

U.S., Russia Warships Dock in Strategic Sudan Port

By [AFP](#)

March 01, 2021



Russia recently signed a 25-year agreement to build a naval base in Port Sudan, part of Moscow's latest geopolitical push into Africa. **AFP**

A U.S. warship docked in Sudan Monday a day after a Russian frigate arrived in the same key Red Sea port where Moscow is planning to establish a naval logistics base, an AFP correspondent said.

The arrival of the guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill to Port Sudan follows Washington's delisting of Khartoum as state sponsors of terrorism, following the April 2019 ouster of strongman Omar al-Bashir.

An expeditionary fast transport ship, the USNS Carson City, had already docked in the port on Feb. 24, the "first US navy ship to visit Sudan in decades," the U.S. embassy in Khartoum said in a statement at the time.

It "highlights the willingness" of the U.S. military to "strengthen their renewed partnership" with Sudan's armed forces, it added.

The arrival of the USS Churchill was "the second (U.S.) ship to stop in Sudan this week," said U.S. Charge d'Affaires Brian Shukan.

Its arrival, "sheds light on U.S. support for a democratic transition in Sudan," Shukan added, in a message on Twitter.

The USS Churchill docked shortly after Russia's Admiral Grigorovich frigate arrived in Port Sudan, where the Russian Navy said "a logistical support base" would be created.

The Admiral Grigorovich frigate would refuel and its crew rest after exercises in the Indian Ocean off Pakistan, the navy added.

'Peace and stability'

Sudan's military said the Admiral Grigorovich's visit was "part of advancing diplomatic relations" between the two countries, according to a statement late Sunday.

In December, Russia announced signing a 25-year agreement to build a naval base in Port Sudan, part of Moscow's latest push into Africa as it seeks to renew its geopolitical clout.

The purpose of the base will be to "uphold peace and stability in the region," according to the deal.

Russia's Navy will be allowed to keep up to four ships at a time at the base including nuclear-powered vessels. The base will be manned by up to 300 military and civilian personnel.

Russia will have the right to transport via Sudan's airports and ports "weapons, ammunition and equipment" needed for the naval base to function.

The Red Sea naval base will be Russia's first in Africa and only its second on foreign soil, after Tartous in Syria.

The U.S. has its only permanent base in Africa in the port of Djibouti, 1,000 kilometers (625 miles) to the south, which overlooks the narrow strait between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden — a chokepoint for world shipping.

After Bashir was toppled, Sudan is led by an civilian-majority administration which has been seeking reintegration in the international community and to ending decades of pariah status.

In December, Washington removed Khartoum from its blacklist as part of a deal for Sudan to agree to normalize ties with Israel.

The move is hoped to help fix Sudan's beleaguered economy suffering from decades of U.S. sanctions, mismanagement and civil war, as well as by the secession of oil-rich South Sudan in 2011.

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