



Local newspapers

Arabic language papers (Al-Sahafa, Rai-Alam, Akh-Bar Yom, Akhir-Lahza)

MoFA Spokesperson Ali Al Sadig reiterated the government's rejection of the ICC, adding that the GoS would launch a diplomatic campaign within the UN and Security Council to block the ICC proceeding. He denied any impact of the ICC decision on UNMIS and confirmed that SAF would protect the mission.

Presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie addressing youth who gathered to declare support to the President stated the President Bashir would be the presidential candidate for all the Sudanese people in the forthcoming elections.

The National Assembly will hold an extraordinary session tomorrow to discuss ICC. The NCP Council of leaders will also hold a meeting within a week to discuss the issue of ICC.

An SPLM statement said that the ICC indictment of the President constituted a threat to peace and stability in the Sudan and stressed the need for understanding with the international community and ICC.

Under-Secretary of MoFA Mutreeh Sidiq said the Ministry had received official notification from UNAMID regarding the evacuation of 2,700 personnel. The decision to evaluate the personnel was unilateral, he said. Because of anticipated attacks by some Darfur rebels against NGOs and UNAMID, the government had instructed security organs to provide them with protection.

The Presidency issued a statement yesterday saying that Sudan was not a party to the ICC and that it had no jurisdiction to prosecute Sudanese. The ICC indictment would affect the CPA, Abyei roadmap and holding of elections on schedule. It would also affect development and reconstruction.

Sudan's Ambassador to the UN said the ICC decision would encourage Darfur rebels to increase their military operations in the region, adding that Sudan would seek Chinese support to block the ICC. Any attempt to detain Bashir would be regarded as a declaration of war on Sudan.

NCP official, Kamal Obeid hoped that UN and SC would reverse the decision, so that Ocampo does not send wrong signals to Darfur rebels and UN is not viewed as lacking capacity to address the situation created by ICC application.

Student's Union of the University of Holy Quran in Kordofan issued a statement denouncing ICC application. They have called for expulsion of French and British ambassadors and withdrawal of Sudan from UN.

Deputy Chairman of the National Umma party, Adam Musa Madibo said ICC charges against the President would plunge Sudan in a new crisis and stressed the need for wisdom to address the issue.

The Council of States, Khartoum State Government and Khartoum State Assembly had declared their rejection of the ICC application.

The Board of Police Commanders declared full support for the President saying that the ICC decision would increase tension and suffering in Darfur, affecting the ongoing effort to resolve the problem peacefully. It would also distract voluntary returns of IDPs and provision of relief.

About Abdulrahim, Akhbar Al Yom Newspaper columnist, wrote that anti-ICC spontaneous demonstrators declared that from now onwards there will be no room for UN agencies ("operated by remote control from the White House"). Whereas, Akhar Lahhza columnist Anhind Izzendin is of the view that the GoS reaction should take the form of SAF deployment across Darfur. Osman Mirdhani, Al Sudani columnist, wrote in his column that the solution lies in GoS engagement in unconditional dialogue with all Darfur movements.

English language papers

Most English local papers reported on the Monday press conference of Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha about ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's decision to indict President Omar Al-Bashir.

Sudan Tribune noted that Mr. Taha had rejected the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's accusations against President Bashir, dismissing them as "null and false". Mr. Taha stressed that the court had no jurisdiction in his country, and that Sudan had never recognizes the court.

The ICC move was a politically-motivated one against Sudan instead of a legal one, he said. Vice-President Taha said conflicts between different tribal groups in Darfur had originated from disputes over land and water, which had begun before President Bashir rose to power, and were by no means ethnically based. He dismissed the charge that particular ethnic groups in Darfur had been targeted for annihilation by the Sudanese government.

"It is absolutely not true that all of these rebel movements fighting the government belong to the same [ethnic] group," he said. "The tribes purported to be victims of genocide have among their members large groups who are loyal to the government and take part in its institutions, armed forces, security services and high-ranking political and administrative positions."

