



CSBAG BUDGET NEWS BRIEF



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Advocating for a People Centered Budget that Dignifies Humanity



Govt lost money to Prosecutors' strike as service delivery stalled

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Government has been paying salaries to the over 400 striking state prosecutors for the last two months despite not doing any prosecutorial work, CSBAG established. According to a highly placed source in the office of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, despite the prosecutors being on strike, Government has been crediting their bank accounts with salary. This means that government has been losing about Shs600m to the striking prosecutors per month for no work done. When the Secretary to Treasury Mr Keith Muhakanizi, was contacted, he said he had nothing to say on grounds that he has not been involved and he referred the matter to the Attorney General, Mr William Byaruhanga who admitted that striking prosecutors were paid. He was however quick to say that the Government had plans set to meet them soon.

More losses

The other way that the Government lost money due to this strike according to Ms Jane Okuo Kajuga, the spokesperson of the DPP, is that when they successfully prosecute corruption cases, court can order for compensation, confiscation of property from the convicts, which proceeds go to the Government coffers, but this has not been the case. From the prisons side, it has since been established that for the last two months of the prosecutors' strike, the prisons service has been spending close to Shs16m every day to transport remand inmates to court. The same fuel according to the prisons spokesperson Mr Frank Baine, was being wasted since there has not been much activity in courts ever since the state prosecutors laid down their tools over poor pay. Mr Baine went on to explain that on average, they use 5000 litres of fuel per day to transport the remand inmates to courts scattered all over the country.



Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister, Kahinda Otafiire speaks with prosecutors at a past event. The two month prosecutors' strike cost Government money and hurt service delivery. | @CSBAG2017

He added that despite spending this much fuel, they have not benefited from these expenditures due to the strike by the prosecutors, which meant that no criminal court could sit and litigate. "We spent on fuel daily because we had to go to court and yet there was nothing much there due to the ongoing strike," Mr Baine lamented. He was quick to warn that time will come when fuel will be needed to transport the remand inmates to court when the strike is called off, but it will not be there.

Police explains

From the police side, Mr Emillian Kayima, the police spokesperson explained that despite the numbers in their detention cells doubling, the quantity of food has remained the same. "The numbers of suspects almost doubled in our cells but practically, the amount of food remained the same and that means they fed on less. This is also affected how they sleep due to congestion," Mr Kayima said. When asked why the quantity of food was not increased, Mr Kayima explained that since the police budget is released quarterly, it was hard to increase on the money to buy more food and other essentials to cater for the increasing numbers of suspects in their cells.

Weighing-in on the issue of expenditure for no work done, Mr John Mark Agong, the budget specialist with Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), recently said, "It's absurd to learn that as tax payers, we were losing money and yet justice was not being served as a result of the prosecutors' strike. But early last week, Government said it would start enhancing salaries of civil servants in phases starting in July next year. Prosecutors and judicial officers are in the first category of those to be considered.

Unresolved cases

"For instance, the bulging number of prisoners with unresolved cases is bound to put pressure on the limited prisoners' budget and capabilities. Still this situation has implications on peace and security particularly within the various communities that now must feel the brunt of the delays in prosecution," Mr Agong said recently. According to the current salary structure of prosecutors under DPP, the lowest ranking prosecutor (state prosecutor) earns a monthly gross pay of Shs644, 963 with the highest-ranking prosecutor at the rank of Senior Principal State Attorney, pocketing a gross monthly pay of Shs2.1m.

OUR WORK IN PICTURES



CSBAG Budget Policy Specialist, John Mark Agong (right) with other officials during a Tobacco tax and control meeting in Nairobi, Kenya last week. | @CSBAG2017



Members of district councils, Participatory Budget Committees, and other CSOs at the end of a meeting in Northern Uganda last week. | @CSBAG2017



Oxfam's Valarie Bey addressing CSO participants during an Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) training in Mukono recently. | @CSBAG2017