



Femmes Africa Solidarité

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INFORMATION NOTE

International Criminal Court Issues Darfur Arrest Warrants for Two Sudanese Officials

On 2nd May 2007 arrest warrants were issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Ahmad Muhammad Haran, the Sudanese Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, and the militia commander Ali Muhammad Al Abd-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb. The warrants accuse the two men of 51 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, attacks against the civilian population and rape, which were committed in the region of Darfur, between 2003 and 2005. Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) recently made a statement, during the 4th Session of the Human Rights Council, calling for justice on behalf of the women and girls who have suffered from human rights violations in Darfur, and therefore welcomes the actions of the ICC .

The Government of Sudan has stated it will not hand over the suspects as it has not ratified the Rome Statute, which formed the ICC, despite signing the treaty in 2000. However, the terms of Security Council Resolution 1593, which referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC, obligates the Government of Sudan to cooperate and provide any necessary assistance to the Court and the Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo. Despite its refusal to ratify the Rome Statute, the Government of Sudan has signed up to other core human rights treaties including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which has specific provisions protecting the rights of women and girls – these remain in force even in cases of armed conflicts.

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable in the Darfur conflict and several reports on the situation have highlighted the use of rape as a widespread and systematic weapon of war. These attacks not only have serious physical consequences, but the stigma and shame attached to cases of rape result in severe psychological trauma. Married women who are raped may be left by their husbands, and unmarried girls are considered to be 'spoiled', with the result that they may be deemed to be unsuitable for marriage. Equally, in cases where rape has resulted in pregnancy, women are often forced to choose between abandoning the child or risk being ostracised by the community. Women and girls have also been the specific targets of abductions, sexual slavery and torture and many have been forcibly displaced.



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FAS calls on the international community to support the ICC in ensuring that cases of rape are fully investigated and prosecuted, and that compensation, medical treatment and counselling are provided for the victims of sexual violence. Equally, there is an urgent need to protect civilians, particularly those who have been forced into camps for Internally Displaced People (IDP). FAS' experiences in the Mano River region and Great Lakes have shown that women must also be included in peace negotiations and their concerns and priorities integrated into any agreements.

Please Contact the FAS Office for more information
www.fasngo.org

FAS is an international women's organisation with the ECOSOC Consultative Status working to empower African women to assume a leadership role in peace building, and conflict resolution. FAS programmes operate mainly in war-torn countries such as the Mano River and the Great Lakes regions. FAS also works closely with African sub-regional and regional organs such as ECOWAS and the African Union to ensure greater involvement of women in decision-making processes for peace and development

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