

Lebanon may choose president by majority

by UPI

BEIRUT, Lebanon - The deputy speaker of Lebanese Parliament said lawmakers may elect a president by simple majority vote, rather than the previously required two-thirds majority. Lebanese Deputy Speaker Farid Makari said during a visit to the United States with Future Parliamentary Bloc leader Saad Al-Hariri that he would chair a vote requiring only a half-plus-one majority for president if asked by the March 14 Alliance, KUNA, the Kuwait News Agency, reported Friday. "If leaders (of the March 14 Alliance) approach me for chairing a half-plus-one majority vote, and if I learn that Speaker Nabih Berri is not going to carry out this duty, then I will not hesitate to do so," Makari said. The current procedure requires a presidential candidate to secure a two-thirds majority to claim victory. By political consensus, the candidate must also be a Maronite Christian. The election process was postponed by Speaker Nabih Berri until Oct. 23 last week after members of the pro-Syrian bloc of parliament refused to participate, making a two-thirds majority impossible.

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