

Coalition for the International Criminal Court-Turkey

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Turkey should not permit Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to participate in the meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Turkey, but hand him over to the International Criminal Court if he should enter Turkey!

Through the media we have learned that Sudanese President Omer Hassan al-Bashir, against whom the International Criminal Court (the Court) has issued an arrest warrant, is planning to participate in the meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Istanbul on 9 November 2009.

The arrest warrant lists several counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly perpetrated by Sudanese President Omer Hassan al-Bashir. Bashir, against whom the Court issued an arrest warrant on 4 March 2009, has repeatedly declared that he will not comply with the Court's decision and thus has been on the run from international justice since March 2009.

Until today 110 countries have ratified the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, and the latest country ratifying the Rome Statute in July 2009 was the Czech Republic. Turkey has not yet ratified the Rome Statute. However, according to Article 13 of the Turkish Criminal Code, Turkey has accepted universal jurisdiction for certain crimes, such as crimes against humanity or genocide. Consequently, it is possible to put Bashir on trial for the alleged crimes in Turkey.

After the issuance of the arrest warrant Bashir has visited seven countries, namely Eritrea, Egypt, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe, none of which are State Parties to the Court. Although, the African Union rejects the Court's decision and has tried to influence all states to not comply with it, Botswana and South Africa as well as non-African nations such as Brazil have so far declared that they would arrest Bashir in case he should enter any of their territories.

It is unacceptable that a Prime Minister who said in Davos that applauding those who killed children in the Gaza Strip is a crime against humanity, and government officials who speak of international justice at the United Nations and other international forums, should host a person who is avoiding facing international justice for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

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Members of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court Turkey (CICC Turkey)

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