Sudan: ICC States Parties should not attend the inauguration of President Al-Bashir

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On May 27, 2010, Omar Hassan al-Bashir is due to be inaugurated for another term as President of Sudan. NPWJ has heard that States Parties to the International Criminal Court (ICC) are considering sending representatives to the inauguration. The ICC has had an arrest warrant outstanding for President Bashir since March 2009, and the inauguration comes just four days before the opening of a historic event in the Court’s history - the first Review Conference of the Court’s founding treaty, the Rome Statute, which will take place in Kampala, Uganda.

Statement by Alison Smith, Legal Counsel of No Peace Without Justice:

“ICC States Parties should not even think of being represented at the inauguration festivities for President Bashir – they should instead see it as an opportunity to show their support for the ICC by publicly announcing their intention to boycott the event”.

“Any State that values democratic principles should think twice about being seen to celebrate the outcome of an election that by all accounts was neither transparent nor fair, and which legitimised the return to power of a government that has ruled for two decades by corruption and violence against its civilian population. But given that President Al-Bashir is wanted by the ICC on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur, ICC State Parties should be particularly determined to distance themselves”.

“The timing of the inauguration is particularly pertinent since the same States Parties will gather in Kampala just a few days later to negotiate certain amendments to the ICC’s Rome Statute, particularly the possible inclusion of the crime of aggression in the jurisdiction of the Court, and to evaluate the current status of international criminal justice. What kind of message would it send for States to celebrate the continued hold on power by a leader who has openly defied the ICC, then to gather just a few days, in a neighbouring country, to celebrate the progress of the ICC system?”

“No Peace Without Justice and the Transnational Nonviolent Radical Party call upon all ICC States Parties openly and publicly to state their intention not to attend the inauguration of President Al-Bashir and to use the occasion instead as an opportunity to restate their support of the ICC; to urge the Sudanese authorities to cooperate with the Court; and to encourage President Al-Bashir and the two other suspects wanted in the Darfur case to face the charges levelled against them.”

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