

Northern Bahr el Ghazal parliament gets new Chief Whip

Thursday 13 September 2012

September 11, 2012 (JUBA) - Northern Bahr el Ghazal held a parliamentary function to swear in the state's newly appointed Chief Whip, Daniel Akol Diing, legislators said on Wednesday, five days after his new role was announced by Governor Paul Malong Awan.

Despite being a close ally to the Governor, this is Akol's first constitutional post, having never served as a minister or any other position in the state administration, since governor Awan assumed office in March 2008.

Before the April 2010 general elections, when he won a seat in the state parliament, as a candidate of South Sudan's ruling party - the [Sudan People's Liberation Movement \(SPLM\)](#), Akol was a civil servant at Northern Bahr el Ghazal's Ministry Education in the Department of Adult Education and Accelerated Learning.

As Chief Whip, Akol is the third highest ranked official in the Northern Bahr el Ghazal parliament behind the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, both of whom are elected, unlike the Chief Whip who is appointed by the Governor. In South Sudan's national parliament the Chief Whip is appointed by the President.

Little is known about Akol's educational background, although friends and relatives claim he holds a diploma in education and that he sat the Sudan School Certificate before joining SPLM, at the height of the Sudan's civil war between southern rebels and the government in Khartoum.

After two-decades of conflict, which claimed more than two million lives and displaced four million people a peace deal in 2005, paved the way for South Sudan to secede last year.

Before Akol's appointment, speculation in Northern Bahr el Ghazal was that Akoon Diing Angok was leading the race for the post. Although Akol did not publicly position himself for the role many believe that behind the scenes he was lobbying the governor through his aides.

In his acceptance note on Tuesday, Akol, while inviting members of the public to his swearing in ceremony at the Northern Bahr el Ghazal State Legislative Assembly, described the appointment as an "honour" and that he would work hard to promote good relations between the parliament and the executive branch of government.

Akol's swearing in ceremony on Wednesday was presided over by the Deputy Governor, Madut Dut Yel, who was representing the absent Governor Paul Malong Awan. Other officials at the function included the Speaker of the house, Monica Achol William Amoi, who is the state's first woman to hold the role.

Amoi was elected Speaker following political differences between state executive and the house in 2011 after some members voted to impeach former Minister of Finance, Ronald Ruay Deng, allegedly over failure to answer questions relating to irregularities observed in the 2011 budget.

The then Speaker, Aguer Wol Aguer was blamed for allowing members of the house to impeach a minister who belonged to the SPLM and was removed in July 2012 following dissolution of the Assembly. The state Assembly passed another resolution tasking her to take over the seat as caretaker until two weeks later when she officially became the speaker of the house.

Aguer contested his ouster describing it as "constitutional coup" and the encroachment of the Governor's office into the state parliament.

Majang Ngor Kuany, a former Speaker of the parliament, who now heads the information and communication committee in the House described Akol's appointment as "good development" and expressed hope that the new appointee of the house would work hard to promote better working relations between the two arms of the government.

"I am confident that Honourable Daniel Akol Diing will work hard to improve relation and create enabling environments between the executive and the house", Kuany told *Sudan Tribune* on Wednesday.

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