
MEDIA RELEASE:

MELB. Sudanese Community Support ICC Decision to Charge President with GENOCIDE and Protest UN Support to end Atrocities

The Melbourne based Sudanese community group Dinka Ngok Abyei Association of Aust. (DNAAA), will join with other Sudanese groups globally to show their support for the International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrant of Sudan's president al-Bashir this week and **will stage a protest at Federation Square on Tuesday 22 July for UN and international support of the ICC warrant and to increase peacekeeping efforts. The group will create a visual display of shoes representing the many lives lost through genocide under al-Bashir's reign.**

ICC prosecutor Luis Ocampo-Moreno released a detailed charge sheet accusing al-Bashir of 10 counts of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Ocampo-Moreno said that on al-Bashir's orders, the combined forces of the Sudanese military and the Janjaweed militia have attacked and destroyed villages, murdered or caused death by famine, disease and rape to hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians as well as displacing millions. Obstruction of international relief assistance was also indicated.

While UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is concerned about retaliation by the Sudanese government and the affect on humanitarian aid programs, the UN are not openly supporting the ICC. In response to this inaction and misdirection, global Sudanese communities are urging the international community to put pressure on the UN for their lack of foresite in recognising the need to support justice on a large scale rather than folding to the pressure of other international networks. DNAAA member Biong Deng commented, *" how long does the UN want to continue the peacekeeping effort? now they have an opportunity to support the end of the atrocities that create the need for their presence. Such decision making, is very short sighted and suggests they are fearful of others. It creates an irreparable hole in the reputation and role of the UN as an organisation and places millions of lives at risk. They must seize this opportunity to strongly support the ICC and increase peacekeeping forces swiftly to back their concern for potential retaliation from government forces."*

Sarah Hellings Director of the Darfur Australia Network stated that *"the people of Darfur deserve justice, which is why al-Bashir must be tried. However, just as the international community has a responsibility to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to the ICC, they have a responsibility to protect Darfur's civilians from further violence.*

CONTINES PAGE 2

CONTINES FROM PAGE 1

UNAMID must be properly resourced to ensure that the millions of people surviving off humanitarian assistance are protected. Peace in Darfur must be established before justice can occur.”

International human rights organisations point to the involvement of China over oil in Sudan, often indicated as the underlying motive for genocide and displacement to access oil particularly in Darfur and Southern Sudan. The claim of Chinese and Sudanese governments reported in international media that ICC charges will damage the peace process in areas of contention in Sudan, is almost laughable if consequences were not so grave. DNAAA President Belbek Belbek further commented *“what peace processes? people are still being killed and living in extremely deprived circumstances, that is not a peace process. What they really mean is that an already dire situation will worsen dramatically.”*

Belbek also brought to attention the questionable representation of protestors shown supporting al-Bashir throughout international media which have now been reported as being government sponsored.

DNAAA is also concerned that international media and government contestation of the ICC as an organisation is diverting attention away from the real issue of preventing genocide and bringing to justice those responsible. The ICC has also recently brought to trial Liberian President Charles Taylor and former Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosovich strongly identified for their role in war crimes.

International support for ICC investigations continues to grow with John Bellinger, the US State Department’s top legal adviser commenting that the department *“support’s it’s (ICC) investigation and prosecution of those atrocities.”* Meanwhile British Prime minister Brown further reinforced; *“We call on the government of Sudan to co-operate with the International Criminal Court’*. DNAAA are hopeful that Arab league talks being held currently consider international dialogue and peace processes carefully to ensure the safety of their families still living in Sudan.

UN Support ICC Stop Genocide in Sudan Protest
Tuesday 22 July
12pm
Federation Square
Moving to steps of Parliament by 1pm

All supporters are invited and asked to bring an old unwanted pair of shoes or shoes with name labels securely attached.

Photograph opportunities available & interviews can be arranged:

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