

Qatar says seeking to bring Darfur rebel groups to join peace deal

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November 12, 2012 (KHARTOUM) – A Qatari official said on Monday that his country is holding contacts with armed groups from Sudan’s western region of Darfur to persuade them to join the government in a peace deal the Arab Gulf country brokered last year.

Qatar’s state minister of cabinet affairs, Ahmad Bin Abdulla Al Mahmud, revealed, while addressing the fourth meeting of the monitoring committee of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) in Doha, that Qatar has been engaged in new contacts with Darfur rebel groups to bring them to join the DDPD which was signed between the government and former rebel group the Justice and Liberation Movement (LJM) in July last year.

Al Mahmud did not specify which groups they are trying to bring on board but the main three groups that boycotted the DDPD are the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement-Manni Minnawi (SLM-MM), and the Sudan Liberation Movement-Abdel Wahid Nur (SLM-AW)

The Qatari official acknowledged that the implementation of the DDPD is facing obstacles and challenges that require time to overcome them. He warned that any delay or substantial failure in implementing the deal will lead to negative consequences for Darfur, Sudan and the entire region.

Al Mahmud added that one of the biggest pitfalls that are attending the process of implementing the DDPD is persuading the hesitant groups to join the peace deal and refrain from attempting to sabotage it. “We are facing a two-fold challenge to keep the signatories committed to the agreement and to deal with the hesitant groups to join the peace process”.

The minister pointed out that extensive talks were held in Doha last month between government representatives and JEM in an attempt to widen the scope of peace. He said that the two sides agreed to cease hostilities and return to negotiations.

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