

Obama to appoint envoy to Sudan

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. President Barack Obama plans to appoint retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. J. Scott Gration as his special envoy to Sudan, administration officials said.

Obama's anticipated appointment of Gration, who grew up in Africa as the son of missionaries, would be one of the most delicate diplomatic missions of his presidency, three administration officials told The New York Times.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Tuesday vowed to hold Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir responsible for the expulsion of humanitarian aid groups servicing the Darfur region.

On March 4, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, charged Bashir with seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for a vicious campaign in Darfur that left more than 300,000 civilians dead and drove more than 2.7 million people from their homes.

"This is a horrendous situation that is going to cause untold misery and suffering for the people of Darfur, particularly those in the refugee camps," Clinton said. "The real question is what kind of pressure can be brought to bear on President Bashir and the government in Khartoum to understand that they will be held responsible for every single death that occurs in those camps."

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