

Sudan allows peacekeepers in Darfur

by UPI

KHARTOUM, Sudan - The African Union said Sudan has agreed to allow a joint U.N. and African Union peacekeeping force into the troubled Darfur region.

The announcement that Sudan will allow 20,000 peacekeepers into Darfur was hailed by some African Union officials as a breakthrough but others cautioned that the Sudanese government has agreed to peacekeepers before only to reverse the decision before they could be deployed, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

One of Sudan's conditions for the deployment is that the majority of the troops must be African, with non-African soldiers being used only as a last resort. That condition and others may prevent the force from reaching full strength, the Times said.

The conflict in the Darfur region between government-allied militias and rebel groups has resulted in the deaths of at least 200,000 people and driven 2.5 million from their homes.

At the United Nations, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said details on the agreement were needed, especially on whether non-African troops would be restricted.

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