

S. Sudan parliament adjourns vetting electoral board members

Friday 17 August 2012

August 16, 2012 (JUBA) - During a heated debate in the South Sudan parliament on Wednesday, members voted to postpone the vetting names of the nine members of the election commission appointed by the country's president Salva Kiir, at the beginning of the month.

The transitional constitution of South Sudan gives Kiir the power to appoint constitutional post holders but requires the approval of the house before the appointed official can take an oath of office.

In a sitting chaired by the deputy speaker on 15 August, the house voted to adjourn the vetting process of members appointed to the [National Elections Commission](#) after some Members of Parliament (MPs) contested the appointments.

The debate saw some members, mainly those whose states were not represented in the commission, questioning the fairness and integrity of the process leading to selection of the members without conducting a wider consultation with the relevant institutions and establishments.

MPs representing Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Eastern Equatoria described the selection process as "biased and divisive" and intending to marginalise some of the nation's states.

Deputy speaker, Daniel Awet Akot told journalists that the adjournment was taken to gather the "relevant information" relating to the "individual backgrounds" of the appointed members of the commission.

"The house needs to know more about their backgrounds not necessarily where they come from", Akot said on Wednesday.

No specific date has been fixed to resume deliberations making it the third time the House has had to postpone the vetting of the appointments. Previous adjournments were linked to failure of the office to present the credentials of the appointed officials for parliamentary scrutiny before endorsing the presidential decree.

Grace Abalang who comes from Eastern Equatoria state contested the appointment, saying it marginalised her state.

She said all nine candidates forwarded by the Office of the President did not preserve a sense of unity.

On 1 August Kiir appointed Abednego Akok Kacuol chairperson of the elections commission; Jersa Kide Barsaba deputy chairperson of the elections commission; and Mac Maica Deng chief electoral officer.

Other members include Akur Julia Ajuoi Magot, Anthony Mogga, Paul Marial Dot, Lawrence Sulubia Amin, Jok Dak Puok, and Lawrence Deng Aluat.

Aleu Ayeny Aleu, a chair of parliamentary committee responsible for public order and security dismissed claims of marginalisation.

South Sudan before it was divided into ten states was administered as a region of three provinces. Bahr el Ghazal which was later divided into four states of Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap and Lakes. Upper Nile was divided into Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile. Equatoria was divided into East, Centre and Western states. Capitalising on the regions, Aleu argued that Kiir's appointment fairly distributed all positions according to the regions, resulting in each taking three positions.

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