Sudan's Bashir to visit Russia Thursday: Kremlin

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By AFP

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Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by The International Criminal Court for genocide and war crimes related to the Darfur conflict, will visit Russia on Thursday, the Kremlin said.

The visit will be the long-time Sudanese leader's first official trip to Moscow.

"We can confirm that (a meeting will take place) on Thursday," news agencies quoted Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov as saying.

He did not say whether the Sudanese leader would be meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin or another senior official.

Bashir has denied charges against him and continues to travel to various countries with impunity, despite being wanted by the Hague-based court.

Sudan's deadly conflict in Darfur broke out in 2003 when ethnic minority groups took up arms against Bashir's Arab-dominated government, which launched a brutal counter-insurgency.

The UN says at least 300,000 people have been killed and more than 2.5 million displaced as a result of the conflict.

Top Sudanese officials including Bashir now claim that the conflict has ended, but the region continues to see regular fighting between myriad ethnic and tribal groups.