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Sudan: War crimes suspects must be brought before International Criminal Court

Amnesty International welcomed today's decision by the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants for two suspected Sudanese war criminals, and urged the Sudanese government to immediately arrest the two men and hand them over to the Court in The Hague.

Current State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmad Harun, and renowned Janjawid leader Ali Muhammad Ali Abdelrahman (also known as Ali Kushayb), face 51 counts of alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, persecution, the destruction of property, pillaging, rape, torture, outrages upon personal dignity and other inhumane acts.

"The UN Security Council must now demand that Sudan -- or any other state in whose territory the two suspects are found -- arrest and surrender them immediately," said Erwin van der Borght, Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme. "The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) should also be requested and equipped to arrest and surrender them."

Amnesty International urged the African Union to press the Sudanese government to arrest and surrender the two men, and to direct their forces currently in Darfur to do the same if they are found within their sphere of operations.

In addition, Amnesty International called on the Sudanese government and on other governments to investigate and prosecute, in accordance with international standards, other war crimes and crimes against humanity not prosecuted by the ICC Prosecutor and to ensure that victims and their families are able to seek and obtain reparations.

Ali Kushayb is thought to be currently in detention in Darfur, awaiting trial. There is no confidence that the Sudanese government is able or willing to prosecute him effectively in this case.

"Today's decision by the ICC indicates an important step forward in how the international community will deal with Sudan over the gross human rights violations taking place in Darfur," said van der Borght.

"It is no longer seen to be enough to just conduct political negotiations over strengthening the current peacekeeping force in Darfur and try to further peace talks. Concrete steps must also be taken immediately to hold people to account for the crimes being perpetrated against the people of Darfur."

"Seeking justice for the people of Darfur now will not hinder the continuing search for a political solution -- it will only serve to make that solution, when it is found, more durable."

Public Document

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