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Sudan Suspends Planned Russian Naval Base – Reports

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A former Russian Navy admiral said he believes Sudan suspended its agreement with Russia "under pressure from the U.S." but Moscow denied the reports. **Kremlin.ru**

Sudan has suspended plans for Russia to open a naval logistics base in a key Red Sea port, Middle Eastern media reported Wednesday in news that sparked immediate denials from Moscow.

Russia in December announced the signing of a 25-year deal to build the logistics hub for nuclear-powered warships and up to 300 military and civilian personnel in Port Sudan. It would be Russia's first naval base in Africa and its second on foreign territory after Syria's Tartous.

Related article: Russia Signs Deal to Open Naval Base in Sudan

But according to the Dubai-based Al Arabiya broadcaster's Twitter account, Sudan has suspended the naval base agreement "signed by Moscow with the former regime." Interfax,

citing Bloomberg, added that Sudan has also stopped "any new Russian military deployment" in the Red Sea.

Sudan, suffering from civil war, the 2011 secession of oil-rich South Sudan and three decades of U.S. sanctions, has been under a transitional civilian-majority government since the April 2019 ouster of longtime president Omar Bashir. The United States removed it from its blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism in December after Sudan agreed to normalize ties with Israel.

A former Russian Navy admiral told Interfax that he believes that Sudan suspended its agreement with Russia "under pressure from the U.S."

Russia's Embassy in Khartoum denied the reports, saying on its Facebook page that it "has not received any official notifications from the Sudanese side."

"This agreement will enter into force only after both parties ratify it," it wrote early Thursday.

"Since this has not yet happened, all other statements are [wrong] and aim to damage traditionally friendly Russian-Sudanese relations."

A draft of the naval base deal published on the Russian government website in November said that Russia would be allowed to ferry weapons into Sudan without inspections. In exchange, Russia would provide Sudan free assistance in search-and-rescue operations and support in antisabotage.

Russia has pushed to regain its Soviet-era strategic influence in Africa in recent years, with investments and military assistance in exchange for mining rights in the mineral-rich continent.

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