



HRCC, CHRR, CEDEP, NGO GCN CALL FOR THE ARREST OF PRESIDENT OMAR AI-BASHIR

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For immediate release

The Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), The Centre for Development of People (CEDEP) Non Governmental Organization, Gender Coordination Network (NGO GCN) strongly echo the voices of concern in calling upon the Malawi Government to immediately facilitate the arrest of Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir and hand him over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer alleged cases of crimes against humanity against his people in Darfur. The ICC has since 2009 issued two arrest warrants to President Al- Bashir for crime he has allegedly perpetrated against his fellow Sudanese citizens people.

President Al-Bashir has been charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Therefore playing host to President Al-Bashir in Malawi without executing these warrants is not only a failure on Malawi Government to uphold its obligations as a party to the Rome Statutes but it is also putting unnecessary and undue strain on the already bruised human rights record for this country.

Allowing President Al-Bashir to enter and let alone be accorded the VIP treatment during his stay in Malawi is not only a mockery to the victims of his (Al Bashir) alleged grave crimes but also contradicts Malawi's commitments for justice as enshrined the Rome Statutes which we are party to.

The government of Malawi should know that by being party to the Rome Statute, it has an obligation to fully respect, cooperate and uphold the ICC determinations including facilitation or execution of arrest warrants.

It is in this respect that we have learnt with great shock to hear from the minister of Information Hon Patricia Kaliati speaking on BCC that the Malawi government has no mandate to arrest Al Bashir. This is a lame excuse that is only aimed at misleading people and also shielding President Al Bashir. As indicated earlier on Malawi government has the mandate to facilitate the execution of arrest warrants.

In our considered view we at HRCC, CHRR, CEDEP, NGO GCN, Malawi cannot afford to further isolate itself with the international community. While we are still grappling with mending our international image in as far as human rights is concern, it is does not help for Malawi to be associating itself with an ‘international fugitive¹’ for the same reasons of disregard to human rights and good governance.

We are calling upon the Malawi government to emulate other African countries which have not only come up to strongly condemn President Al Bashir but also to sternly warn him that he will be arrested upon entering their respective territories. The government of South Africa has publicly indicated that Al-Bashir will be arrested if he enters their territory.

Above all Forums like the African Union (AU) Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) must not at all cost be used to shield leaders with heinous crimes against humanity but must strive to uphold human rights good governance for all its member states. In fact rule of law and respect for human rights must be amongst the prime prerequisites for a country to be a member of these organizations.

Once again we at HRCC, CHRR CEDEP and NGO GCN are therefore calling upon the Government of Malawi to assist the ICC in arresting President Omar Al-Bashir and hand him over for him to stand trial on alleged crime against humanity.

Signed

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¹ Human Rights Watch Statement 13 October, 2011

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