Asked about the position of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), his partner in the national unity government, Mr. Taha said the SPLM stood firm by the Sudanese president. "The position of the SPLM is the position of patriotism and responsible attitude. It is based on full solidarity with the President."

He went on to note that southern Sudanese would be the first to pay the price of the indictment of al-Bashir, should the judges issue the arrest warrant. Southern Sudan stood to be "the first to be harmed by the disruption of the peace implementation if the procedure is engaged to its end", Mr. Taha said.

The Vice-President said this was the position of the entire SPLM, which had been expressed yesterday in the Council of Ministers. "The coming days will confirm this and we do not have any doubt in the patriotic attitude of the SPLM."

The Citizen cited Mr. Taha as telling reporters that the indictment was no surprise to the Sudanese government. It was meant to instigate the international community against Sudan to hinder development and peace and cripple the country from playing a role in the international community, the Vice-President said.

He further noted that the ICC prosecutor had never been to Darfur, supported his indictment with reports of people who also had never been to Darfur, and that UN reports refuted everything he said.

Concerning genocide in Darfur, Mr. Taha said the government's record was clean in Darfur and that the Salvation Government had made great efforts to resolve tribal conflicts caused by drought and desertification in the region. Sudan would use diplomacy in the UN, AU and human rights organizations to confront the ICC, as the report would negatively affect signed peace agreements, including the CPA.

An article in **Sudan Vision** said the ICC indictment would complicate the Darfur issue rather than help resolve it, affecting stability in Sudan and the future of the CPA as well as other peace agreements. Mr. Ocampo's step was political, a continuation of the JEM sabotage attempt to overthrow the Sudanese regime, the paper said.

Other reactions to ICC announcement

The Citizen included the SG statement that the UN would remain neutral in terms of the ICC indictment and that the court was an independent institution. Also, the UN must respect the independence of the judicial process.

The paper also noted that the UN peacekeeping operation in Sudan would continue to work in an impartial manner "cooperating in good faith with all partners so as to further the goal of peace and stability in the country". The UN would also continue its "vital humanitarian and development work there".

Mr. Ban also said he expected that the Sudanese government would continue to cooperate fully with the UN in Sudan, while fulfilling its obligation to ensure the safety and security of all UN personnel and property.

The Citizen also cited MOFA Spokesperson Ali Sadig as stating that the government would pay no attention to the ICC indictment, which showed no respect for efforts exerted by the government to bring peace to Darfur. The government would continue cooperating with the UN and AU to resolve the Darfur problem, including full deployment of the hybrid forces and sitting with rebels at the negotiation table.

In another article, **The Citizen** quoted the SPLM leadership as stating that the Darfur conflict was a political issue arising out of long and continuous political, economic and cultural marginalization since Sudanese independence in 1956. Resolving the situation required a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the conflict between the parties.

"Therefore, the Government of National Unity is required to develop, within a week's time, a roadmap for resolution of the Darfur conflict, in consultation with all the political forces and civil society groups in the country, specifically the groups in Darfur, in order to build national consensus for a fair and speedy resolution of the conflict.

The Umma Party (**Khartoum Monitor**) issued a statement saying the charges against the President would create a "constitutional collapse" with serious repercussions on security in the country. There should be urgent moves to create a common national vision to overcome the dangers facing the country, the statement said. It called on ruling parties to exercise self-restraint and take into account political and constitutional status.

Also reported in the **Khartoum Monitor**, the National Assembly called an emergency session for 16 July. Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir said the Assembly Affairs Committee had rejected accusations by the ICC against the President. Ex-Ambassador Hassan Abdier said the indictment was intended to bring about the downfall of the regime, obstruct democratic transformation and block re-election of Bashir.

Sudan Vision reported that President Al-Bashir had announced a new initiative to settle the Darfur crisis in a meeting with leaders of Sudanese political parties, who had agreed to reject the ICC accusations. Most speakers underlined the need for arriving at a solution to the Darfur problem.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Al Sammani Al Wasila said Mr. Ocampo's action would have a positive impact in that it would bolster cohesion among Sudanese people. He called on the UN and international community to "shoulder their responsibility towards breaches of the Criminal Court and its prosecutor", which would have "grave consequences at all levels".

