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Sudan Lawmakers to Review Russian Navy Base Deal – FM

By AFP

July 12, 2021



Lev Fedoseyev / TASS

Sudan's Foreign Minister Mariam al-Mahdi said during a visit to Moscow on Monday that lawmakers in the African country would consider an agreement brokered by its ousted leader to establish a Russian naval base there.

Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with Sudan's former president Omar al-Bashir in 2017 on establishing a naval base in Port Sudan, on Sudan's Red Sea coast.

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But Bashir was overthrown in 2019, and Sudan has since moved closed to the United States.

No announcement was ever made by the Sudanese side but Russia said it had signed a 25-year agreement with Khartoum in December last year to build and operate the base.

Last month a top military official in Sudan said the country was reviewing the document after some clauses were found to be "somewhat harmful."

During a press conference with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Monday, Mahdi said the legislature will study the agreement.

"We now have a government that is accountable to a new legislative mechanism," she told reporters.

"The Sudanese legislature will discuss and consider this document," Mahdi added.

Sudan's legislature has however not yet been set up.

Since August 2019, Sudan been led by a transitional administration that has sought to end the country's international isolation.

The base deal was to allow Russia's navy to keep up to four ships at a time at the base, including nuclear-powered vessels as well as up to 300 military and civilian personnel.

Lawmakers will ultimately evaluate whether the agreement is a "benefit to Sudan itself and the strategic goals pursued by Russia and Sudan," Mahdi said.

For decades, the country was dependent militarily on Russia because of crippling sanctions imposed by Washington against the government of now ousted president Bashir.

But the United States removed Khartoum from its black list last year.

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