

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

676-20-04-2006

In execution of Presidential Decree No. 80 of February 7, 2006, on Sending a Russian Armed Forces Military Contingent to Participate in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in the Republic of Sudan, beginning on April 20, a Russian Defense Ministry advance team is setting off for the Sudan to prepare the deployment of a Russian air group within the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), which is planned to be completed during May this year.

The UN peacekeeping operation in the Sudan is being carried out in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1590 of March 24, 2005.

At the UN Secretary General's request, four transport-and-combat helicopters with complement, organic weapons, ammunition, military equipment and other necessary means will be stationed in the Sudan.

The Russian air group will operate as part of the UN peacekeeping force and will perform helicopter support of the rapid response force, round-the-clock medico-evacuation activities, aerial surveillance, search and rescue operations, and the delivery of UN equipment and personnel to their places of deployment and points of basing.

Apart from the air group, UNMIS currently has 34 Russian peacekeeping officers (military observers and civilian police officers).

Russia's practical involvement in the UN peacekeeping operation in the Sudan is directed at effectively supporting the implementation of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This will have favorable impact on stabilization in that country and the

maintenance of peace and security in the region as a whole, Moscow believes.

April 20, 2006