Sudanese Bar Association Dean Fathi Khalil said the Prosecutor was uninformed about the nature, harmony and solidarity of Sudanese society. The Prosecutor had overridden international and general legal principles when he described President Bashir as a criminal

EI-Nileen University law expert Babiker Al-Sheikh said the decision was political in nature, not legal, to be used as a precedent against a state president still in office. The aim was to weaken the government, but instead it would weaken the ICC.

International law expert Abdullah Al-Asha'l, of the Egyptian People's Council, described the ICC decision as a threat to regional security and stability. He urged Arab countries to take a strong, unified stance in the matter.

Editorials

An editorial in **the Citizen** noted that the President now knew his fate and would work to prove the ICC wrong by resolving the war in Darfur or through cooperation with the international community. The problem, the writer said, was with those who were not named.

A Sudan Vision editorial stated that legal experts, nationally, regionally and internationally, had agreed that it was a political decision of the US and the ICC and that Ocampo was a mere tool to implement the programme of his masters.

Whenever there was a sign of progress on the Darfur issue, Mr. Ocampo appeared to create a false impression that serious breaches of human rights were being committed so that the secret agenda of the US and ICC against Sudan was carried out. The prosecutor's indictment and demand for arrest warrant of the President fell into this pattern.

The consequences of the ICC action would greatly endanger the stability of the entire region, not only Sudan. What was now needed was a unified stance from the AU, Arab League and other national, regional, international and civil society organizations to challenge the bogus legal step. If it was left unchecked, it would appear on the doorsteps of other African and world leaders.

International headlines

- China has "grave concerns" over ICC Sudan decision (Reuters)
- U.N. ups security ahead of Khartoum ICC protests (Reuters)
- Rights group fears Sudanese backlash (CNN)
- UN prepares to pull staff from Darfur (AFP)
- US ambivalent on charge against Sudan leader (AP)

China has "grave concerns" over ICC Sudan decision

BEIJING (Reuters) - China expressed "grave concern and misgivings" on Tuesday over the decision of the International Criminal Court to seek an arrest warrant for Sudan's president on charges of genocide in the region of Darfur.

With the ICC's prosecutor hoping to arrest Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, China confronts acute choices over its relationship with the African leader just as the Beijing Olympics opens a soft spot for international pressure.

"The ICC's actions must be beneficial to the stability of the Darfur region and the appropriate settlement of the issue, not the contrary," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a regular news conference.

Beijing has for years scrambled between its energy and political stakes in Sudan and a rising power's desire for a respected seat at the table in Darfur peace efforts.

The ICC prosecutor's momentous move makes that straddling act immensely harder, with all sides of the conflict waiting to see if Beijing will seek to suspend the legal action via a U.N. Security Council decision.

Liu said that China had consulted with other members of the United Nations Security Council and "hopes to reach consensus with the relevant parties".

"This presents China with many quandaries," said He Wenping, an Africa expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a leading think-tank in Beijing.

"It will have many consequences that China won't like. Our own peacekeepers could be threatened, and also this will seriously impede China's space to mediate over Darfur and encourage dialogue between Sudan and the West."

Liu confirmed that 172 Chinese peacekeepers will head to Darfur on Wednesday, bringing all of its 315 promised peacekeepers into place.

Shi Yinong, an international security expert at Renmin University in Beijing, said China would likely let other powers lead any opposition.

"With international opinion so excited ahead of the Beijing Olympics, this is not the time for dramatic decisions (by China)," said Shi. "The Olympics make a complicated situation for China even more complicated."

China's special envoy on Darfur, Liu Guijin, has not publicly commented on the charges against Bashir.

But in the official China Daily on Tuesday, Liu defended his country's role in Sudan and suggested it was Darfur rebels -- not Bashir's government -- impeding stalled peace efforts.

Rejecting a BBC report that Chinese-made arms found their way to government-backed forces in Darfur, Liu said Western-made arms in the hands of the rebels were the real trouble.

