

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

25 February 2014

**Democratic Republic of Congo Must Arrest Al-Bashir***Congolese authorities have obligation to arrest Sudanese president wanted by ICC*

**New York/The Hague**—The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) should abide by its obligations as a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and arrest Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir while he is in the country, the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Al-Bashir, who is wanted by the ICC for charges including crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, is reportedly attending the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) summit from 26-27 February in the DRC. As a state party to the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC, Congolese authorities are obligated to arrest Al-Bashir.

“It is unacceptable that the DRC—a party to the Rome Statute—allows Omar Al-Bashir to visit its territory,” **said William Pace, convenor of the Coalition for the ICC.** “The millions of victims of the conflict in Darfur, as well as the more than 5 million victims in the DRC who have suffered similar atrocities, deserve justice and accountability.”

Al-Bashir has been wanted by the Court since 2009 for war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the conflict in Sudan’s Darfur region. In 2010, ICC judges issued a second arrest warrant for the charge of genocide.

The ICC investigation in Darfur began in June 2005 after being referred to the Court by the United Nations Security Council, which had determined the conflict there a threat to international peace and security. However, the Council has subsequently failed to ensure the cooperation necessary for ICC prosecutions to take place, and Al-Bashir has been allowed to make numerous trips outside of Sudan, including several visits to ICC member states.

“Each time a state has failed to arrest Al-Bashir it has shown great disrespect not only for the rule of law, but also for the victims of the conflict in Darfur,” said Pace. “Kinshasa must now choose whether it will stand with those victims or allow justice to once again go undone.”

---

**BACKGROUND:** The ICC is the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: [www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)

**CONTACTS****In Cotonou, Benin:**

Mr. Francis Dako  
Africa Coordinator  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: +229 21 32 28 06  
[dako@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:dako@coalitionfortheicc.org)

**In New York:**

Dan Verderosa  
Communications Officer  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: + 1 646 465 8524  
[verderosa@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:verderosa@coalitionfortheicc.org)

**In The Hague:**

Niall Matthews  
Head of Communications  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: +31 (0) 70-3111085  
[matthews@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:matthews@coalitionfortheicc.org)