



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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GLOBAL COALITION SAYS ANNIVERSARY OF ICC ARREST WARRANTS FOR DARFUR A LITMUS TEST FOR SECURITY COUNCIL

New York, New York. Exactly one year ago on 27 April 2008, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, issued warrants for the arrest of Ahmad Muhammad Harun and Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman (more commonly known as Ali Kushayb), citing the two as bearing responsibility for grave crimes committed in the troubled region of Darfur, Sudan between 2003 and 2004.

To date—despite the referral of the situation to the Court by the United Nations Security Council in 2005—neither suspect has been apprehended.

“The issuance of the Court’s arrest warrants in Darfur, which was the first concerted action by the international community to address the conflict, is testing the global resolve to end impunity for unspeakable horrors,” said Program Director of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Tanya Karanasios.

“Failure to ensure that both Kushayb and Harun are brought to the ICC compromises the Security Council’s legitimacy and its mandate to maintain international peace and security. It has been one year too long for the victims of the conflict who continue to pay the price for the Sudanese government’s blatant disregard for human rights,” she said.

On 31 March 2005, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1593 referring the situation in Darfur to the ICC’s Office of the Prosecutor. In accordance with the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC, the prosecutor officially opened an investigation on 1 June 2005. Following an investigation that spanned 17 countries, the ICC prosecutor charged Harun and Kushayb with criminal responsibility in relation to 51 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include charges of rape, murder, persecution, torture, forcible transfer, destruction of property, attacks against civilians and severe deprivation of liberty.

Since the accusations were levied, the Sudanese government has openly defied the Court and the international community. The government of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has consistently refused to cooperate with the Court. In addition, Ali Kushayb, who had been imprisoned by Sudanese authorities on unrelated charges, was released in October 2007 for “lack of evidence.” And Ahmad Harun who was previously State Minister of the Interior responsible for the government’s Darfur Security Desk at the time of the crimes, was last year promoted to State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs in Darfur with direct authority over the victims of his alleged crimes. Most recently, Harun was tasked with the role of Sudanese government liaison with UNAMID, the United Nations-African Union hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

“Our call to the Security Council, and the international community at large, is clear: ensure the immediate arrest and surrender of Harun and Kushayb,” said Karanasios. “Anything less than this calls into question the global commitment to heed the cries of ‘never again’ that were issued more than a half century ago.”

To learn more about the Court’s investigation in Darfur, see <http://www.iccnw.org/?mod=darfur>

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***Important notice:** The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), an independent NGO movement, is dedicated to the establishment of the International Criminal Court as a fair, effective, and independent international organization. The Coalition as a whole, and its secretariat, does not endorse or promote specific investigations or prosecutions or take a position on situations before the ICC. However, individual CICC members may endorse referrals, provide legal and other support on investigations, or develop partnerships with local and other organizations in the course of their efforts.*

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