

Warrap parliament pledges to work with Governor Deng

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August 11, 2012 (JUBA) - South Sudan's Warrap State pledged on Saturday to working together with the state executive under gubernatorial leadership of Nyandeng Malek, apparently in attempt to end a long and widely publicised parliamentary dispute with the state administration.

Warrap parliament in 2011 saw a bitter attempt to remove the state governor following claims of administrative failure and inability to manage state affairs. The governor was also accused of using security forces to arbitrarily arrest and harass members of parliament who opposed her.

Security agents reportedly with close relations with governor Malek attempted to arrest Dominic Deng Mayom, a state member of parliament representing Tonj North County in August 2011.

Local attempts to reconcile the two institutions did not succeed until the central government in late December 2011 intervened, advising the two organs of the state administration to respect the competence of the other and accept the need to work together as member of the same government regardless of their political affiliations and views.

Madot Madut Deng, Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly said on Saturday that unity between legislature and executive arm of the state administration was "key prerequisite requirement" in service delivery and creation of social harmony and stability in the area.

The top legislator stressed that political differences due to misunderstanding between some members of the house and the executive arm of the state government have created "sharp" mistrust and disunity.

He also claimed a lot of things have been done since Nyandeng Malek ascended to gubernatorial power as the first female governor during the controversial 2010 April elections compared to the period in which her predecessors served the state.

"A lot of things have been done only that our people do not appreciate work done before the person is gone. Governor Nyandeng has done a lot in term of service delivery compare to her predecessors. The security situation has now improved greatly since she became the governor. There have been regular peace and reconciliation meetings and workshop held to resolves differences", Deng explained.

He cited a recent high level security and cattle rustling meeting, attended by county commissioners from neighbouring Lakes State, to address insecurity issues and conflicts created as result of cattle theft and cross-border raids between the two states.

"The last week meeting which brought together all county commissioners from Warrap and Lakes State is one such example that shows governor Nyadeng is committed to exerting her efforts to ensure peace and stability between two states. Similar meetings and workshops were also held with the neighbouring state of Unity", the speaker explained.

He denied that the state administration had intentionally failed to deliver services but linked it to what he described as "unforeseen difficulties" in relations with Sudan. South Sudan seceded from Sudan last year but tensions have remained tense along the oil rich border which has not been demarcated.

As a border Warrap also recieved displaced people from the disputed region of Abyei last year when Sudan military took control of the area. In April this year the two sides fought a brief border war over the adjacent area of Heglig/Panthou, which is also claimed by both sides.

The two sides recently agreed an oil deal after a dispute led the stoppage of exporting oil through Sudan at the start of the year. It is unclear, however, when production will resume.

Warrap's Speaker, like other officials in the government of South Sudan claim that the were forced to halt production as Sudan was "stealing" its oil as it passed through the pipes and refineries, which lie in north Sudan. Khartoum denies this and maintains it only took oil as payment in lieu of unpaid fees.

Before the shutdown oil production provided the young South Sudanese government with 98 percent of its revenue.

"The people expected a lot, and with such expectations it became challenging and also became difficult for our people, particularly economically, because of what had happened," said Speaker Deng. "Our cabinet in Juba as you may be aware decided early this year to close the flow of the oil, the flow of the pipeline because Sudanese government was stealing it. It was for good reasons though it created budgetary gap."

He said that after the Sudanese civil from 1983-2005 in which around two million people died and four million displaced, after independence on 9 July 2011 many throughout the country and abroad had too high expectations.

"It is one year since we became an independent state. And we know it is going to be a long and hard process, it is going to be tough in the first few years because first years for any new nation are always faced with a lot of challenges" said Speaker Deng. "It is not going to be easy because state building everywhere even the developed world is never easy", he explained.

He said South Sudan was in a difficult situation as not only was it emerging from what was Africa's longest-running civil war but it is also contending with an historical lack of investment and infrastructure.