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Sudan: Chad must arrest ICC-indicted President al-Bashir

The government of Chad must arrest and surrender the President of Sudan, President Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court (ICC) when he visits Chad on Monday, says Amnesty International.

If the Chadian government fails to arrest President al-Bashir, the UN Security Council needs to step in and insist that Chad complies with its international legal obligations.

The trip by Sudan's President al-Bashir will coincide with the 10th anniversary of the start of the Darfur conflict.

As a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Chad has a legal obligation to cooperate fully with the arrest of all ICC suspects and to ensure their surrender to the ICC.

"If he is not apprehended, President al-Bashir's planned fourth visit to Chad will be a further slap in the face to all victims of serious human rights violations in Darfur," said Amnesty International's Africa Programme Director, Netsanet Belay.

"Such regular and open invitations to a fugitive from international justice should not be ignored any further."

Despite two arrest warrants issued in March 2009 and July 2010 for acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, President al-Bashir visited Chad in July 2010, August 2011 and February 2013.

Such visits go against the obligation of every state to deny a safe haven to anyone, regardless of status, if they are suspected of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Although some recent African Union decisions have urged member states not to cooperate with President al-Bashir's arrest, such political decisions do not trump African Union member states' obligations under international law, including the Rome Statute and Security Council Resolution 1593.

Indeed a number of African states, including Botswana, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Niger, South Africa and Zambia have confirmed that they will cooperate fully with the arrest and surrender of those charged by the ICC.

On the 10th anniversary of the conflict in Darfur, the human rights situation remains dire. Civilians continue to face attacks from government forces, pro-government militias and armed opposition groups.

Security services have been repeatedly accused of using torture and excessive force against protesters and dissenters.

"For the last 10 years, the people of Darfur have endured killings, kidnappings, sexual violence and looting. And while many incidents are reported to the police, perpetrators are rarely convicted," adds

Belay

"For the human rights situation in Darfur to improve, impunity for perpetrators of war crime, crimes against humanity and human rights violations must end. The Sudanese government needs to deliver indictees to the ICC and the international community should make every effort to arrest President al-Bashir and the other ICC-indictees."

"And this must start with Chad arresting President al-Bashir and surrendering him to the ICC. It's time for justice for the long-suffering people of Darfur."