

BBC News 3 July 2009 The African Union says it will halt co-operation with the International Criminal Court over its decision to charge Sudan's leader with war crimes.

President Omar al-Bashir was indicted over alleged atrocities in the Darfur region in March.

But delegates to an AU meeting in Libya agreed a resolution saying they would not co-operate in his arrest.

Analysts say the move means the Sudanese leader can travel across the continent without fear of arrest. (...)

The ICC has accused President Bashir of two counts of war crimes - intentionally directing attacks on civilians and pillage - as well as five counts of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and torture, related to the conflict.

He denies the allegations, saying the state has a responsibility to fight rebels.

In a statement, the AU pointed out that its request to the ICC to defer Mr Bashir's indictment had been ignored.

It went on: "The AU member states shall not co-operate... relating to immunities for the arrest and surrender of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to the ICC."

The statement was backed by many African leaders who, analysts say, see the ICC as an attempt by the West to interfere in their affairs.

(...) But, says BBC Africa analyst Martin Plaut, despite the Sudanese satisfaction a number of countries, including Chad and Benin, are reported to have expressed disquiet about the text.

(...) It does not ask the 30 African states that have signed up to the ICC to end their relationship with it.

Indeed, on the day this resolution was being passed, Kenya agreed explicitly to continue co-operating with the ICC, to prosecute those suspected of taking part in the violence that

followed the December 2007 election.(...)

Source:

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