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Tolo

Karzai Officials Receiving Massive 'Incentive' Pay

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High ranking government officials and personnel at President Hamid Karzai's office are receiving substantial "incentive payments" of up to $7000 a month, a TOLOnews investigation can reveal.

The investigation has documents showing that 11 million Afghanis (US$220,000) was spent in two months for 80 employees at the Presidential Palace.

Both Karzai's spokesman Aimal Faizi and his chief of staff Abdul Karim Khoram are each receiving up to 350,000 Afghanis ($7000) per month on top of their salary under the title of incentive payments.

Others receive substantial allowances for food and transport.

Around 580,000 Afghans work for the government with most of them receiving a salary of 5000 to 30,000 Afs per month.

Kabul University professor and economist Hamidullah Farooqi said this issue needs to be seriously addressed.

"An ordinary government employee receives only 5000 to 10,000 per month, while another employee with lesser qualifications at the Presidential office receives 10 times or even 100 times more? This matter should be seriously taken into consideration," Farooqi told TOLOnews.

The Ministry of Finance declined to discuss or provide further details about this, but stressed that incentive payments are approved mainly by President Karzai.

"I think most of the incentive payments are being approved by the President or the head of the related organs. I don't think all the ministers have approved incentive payments to their personnel," Finance Ministry spokesman Wahidullah Tawhidi said.

President Karzai's spokesman Aimal Faizi declined to comment on the matter.

More than 40 percent of the Afghan government's budget is sponsored by the international community.