

Norway supports the International Criminal Court



Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre says Norway supports the work of the International Criminal Court at The Hague (ICC), and urges the Sudanese authorities to cooperate with the ICC, after the court issued an arrest warrant for Sudan's President.

The arrest warrant is based on five counts of crime against humanity and two counts of war crimes in Darfur.

- The arrest warrant for Sudan's president Omer Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir is based on serious charges against a country's head of state and it is the first time the ICC has issued an arrest warrant for a head of state, says Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

- Norway supports the work of the International Criminal Court at The Hague, and was one of the countries behind the establishment of such an independent international court. It is important that we do not accept impunity for atrocities against the civilian population in war zones of this kind, says Mr. Støre.

- I will urge the Sudanese authorities to cooperate with the Court, stop all fighting in Darfur and actively seek a lasting political solution to this conflict. At the same time I will ask the rebel groups to agree to a ceasefire with the Government, cease all violence, and participate in the peace negotiations under the auspices of the UN and the AU, says the Norwegian Foreign Minister.

The Foreign Minister underscores that it is important to ensure that any controversy surrounding the arrest warrant does not cause the violence in Darfur to escalate or put new obstacles in the way of the humanitarian efforts in Darfur and the UN peacekeeping operations in Sudan.

- Norway will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the war-affected population of Darfur and to support the reconstruction efforts in previous war zones, such as in Southern Sudan. Norway is also actively supporting the efforts by the UN and the AU to find a political solution to the conflict in Darfur, led by chief mediator Djibril Bassolé, the minister stresses.

Mr Støre also emphasises the need to continue the implementation of the 2005 peace agreement between North and South.

- Norway will continue its strong commitment to promoting peace and reconstruction in Sudan, says the Foreign Minister, citing as examples the two international donor conferences for Sudan that were held in Norway in 2005 and 2008.

(NRK/Press release)

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