

## Lakes State MPs protest against parliamentary Speaker

Friday 14 September 2012

September 13, 2012 (RUMBEEK) - The Speaker of the Lakes State Legislative Assembly, John Marik Makur, has been criticised by members of parliament for not allowing the parliament's conduct of business to be amended as demanded by some MPs.

On Wednesday, lawmakers were angered by the refusal of the Deputy Speaker Nhial Enock Chahoc to continue a session debating possible changes.

One MP is reported to have padlocked the main door of the parliament building in protest.

Marik Nanga Marik MP, who represents Rumbek North County told *Sudan Tribune* that Lakes State parliament was not acting democratically and setting a bad example to the public.

"Democracy is a valued principle, so much so that some people have sacrificed their lives to fight for it. While no system is perfect, it seems that democracy is once again under assault. What are the challenges posed in a democratic system and are established safeguards helping to strengthen democracy or are their forces successfully weakening it?" Marik told the press, shortly after the Deputy Speaker rejected the discussion on conduct of business.

Having learned the MPs intention to discuss reforming the Conduct of Business the Lakes State Assembly Speaker John Marik Makur did not attend the discussion, according to Nanga.

"This is tactic to undermine state democracy principals" he said.

Taban Abil Aguek MP, who represents Awerial County at the Lakes State assembly said that argument is over Article 116 of the parliament's Conduct of Business that concerns the governance of lawmakers.

Around two thirds (32 out of 48) of MPs want the term length of specialized committee chairpersons to be limited to two and a half years down from five years. The disagreement comes over whether existing chairpersons should step down after five years or at the new limit.

"We must amend this Conduct of Business to allow democratic dream to be realize in this house" said Taban.

However, on Thursday, the Speaker, his deputy and specialized committee chairpersons held a closed door meeting but did not make public what had been discussed.

Lakes State parliament is dominated by South Sudan's ruling SPLM but there are two independent MPs representing Wulu County.

Lakes state parliament had history of confrontation with it leaders. On August 21, 2007, the Lakes State parliament [impeached state Finance Minister Philip Marol Mading](#) during the term of former Governor Daniel Awet Akot.

The ex-minister was charged with mismanaging public funds. Also in 2007, the parliament operated under political turmoil that lead to former Speaker, Isaiah Alier Machinkok, resigning.

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