

# Sudan Will Be Next to Normalize Relations with Israel

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**Sudan will soon be taken off the American list of state sponsors of terrorism. It has first to agree to pay \$335 million dollars to the families of victims of Sudan-sponsored terrorism. And the next step, which is not being made explicit but that everyone understands is coming, will be for Sudan to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. The full report is [here](#).**

*President Donald Trump announced on Monday [October 19] the United States would remove Sudan from its list of state*

*sponsors of terrorism as soon as Khartoum sets aside \$335 million for payments for American victims and their families.*

*The deal could also set in motion steps by Sudan toward establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, an American official told Reuters, following similar US-brokered moves in recent weeks by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The details and timing were still being worked out, the source said.*

*Though Trump made no mention of Israel in his tweet announcing the breakthrough with Sudan, rapprochement between Israel and another Arab country would give Trump a new diplomatic achievement as he seeks re-election on Nov. 3.*

*Sudan's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism dates to its toppled ruler Omar al-Bashir and makes it difficult for its transitional government to access urgently-needed debt relief and foreign financing.*

*Many in Sudan say the designation, imposed in 1993 because the United States believed Bashir's government was supporting militant groups, is now undeserved since Bashir was removed last year and Sudan has long cooperated with the United States on counter-terrorism.*

This is correct. Omar al-Bashir, the dictator of the Sudan who was removed from office in 2019, was for many years a supporter of Hamas, for which Sudan was both a base and a refuge. He also supported Al Qaeda, and even invited Osama bin Laden to stay in Sudan; Bin Laden bought a house on El Meshtal Street in Khartoum and lived there for four years. But ever since Al-Bashir was deposed in a palace coup in April 2019, the military men who now run Sudan have stopped support for Islamic terrorists. The Trump Administration is not bending its rules to now accommodate Sudan in order to have it establish relations with Israel; it is recognizing that the country has earned the right to be removed from the list of

state sponsors of terrorism.

*“S-Sudanese negotiations have focused on funds that Washington wants Khartoum to deposit in escrow for victims of al-Qaeda attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, U.S. government sources said.*

*“GREAT news! New government of Sudan, which is making great progress, agreed to pay \$335 MILLION to U.S. terror victims and families,” Trump tweeted. “Once deposited, I will lift Sudan from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. At long last, JUSTICE for the American people and BIG step for Sudan!”*

*A Sudanese government source said Khartoum was ready to pay compensation to US embassy bombing victims...*

*A key sticking point in the negotiations was Sudan’s insistence that any announcement of Khartoum’s de-listing not be explicitly linked to normalization with Israel. Differences remain between Sudanese political and military officials on how far and how fast to go in warming of relations with Israel...*

The \$335 million that the Sudanese government is now prepared to pay the American victims of Sudan-sponsored terrorists (responsible for the embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998) will wipe that financial slate clean. Following the first step – Sudan’s putting into escrow that \$335 million – the second step will be the de-listing, by President Trump, of Sudan as a state sponsor of terror. The third step is for Congress to then restore Sudan’s sovereign immunity, which means that Sudan can no longer be sued in terrorism-related claims for past attacks. In the end, Sudan will come out way ahead financially. For once it is de-listed as a state sponsor of terrorism, it will be eligible for IMF and other loans, and for American and other Western aid, which is likely to be generous, in order to ensure that the current Western-leaning

regime in Khartoum remains stable. Furthermore, the de-listing of Sudan from the state sponsors of terrorism will make it a much more attractive prospect for Western investment, both public and private.

In this diplomatic dance, given that Khartoum has asked Washington not to explicitly link to its de-listing, will be the Sudan's establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. A country that once hosted Osama bin Laden for four years will now be welcoming an Israeli ambassador. That will be one more astonishing achievement for the Trump Administration's Middle Eastern diplomacy.

And like Washington, Israel has a stake in having the new Sudanese government succeed. The Israelis will no doubt be eager to share their agricultural know-how with Sudanese farmers, including the latest advances in drip irrigation, desalinization, and Israel's astonishing advances in waste water management. Sudan is water-poor, and this is exactly where it most needs help for its agricultural base. Israel is also a world leader in solar energy, which could benefit Sudanese farmers; it is energy that can be produced and consumed in the same area, without the need of distant transmission through pipelines. And Sudanese oil that is now being used domestically could be replaced by solar energy, allowing the country's oil to be sold abroad in its entirety, to obtain much-needed hard currency.

Sudan will find out soon enough just how much it can benefit from its economic ties with Israel. And that will encourage other Arab states to go and do likewise. Given all the mutually beneficial economic deals now being announced between Israel and the UAE, Israel and Bahrain, given that something of the sort may soon come to pass between Israel and Sudan, what Arab country will be next to hop on the juggernaut before it passes by?

First published in