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Egypt: Arrest Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir

The Egyptian government should immediately withdraw its invitation to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, and arrest him if he travels to Cairo, Amnesty International said today.

Omar Al-Bashir is due to meet President Mohamed Morsi and other top Egyptian officials as part of a two-day visit beginning on 16 September.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued two arrest warrants for Omar Al-Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur. The warrants, issued in 2009 and 2010, charge him with criminal responsibility on 10 counts, including murder, extermination, forcible transfer of population, torture and rape.

“If Egypt welcomes Omar Al-Bashir it will become a safe haven for alleged perpetrators of genocide”, said Marek Marczyński, Amnesty International Justice Research, Policy and Campaign Manager.

“Egypt should not allow Omar Al-Bashir to enter its territory, and must arrest him if he arrives.”

Egypt has previously chosen to ignore the ICC arrest warrants. It failed to arrest Omar Al-Bashir during previous visits, including in March 2009, just weeks after the ICC first called for his arrest, and in March 2011, when he met with Egypt’s then-ruling military council.

When the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC in 2005, it urged all states to co-operate fully with the Court.

Although Egypt is not a party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, it should remember all states have a shared responsibility to ensure that persons suspected of genocide and crimes against humanity are investigated.

Where there is sufficient admissible evidence, suspects must be prosecuted in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.

In his first address, President Morsi said that Egypt’s values and identity would uphold humanitarian values, especially in freedom and human rights. How can he now shake hands with a man wanted for genocide?” said Marczyński.

“Amnesty International is calling on all members of the international community to assist the ICC in executing its arrest warrants in the Sudan situation.”