

South Sudan's Machar calls on religious institutions to promote education

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February 11, 2013 (JUBA) - South Sudan's vice-president, Riek Machar, has called on the religious institutions in the 19-month-old country to promote education in their respective organisations.

He also reiterated his government's policy on freedom of religion which is enshrined in the nation's transitional constitution, adding that there is no state religion in the new state.

Machar made the remarks on Monday while witnessing the graduation ceremony of teachers who graduated from the schools under the administration of the South Sudan Islamic Council in Juba, where he was invited as their guest of honour.

He also called for harmonisation of the education curriculum in which subjects on both Christian and Islamic religions should feature in the official general education system, adding that citizens should be able to access different religious educational institutions irrespective of their religious background.

He said the Muslim community in South Sudan should also play a role in cementing relations between South Sudan and countries in the Arab world and informed the gathering that the new country had already initiated diplomatic relations with many of them.

The training of teachers of the Islamic council in Juba was sponsored by the International African Foundation for Education (IAFE), an Islamic-founded organisation which is based in the Sudanese capital Khartoum.

The organisation began providing services in 1983 in Khartoum and has about 84 educational institutions in Sudan and other parts of the world.

The graduation ceremony was also attended by the former caretaker president of Sudan, Suwar El-Dahab, who chairs the IAFE organisation in Sudan and also led a delegation of Muslim leaders to Juba to witness the event.

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