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Prosecutors resume strike over pay raise

KAMPALA. State prosecutors have resumed their indefinite strike after government failed or refused to increase their salaries and other emoluments within the 90-day deadline they had issued.

The renewed strike was announced on Monday night in a statement by the Uganda Association of Prosecutors (UAP).

“As the 90-day period, which was agreed by the general assembly, has now lapsed with no implementation of the commitments from the government to address our demands, it is now our duty as the executive to give you guidelines on how to conduct yourselves during the resumption of the strike,” the UAP statement reads in part.

The UAP president, Mr David Baxter Bakibinga, said he had met the minister of Justice, Gen Kahinda Otafiire, about

three weeks before and that he had promised to meet the State attorneys but no meeting happened.

“The first strike was not called off, it was merely suspended to allow government address our issues within 90 days but instead of working on our issues, they are busy running around over Article 102 (b) [of the Constitution seeking to remove the 75-year cap for the presidency],” Mr Bakibinga said on Monday.

Three months ago, the prosecutors went on strike for about a week demanding salary enhancement and various allowances. The industrial action paralysed court operations throughout the country

as criminal cases were simply adjourned. No new criminal charges were sanctioned either and police cells burst with growing numbers of suspects who could not be taken to court for remand or bail.

Gen Otafiire called an urgent meeting with the prosecutors, urging them to suspend the strike for 90 days to allow government address their welfare. The period has elapsed without any of the commitments being fulfilled.

In its commitment letter to the prosecutors, the government pledged to waive taxes of Pay As You Earn (PAYE) on the earnings of the State attorneys under the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. Government also

promised to make a supplementary budget within 90 days to raise their salaries and also commence a promotion exercise. None of these promises has been fulfilled.

“Industrial action is not a problem, we shall sort it out,” Mr Otafiire briefly told *Daily Monitor* by telephone yesterday.

According to the current salary structure, the lowest ranked prosecutor earns Shs644,963 and the highest, who is the Principal State Attorney, earns Shs2.1m.

The contention

They argue that their salaries do not match the payments for their counterparts of the same seniority in other government agencies and institutions under the Justice, Law and Order Sector.

In the proposed new salary structure, they want the lowest prosecutor to earn Shs3.5m and the highest to receive Shs6.2m.