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## **UN: Demand al-Bashir's surrender to the International Criminal Court**

Member states of the United Nations General Assembly must demand that Sudan's President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir surrender to the International Criminal Court (ICC), where he faces charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, said Amnesty International.

President al-Bashir has reportedly applied to the United States Embassy in Sudan for a visa to enable him to travel to the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in New York before its general debate opens on 24 September.

The ICC has issued two arrest warrants against President al-Bashir accusing him of responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide committed by Sudanese forces and their allied Janjaweed militia in Darfur, Sudan.

"Despite the ICC arrest warrants against the President, two other government officials and an alleged Janjaweed militia leader, they are all being protected by the Sudanese government which is refusing to cooperate with the Court," said Tawanda Hondora, Deputy Director of Law and Policy at Amnesty International.

"Sudan's decision to send a person accused of orchestrating these most serious crimes to attend the UN General Assembly is a grave insult to the thousands of people unlawfully killed, millions displaced and countless women and children raped in Darfur over the last decade."

The UN was created following the end of World War II, a period marked by unimaginable human rights violations.

UN members, who said "never again" after the atrocities of World War II must demand that al-Bashir, accept the jurisdiction of the ICC and surrender.

To allow a fugitive from international justice the opportunity to stand brazenly before them – in the same building as the Security Council that referred the Darfur situation to the ICC Prosecutor – without demanding that he surrender makes a mockery of the Security Council's decision and its call for states to cooperate with the ICC.

"It is repugnant for al-Bashir to be given an opportunity to thumb his nose at the international community and the victims of deplorable crimes committed by Sudanese forces and others in Darfur," said Tawanda Hondora.

"Members of the General Assembly must stand up on behalf of Darfuri victims to condemn this impunity

and to call on the UN Security Council to require all states to cooperate fully with the ICC.

“Diplomats of all states and UN officials who meet with al Bashir should press him to surrender to the ICC.”

## **Background**

Ten years after the conflict in Darfur started, widespread and systematic violations of international human rights and humanitarian law continue unabated. Civilians face attacks by government forces, pro-government militias and armed opposition groups. The UN has estimated that more than 300,000 people were forced to flee their homes in the first five months of 2013 alone due to intensified violence in Darfur.

In recent years, the Government of Sudan continued to carry out indiscriminate aerial bombardments and ground attacks against civilians. More recently, the government failed to protect civilians from abuses during fighting between different ethnic groups over land and natural resources which caused death, injuries and massive displacement. Earlier this year, Amnesty International documented the involvement of members of government forces, along with allied armed militias in attacks against civilians in North Darfur.

In 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir accusing him of committing crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur. A second arrest warrant accusing him of genocide was issued in 2010. Arrest warrants have also been issued against two other high-ranking government officials: Ahmed Haroun, former governor of the conflict-affected state of Southern Kordofan, and Abdelrahim Mohammed Hussein, now Minister of Defence. Ali Kushayb, an alleged Janjaweed leader, has also been charged. The government has refused to cooperate with the ICC in all these cases.

Another case against two alleged leaders of the opposition Justice and Equality Movement, who have been appearing voluntarily before the ICC under summons, is expected to commence in 2014.

Despite the severity of the charges, the Sudanese government continues to refuse to cooperate with the ICC. President al-Bashir has also sought to defy the ICC arrest warrant by conducting official visits to some countries which have not arrested him, including China, Chad, Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on all states to cooperate fully with the ICC’s investigations and cases in relation to Darfur and to arrest and surrender any person charged by the ICC, if they enter their territory.