

News / Stories

- [Ticker](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Stories](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [Press-Releases](#)

Chad expels oil firms Chevron and Petronas

26/08/2006 15h55



Tourists stand in front of the famous Petronas Twin Towers

©AFP/File - Teh Eng Koon

N'DJAMENA (AFP) - Chad's President Idriss Deby Itno ordered the foreign oil firms ChevronTexaco and Petronas to leave the country from Sunday for non-payment of taxes.

"From tomorrow, representatives of Chevron and Petronas must leave Chad and close their offices for not respecting their commitment in accordance with clauses relating to the payment of taxes on the companies," Deby said Saturday.

The major US company ChevronTexaco and Petronas of Malaysia are two of three members of a consortium extracting the central African country's oil resources.

Their departure would leave the US oil giant ExxonMobil and the Chadian government to tap the resources together "while waiting to find a solution with the two other partners", Deby said in a speech to government and political leaders.

In a bid to increase Chad's own share of its oil revenue, Deby on Wednesday told his government to renegotiate the contract it signed in 1988 with the US-Malaysian consortium.

A source in the oil ministry said the state would use the Chad Hydrocarbons Company to try to enter the consortium.

On Saturday Deby said three ministers involved in the deal would cease work and go before judicial authorities "to answer for their acts". He did not name the ministers and no further details were available.

Oil has been flowing since 2003 in the Doba basin in southern Chad. In 2004 Chad, which produces less than 200,000 barrels of oil a day, saw its gross domestic product leap 40 percent after oil production began.

- Next: [Man Utd swat Hornets and set the Premiership pace](#)
- Previous: [Banca Intesa, Sanpaolo IMI approve tie-up](#)
- [Back to Contents](#)

[Top](#)

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-
- [Home](#)
- [Products](#)
 -
 - [Online](#)
 - [Image](#)
 - [Text](#)
 - [Video](#)
- [AFP](#)
 -
 - [In Brief](#)
 - [History](#)
 - [What's New](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Press Releases](#)
 - [AFP Worldwide](#)
 - [Subsidiaries](#)
- [Languages](#)
 -
 - [Arabic](#)
 - [French](#)
 - [German](#)
 - [Portuguese](#)
 - [Spanish](#)
 - [Russian](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Site Map](#)

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