

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **SUDAN: Sudanese government must support ICC investigation of war crimes in Darfur**

As the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced that it will begin investigations of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Darfur, Amnesty International said today that the ICC investigation must take priority over any Sudanese investigations and that all states, including the government of Sudan, must support the ICC investigation in every way possible.

"This announcement brings hope for justice and accountability for the victims of killings, massive forced displacement and rape in Darfur," said Kolawole Olaniyan, Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme.

"However, for it to be meaningful for the people of Darfur, there must be a commitment on the part of the Sudanese government to fully support the ICC investigation – including by protecting victims and witnesses and arresting and surrendering persons subject to ICC arrest warrants.

"The victims cry out for justice, not for the cosmetic actions of a government that still denies that mass rape has been committed and has shown itself to be unable and unwilling to address the crimes being committed in Darfur. There should also be reparations for the victims who have lost everything and are facing a third year of misery and insecurity in camps".

The ICC announcement follows the UN International Commission of Inquiry report recommending referral to the ICC in January 2005, followed in March by Security Council Resolution 1593, which did refer the situation in Darfur to the ICC.

"We hope that the investigation will lead to the prosecution of all those who ordered, condoned or carried out crimes such as killings, rapes and mass displacement -- including senior figures in the government, armed forces and armed militia," said Kolawole Olaniyan.

More than 50,000 people in Darfur have been unlawfully killed or extrajudicially executed by government forces and *Janjawid* militia armed and funded by the Sudanese authorities. More than 1.8 million remain forcibly displaced. Thousands of women have been raped and rapes are continuing. Rebel forces have also attacked humanitarian convoys.

The government has failed to disarm the *Janjawid* militias or bring those accused of crimes to justice. The national justice system urgently needs to be rebuilt if Sudan is to complement the work of the ICC by bringing to justice those accused of committing war crimes in trials that meet international

standards of fairness.

The decision by the ICC Prosecutor to open the investigation is a welcome rejection of pressure to delay doing so on the supposed grounds that it would interfere with the African Union peace initiative being undertaken by Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi, the Libyan leader. Amnesty International welcomed the statement of the Prosecutor indicating that traditional reconciliation methods should "complement", as opposed to replace, justice for victims.

"Justice should not be seen as an obstacle to peace, but as part of the essential foundation for building a durable peace through individual – not group – responsibility," said Kolawole Olaniyan.

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