

ICC Prosecutor to UN: Consider Arrests of Sudanese Officials Indicted for Crimes in Darfur

Posted Tuesday, June 5th, 2012 at 5:25 pm

The International Criminal Court is asking the U.N. Security Council to encourage countries to issue warrants and arrest four high-ranking Sudanese officials accused of war crimes in Darfur.

The chief prosecutor of the ICC in The Hague, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, told the Security Council Tuesday that the arrest of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and other suspects would produce a dramatic change in Darfur.

Sudan's ambassador, Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman, condemned Ocampo's recommendation and accused him of ignoring the U.N. Charter.

The U.S. representative, Jeffrey DeLaurentis, said Washington is gravely concerned about the situation in Sudan, and that the continuing impunity for crimes committed in Darfur is forestalling a just and enduring peace there.

Prosecutor Ocampo put Sudan's ambassador on notice that "by denying the charges against Sudanese officials, including President Omar al-Bashir and Defense Minister Abdel Raheem Hussein, he could also be participating in the crimes."

Osman responded that "Ocampo's remarks were a violation of political and diplomatic norms and were the statement of a terrorist."

The Sudanese president was formally charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity in 2009, for allegedly masterminding a campaign of murder, rape and other crimes against civilians in Darfur. Since then he has traveled abroad only to countries that chose not to honor the ICC arrest warrant.

In March, the ICC called for the arrest of Sudan's defense minister, accusing him of coordinating attacks against villages in the Darfur region in 2003-2004.

The prosecutor's office said the attacks followed a pattern in which villages were surrounded, bombed by the Sudanese air force, then attacked by troops and "janjaweed" militia who killed and raped villagers. The Sudanese defense minister has dismissed the accusations, saying they were politically motivated