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# South Sudan production slumps on manpower, infrastructure woes

Since seceding from Sudan this July, oil production in South Sudan has fallen, with much of the reduction coming from Unity State. Officials have said a lack of manpower and the country's poor infrastructure are to blame.

South Sudan pumped around 75% of the approximate 500,000 barrels per day produced in the formerly united state of Sudan. In June, output reportedly decreased to around 450,000 bpd. Productivity in Unity State in South Sudan has fallen from 115,000-120,000 bpd to around 80,000-95,000 bpd, as production has stopped at 15 of the 138 wells in the Unity and Mid fields, the state's oil minister, William Garjang Gieng, told reporters in Bentiu on November 8.

Noting that some wells were inaccessible during the rainy season owing to the withdrawal of Sudanese staff, materials and road-building equipment before independence, Garjang said production was expected to return to normal levels in early 2012.

Some wells need to be reworked by service rigs but, he said, "they don't have access to the roads because that is a swamp area."

In addition, around 1,300 Sudanese oil workers were pulled out of the Unity state oilfields at independence, leaving just 38 South Sudanese and 300 foreign workers to maintain production. Garjang added that some of the remaining workers were volunteers who had not been paid for five months.

South Sudan and Sudan share accusations of supporting rebellions in their mutual border territories, including Unity State.

Garjang said Sudan "wants to cause any problem" that will stop Unity field from working and "have a negative impact" on South Sudan's economy.

He also expressed concern that South Sudan "may be cheated" about the exact quantity of oil being produced and called for South Sudanese government employees to work in the Sudan town of Heglig, in order to monitor throughput.