

Bush to Meet Leader of Darfur Rebel Group

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The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—President Bush will meet with a leader of the Sudan Liberation Army, the main rebel group in the African nation's troubled western region of Darfur, the White House announced Monday.

The focus of the discussion Tuesday between Bush and Minni Minnawi "will be on how to broaden support for the Darfur Peace Agreement, facilitate its implementation and ensure the expeditious deployment of U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur," the announcement said.

Earlier this month, the Sudanese Liberation Army, the only rebel group that signed the peace agreement on May 5, nominated Minnawi to the post of senior assistant to Sudan's president. This would make him the head of what will be the Darfur Authority, the administration that will run Darfur as an autonomous part of Sudan once the terms of the peace accord have been implemented.

The agreement, which the U.S. helped negotiate, sought to put a stop to three years of fighting between several rebel groups and pro-government forces that have killed 200,000 people and displaced another 2 million.

The agreement is not popular in refugee camps in Darfur where many people have tribal links to the leader of a breakaway Sudanese Liberation Army faction and argue that the peace terms are inadequate.

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