

**Sudans Sign Agreement to Resume Oil Exports**  
**By Isma'il KusKush**  
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KHARTOUM, Sudan — Sudan and South Sudan, moving to reduce the hostilities that have severely weakened both of their economies, signed an agreement early Tuesday morning that could lead to the resumption of oil production in two weeks.

“Resumption of production shall take place as soon as technically feasible,” the agreement read. South Sudan became independent of Sudan in 2011, taking with it nearly three quarters of the oil wealth. The pipelines, refinery and port to export the oil, however, are in Sudan.

The two sides, longstanding enemies that fought one of Africa’s longest and costliest civil wars, have been at odds for decades, and South Sudan halted oil production in January 2012 in a dispute with Sudan over transportation fees. Both countries came close to full-out war in April 2012.

Both countries have suffered from the loss of oil revenues, with South Sudan depending on oil for 98 percent of its revenue.

“We assume that we will resume as soon as possible,” South Sudan’s petroleum and mining minister, Stephen Dhieu Dau, told reporters in Juba, adding that it would take roughly three weeks to resume production, Reuters reported.

The agreement, signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the supervision of the African Union, sets a timetable and the mechanisms to enact a cooperation agreement signed by both countries last September.

In addition to oil production, other matters addressed in the cooperation agreement are to be immediately carried out in the next two to three weeks, including security arrangements, the demarcation of borders, the status of people living across borders, trade, economics and pensions.

“March 10th is the D-Day to implement the agreement,” Sudan’s chief negotiator, Idris Abdel-Gadir, told reporters in Khartoum.

Before Tuesday’s agreement, the defense ministers of both sides agreed to begin the establishment of a demilitarized zone along the border as part of the agreed-upon security arrangements.

The Sudanese defense minister, Abdel-Rahim Hussein, confirmed on Sunday that Sudanese troops had begun withdrawing from the border zone. A day later, South Sudan’s military spokesman, Philip Aguer, said orders had been given to South Sudanese troops to withdraw from the border area.

In a statement, the United States State Department said, “The United States welcomes the technical agreement signed between Sudan and South Sudan establishing a safe demilitarized border zone (SDBZ), a firm timeline for the withdrawal of forces, and a way ahead for the deployment of a joint border monitoring force.”

At the United Nations Security Council, which discussed the Sudan-South Sudan tensions on Tuesday, Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador, told reporters that while council members had welcomed the agreements, she was also cautious, given the troubled history.

“There have been many agreements signed but too few actually implemented,” she said. The importance of agreements, she said, was that “they are not just signed and touted but in fact implemented in real terms promptly on the ground.”

No final agreement on the disputed district of Abyei was made, but a timeline to establish an administration, council and security council in the district were set up.

Both sides are scheduled to meet again on Sunday in Addis Ababa.