

Omar Al Bashir at the UN General Assembly: U.S. must arrest him if he sets foot on U.S. territory International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) 23 September 2013

The Sudanese President, subject to arrest warrants for genocide and crimes against humanity, must be transferred to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. FIDH, its member organization in Sudan, the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and in the United States, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), call on the United States to arrest Omar Al Bashir should he set foot on U.S. territory to attend the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that starts tomorrow.

Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir is subject to two arrest warrants for genocide and crimes against humanity in Darfur by the International Criminal Court (ICC), issued in 2009 and 2010, respectively. He has reportedly applied for a visa to attend the General Debate of the 68th session of the UNGA in New York, scheduled to take place from 24 September to 2 October.

The ICC has called on the competent US authorities to arrest Al Bashir and surrender him to the Court, in the event he enters their territory.

Our organizations call on the US and any States whose territory Al Bashir would come through to arrest and transfer him to the Hague in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1593 which “urges all States and concerned regional and international organizations to cooperate fully” with the ICC.

“We are deeply concerned by Al Bashir’s potential participation in the UNGA. His participation would be the ultimate affront to the millions of victims for whom he constantly denies justice. His place is at the International Criminal Court,” said Karim Lahidji, President of FIDH.

In Darfur, violence and armed conflict, including attacks by Government forces on civilians, continue to result in the loss of civilian lives and mass displacement. A surge in violence forced more than 300,000 people to flee their homes in Darfur in the first five months of 2013 alone.

“10 years on from the start of the conflict in Darfur, States must end the climate of impunity that perpetuates serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Sudan” , said Osman Hummida, Executive Director of ACJPS.

“The U.S. can help prevent further atrocities by acting now to assist the ICC in executing the warrant for Al Bashir, and in the process help strengthen international law and an institution critical to the pursuit of global justice,” said Vincent Warren, CCR Executive Director.

According to the UN Headquarters Agreement, the U.S. government is called upon to facilitate the attendance of States at the UN. Although the U.S. is not a State party to the ICC, the undersigned groups call on the U.S. to implement UNSC Resolution 1593 if and when President Al-Bashir is present on its territory. This would not be the first time the US contributed with the ICC, in particular when it transferred the Congolese accused Bosco Ntaganda to the Court.

“Participation in the UN session is no excuse for the U.S. to shirk its obligations to prosecute or extradite those accused of torture under the Convention against Torture. The U.S. should

transfer Al-Bashir to the ICC or prosecute him under U.S. criminal laws,” said Pamela Merchant, Executive Director of CJA.

FIDH, ACJPS, CJA and CCR also call on UN members to refrain from any contact with President Al-Bashir and to cooperate fully with the ICC.

In recent years, some States have avoided visits from and direct contact with Al Bashir. African human rights NGOs have also called for Al Bashir’s presence to be denied at official national and regional events. The Nigerian Coalition for the ICC filed a lawsuit in Nigeria against his presence at the African Union Conference, which contributed to Al Bashir’s departure from the event.

“The time has come to hold Al Bashir accountable for the most horrendous crimes committed in Darfur and for victims to receive justice and reparation,” added Karim Lahidji. [Read the full article.](#)