



global witness

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UN summit on Sudan must kick-start oil sharing negotiations to prevent conflict

At tomorrow's UN summit on Sudan, President Obama and other world leaders must address the disputes over oil that threaten to trigger a civil war in Africa's biggest country, campaign group Global Witness said today. [1]

In a referendum on independence set for January, South Sudan is almost certain to vote to become the world's newest state. Without intensive diplomatic efforts, this outcome could set the stage for a new war over Sudan's valuable oil reserves, three quarters of which are in the south. In the 22 year civil war between north and south Sudan which lasted until 2005, two million people died.

"Brokering a new oil sharing agreement between north and south now is key to preventing Sudan from going back to war," said Dana Wilkins, campaigner at Global Witness. "The heads of state at tomorrow's meeting must seize the opportunity to begin working with both sides to get an equitable and transparent deal in place."

There has been much mistrust between the north and south over the current oil wealth sharing agreement, which was crucial to ending Sudan's civil war in 2005. Global Witness has published evidence of major discrepancies between the volumes of oil that the Sudanese government claim is produced and the production volumes declared by the main oil company operating in Sudan, the Chinese CNPC. [2]

Such discrepancies fuel suspicions that the north is under-declaring the amount of oil produced and therefore sharing less of the oil money with the south than they are due.

"Transparency over oil revenues will be critical to keeping the peace. The new oil agreement will need an independent verification mechanism built into it if it is to stand any chance of lasting. Ban Ki-moon, President Obama and others present at the UN summit must make this an international priority," said Wilkins.

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Notes:

[1] The meeting will take place on 24 September, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting.

[2] See [Fuelling Mistrust: the need for transparency in Sudan's oil industry](http://www.globalwitness.org/fuellingmistrust), September 2009 at www.globalwitness.org/fuellingmistrust.