By Isaiah Abraham

November 14, 2012 - South Sudan like any other country with cash strapped in time will have to fight for survival until things improve. The tie isn't always entirely about the lack of cash but about limitation of the cash, compounded by management financial indiscipline against little public resources. That is the situation this country is in. We have a huge government at the top with many mouths to feed but with few resources to meet the extravagant government financial spells, after the shut down of oil production.

The country might be rich and potentially so, but experience has shown time and again that resources alone can not bring out the quality of life to the people who own such resources but management. Inequality as to wealth will make social development uneven. We have heard that song all around. We may find ourselves fighting for financial resources when money is back but unless management mentality changes chances are that the wealth will go to few hands on the expense of the majority. Politicians and apparatchiks will go exponentially up while the rest will continue to wallow in poverty. The president was on a noble mission to clip his arms of government (Executive) to a sizeable and affordable service agent, and by the passage of time people are still waiting for the downsizing as it would be one way of reducing current huge government expenditure of this government.

Moving on. After the country shut down its main resource of revenue (oil), an austerity practice was introduced earlier this year and the government operates under austere financial scripts for most part of the period, but there are still loop holes that should have been sealed to avoid waste. Finance had hard time to juggle between what is legal and financial. The man in charge (Hon. Kosti Manibe) has a tough job in his hands! Last month however, especially after September Agreement between Sudan and South Sudan that was signed in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa the man was about to breath a sigh of relieve, but somewhere he has another trouble to avert when the Executive suggested that he should relax some of the austerity measures particularly cut on allowances.

His response was a resounding no. He thought it would be premature to go for allowances since the country is still in the financial wood besides legal implications after the Austerity Budget. This came about after Public Service received a directive to restore allowances in full to some civil servants and regular/armed forces. The adjustment was expected to have been made this month for October, but signs are that it might not happen per the argument above. Even if the Treasury was to shot itself in the arm legally, there is this unconfirmed sources at the Treasury that the check to effect payment change will go few millions pounds, and hence unrealistic/cash crisis. To Treasury the government will have to eat a humble pie after announcing that it will restore some allowances; the government will have to continue with the austerity policy until financial things become clearer, they seemed to suggest

But the moral element in this case matters most than the argument itself. Who could be this person that embarrasses the government to propose the restoration of half allowances cut (for lower grades) or restore cut for specific job allowances without counting the cost of the same? Another related question: how does the Republic of South Sudan manage communication, consultation and coordination of its decision? Was the Treasury out side the decision to propose the restoration of allowances cuts? If not who exactly represented Finance? Generally who then call the shot after all if the matters are stake? How about the Council of Ministers, is it above the Legislature, or what is really going on in our system between the two bodies?

I have no answers to the above questions and would like to be enlightened about Republic of South Sudan governance operations. My laymanship intuition tells me that the sole job of the Executive as the term indicates is to execute policies, but somewhere they are now arrogating themselves the mandate of making policies and legalize them. This should not have been the case. The Treasury has every reason to object a move done outside the law. Budget once debated and passed by Parliament it becomes a law. No one besides the Legislature has any mandate to make changes without burning his/her fingers. 2012/2013 remains legal until its is amended by the House. But as normal in our situation, the Executive made the said changes and proposals and passed them immediately to the Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resource Development (MOLPS&HRD) for implementation.

On this particular situation we have a brewed problem of confidence and credibility. This is so: the MOLP&HRD there wasted no time after receiving instruction from the Executive that such scales are exempted from financial cuts. When the policy was coming down to be operational zed now we have a U-turn from the same Executive after Treasure cried that it is broke and won't afford paying additional few millions, who is this to blame? Of course the Executive for not being consistence or

credible. A leaked letter to effect the U-turn was on sloppy and dodgy lane, with intentional fraud and diversionary at the top and falsification of things at the bottom. I was perplexed for the alchemy of the wordings and argument that the payment could be backdated.

The big question is why on earth should one government be playing Tom and Jerry game against its own people? One time for information impairs and the other for scapegoat exit. Let me go straight to un-package what this piece all about. Remember I write not as an official member of the Workers Union (if that body really exists), but as a writer, and writers are mostly no affiliatory. There is this issue of Country civil servants salary delay and looming confusion about whether to relax and restore the previous cuts per austerity dictates or delay it a little further until financial situation improves. The former has already been circulated as narrated above and civil servants have been waiting for that adjustment. However the thing is stalling at the Ministry of Finance because of cash. The Treasury might be right. The question though is what would that means to the government if the implementation of the widely circulated changes isn't done? Think through! The ball is with South Sudan Legislative Assembly to restore the confidence.

I have always admired this body called Parliament because of the team that is in today, but am getting cussed and somewhat agitated when on the same breath they have requested the Treasury to serving them alongside lower grades . In another word they have asked for the restoration of their allowances together with grade 10 -17 and lower ranks in the army and other forces, something un-phenomenon and absurd for people who are call representatives of the people. The house is joining buccaneers we all know, and this country is heading no where. Please don't backtrack on that decision to restore the house allowance for civil servants especially for lower grades, even that in our army and regular force. Mr. Manibe, go by your heart and not by the law!

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