

Unity state education ministry adopts new South Sudan syllabus

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August 10, 2012 (BENTIU) - Unity State's general education ministry announced Thursday the introduction of a new curriculum for both primary and secondary schools, replacing the Sudanese syllabus followed before independence last year.

For the first year of South Sudan's independence the country continued to use the Sudanese but has developed its own curriculum over the last year.

Unity State is the last state to change from the Sudanese syllabus to the new South Sudan syllabus.

William Ghar Bol, the deputy director of general education in Unity State, told *Sudan Tribune* on Thursday it is very important to adopt the new syllabus.

"This year the ministry of education came up with idea of changing the syllabus from old syllabus to the new syllabus, we begin the new syllabus" for school years 1-7. Students in the final year of secondary education, year 8, will be take the Sudanese exams this year as they had already started studying that syllabus. The South Sudanese curriculum will be introduced next year.

Authorities in Unity State confirm that teachers have already taught school children in various counties with the new syllabus at Primary and Secondary, which includes history of the Sudanese civil war which led to South Sudan's independence. The language of instruction changes from Arabic to English.

The deputy director said "it is very important" for children in South Sudan to know the history of the young nation.

Bol said they will allow Students to continue to study in Arabic using the Sudanese syllabus until South Sudan comes up with its own alternative to stop the use of Arabic in schools.

Many South Sudanese speak Arabic better than English.

Schools years in Unity State used to open on 1 April along with the Sudanese system but schools years will now begin in February in South Sudan.

In Unity State's authorities have banned the use of Arabic in public offices despite a majority of state ministers speaking Arabic fluently and having lower levels of English.

South Sudan's transitional constitution, adopted at independence on 9 July 2011, states that English is the official language that could be used in government offices, ministries and embassies.

Yesterday the general secretary of Unity State announced on state run radio FM 99 that using Arabic would be stopped in all official settings. This has created a reaction among some citizens who believe the government has made the decision to quickly and will endanger Arabic speaking officials.

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