



Press Release

President Al-Bashir sought by the ICC Prosecutor for charges of genocide

Sudan / ICC

Paris, London, The Hague – 14 July 2008 - The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation the Sudan Organisation against Torture (SOAT) welcome today's announcement by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on the request for an arrest warrant against Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, President of the Sudan, for charges of genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

“This is the first time judicial evidence is presented to prove that the crime of genocide has been perpetrated in Darfur. The Prosecutor's filing confirms that the highest authority of the government has been personally involved in planning the mass campaign of violence against the population of Darfur. We believe that disclosing this evidence and indicting Al-Bashir could contribute to stability in the region ”, said Souhayr Belhassen, President of FIDH.

“Concealing his crimes under the guise of a ‘counterinsurgency strategy’, or ‘inter tribal clashes’, or the ‘actions of lawless autonomous militia’, Al-Bashir made possible the commission of further crimes. He promoted and provided impunity to his subordinates in order to secure their willingness to commit genocide”, the Prosecutor said.

FIDH and SOAT call upon the Security Council, the African Union and the League of Arab States to support the actions carried out by the Prosecutor and the ICC.

“States must protect the civilian population in Darfur and the joint military force deployed in this territory. They must also intensify their efforts to work towards a legal and political solution”, added Souhayr Belhassen.

According to the treaty founding the ICC, there is no immunity from prosecution for crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes: those who have committed the most serious crimes cannot escape international justice regardless of their official capacity.

[The ICC has already issued arrest warrants](#) for Ahmad Harun, Sudanese Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, and Ali Kushayb, a Janjaweed militia leader. Both men are still at large and have been protected by the Government of Sudan and by President Al-Bashir himself. Mr. Ocampo had indicated in previous speeches that protecting the indicted, in particular Ahmad Harun, demonstrated that other members of the Sudanese government were involved in the commission of the massive atrocities committed in Darfur.

The decision now lies with the judges, who will consider the evidence and decide whether an arrest warrant should be issued against Al-Bashir.

Press Contact : +31 – 6 33 89 32 09