



NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE

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ICC/DARFUR: THERE CANNOT BE LASTING PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE IN SUDAN

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In a historic move, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced earlier today its decision to issue a warrant for the arrest and prosecution of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur during the last five years. The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber has thus determined that there are reasonable grounds to believe that President Al-Bashir committed the crimes alleged in the request for an arrest warrant submitted by the ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo on 24 July 2008. This is the first request for indictment against a sitting head of state issued by the ICC.

Statement by Sergio Stanzani, President of No Peace Without Justice:

No Peace Without Justice welcomes the decision of the ICC Pre-Trial chamber to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, as an important response to the cries for justice from the people of Darfur, through the broad range of charges that include murder, forcible transfer of a civilian population, persecution and rape.

With this indictment, President Al Bashir joins Slobodan Milosevic and Charles Taylor in being called to account for their actions in The Hague, before the ICTY and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Their indictment and arrest paved the way to lasting peace in the former Yugoslavia and in Sierra Leone and Liberia: similarly the indictment, arrest and trial of President Al Bashir will prove to be an important component of reaching lasting peace in Sudan.

The history of Sudan shows how fragile peace accords can be when those responsible for systematic atrocities against the civil population remain in positions of power. The crimes against humanity in Sudan are a product of the decision to reward violence by not including justice as a component of 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that was supposed to bring peace to Sudan. Today there is no going back: there will be justice in Sudan for those who bear the greatest responsibility for violations against the civilian population and with that justice, there will be the hope of lasting peace.

With this decision, and with its ongoing work, the ICC is fast cementing its place in history as an integral component of the international community's fight against impunity. It also stands as a testament to the determination to provide justice for the victims that is shared by and with Africa, as Desmond Tutu so eloquently stated yesterday, in which he encouraged African leaders to demonstrate this commitment by standing with the victims and on the side of justice.

Before President Omar al-Bashir indictment today, the ICC had already indicted Ahmed Haroun, whom President Al-Bashir then promoted to State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs as an insult to the international community, and Janjaweed commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. The ICC Prosecutor is also seeking indictments against three rebel commanders for war crimes against African Union peacekeepers.

We call on the international community, and in particular the European Union and all States Parties to the ICC, to be firm in their support for the ICC and their commitment to ending impunity, and to cooperate fully with the ICC in order to ensure that those who allegedly bear the greatest responsibility for the instigation and planning of



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policies and campaigns involving large-scale violations of international criminal law in Darfur are held accountable and the cries for justice from the people of Darfur are answered. We are heartened by the firm indications from the United Nations Security Council that there will be no deferral for these proceedings, which demonstrates the commitment of the international community to let justice take its course for lasting peace in Darfur.

The people of Darfur and of Sudan deserve a chance to lasting peace, which in turn requires impartial and effective justice: today's decision demonstrates that the ICC is able to respond to the plight of the victims even against the most powerful. The international community must support the ICC and ensure that those responsible for their suffering are brought to account.

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