China is a major investor in Sudan's oil. While it backed a U.N. resolution authorizing a hybrid U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force, nudged Bashir to accept the force, and has contributed its own engineers, China abstained from the Security Council vote in 2005 that authorized the ICC to investigate Darfur, angering Khartoum, which wanted China to use its veto power.

U.N. ups security ahead of Khartoum ICC protests

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - The United Nations urged hundreds of its staff to stay at home on Tuesday as thousands of Sudanese prepared to protest against war crimes charges leveled against their president by an international court.

Protests so far have been staged by pro-government bodies but even Sudanese who traditionally oppose Bashir have backed him against the Hague-based ICC. Demonstrators hung pictures of Bashir on the walls of the U.N. headquarters in Khartoum and the British embassy.

U.N. security officials told non-essential staff to stay at home on Tuesday ahead of Tuesday's expected protests.

Sudan's government has reassured international workers it will ensure their safety, but the United Nations raised security levels in Khartoum and Darfur ahead of the Hague court's announcement, fearing a violent backlash.

Families have been evacuated from Khartoum and non-essential staff moved out of Darfur.

Many aid agencies said they had pulled staff from rural areas back to towns in Darfur. The United Nations declined to comment on how its huge humanitarian operation in Sudan's west would be affected by the security measures.

The joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission, or UNAMID, said it would also begin relocating some non-essential staff, although core operations would continue.

"We are looking at a trend of security in the past couple of months and the ICC could be another aspect we are looking at but it's not the only reason the UNAMID security level has been raised," said spokeswoman Josephine Guerrero.

Rights group fears Sudanese backlash

(CNN) - Human rights activists said Tuesday they feared a move by the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to file genocide charges against Sudan's president could provoke a violent backlash.

"The prosecutor's legal strategy ... poses major risks for the fragile peace and security environment in Sudan, with a real chance of greatly increasing the suffering of very large numbers of its people," the Brussels-based International Crisis Group said.

"These are significant risks, particularly given that the likelihood of actually executing any warrant issued against al-Bashir is remote, at least in the short term," it added.

However in New York, Sudan's ambassador to the United Nations, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamed, told the Associated Press that al-Bashir, who has ruled Sudan for 19 years, was weighing all options, including a military response.

Al-Bashir may attend the U.N. General Assembly in New York in September, and Sudan would consider any attempt to arrest him a declaration of war, Mohamed said.

The alleged crimes against al-Bashir stem from a brutal counter-insurgency campaign the Sudanese government conducted after rebels began an uprising in Sudan's western Darfur region in 2003.

UN prepares to pull staff from Darfur

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The United Nations prepared on Tuesday to fly non-essential staff from Darfur as supporters of Sudan President Omar al-Beshir planned protests in Khartoum to denounce the world court prosecutor's call for him to be arrested for alleged war crimes.

The African Union-United Nations peacekeeping mission announced the staff "relocations" as Sudan promised it would do its utmost to protect peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, but said there could be no security guarantee.

Sudanese and Western officials have widely predicted that the ICC move -- seen by many in Sudan as an assault on national sovereignty -- could spark violent retaliation against Western embassies and UN peacekeepers.

"It's not an evacuation. We're temporarily relocating staff, some non-essential staff. This will probably begin today," said Josephine Guerrero, spokeswoman in Darfur for the UN-led peacekeeping mission. "UNAMID is not pulling out. All the forces are going to be on the ground and humanitarian operations are continuing," she added, referring to the joint UN-African Union force.

A UN official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the move, ordered by UNAMID force commander Martin Agwai, affected only about 1,800 police and 1,000 civilians who are to leave the country temporarily in coming days.

In his first public appearance after the accusations were levelled, Bashir danced, punched the air in delight with his trademark walking stick and shouted 'God is Great' at an elaborate ceremony to ink the new Sudanese electoral law.

Sitting on a podium in the giant Chinese-built Friendship Hall in Khartoum before more than 500 supporters and Sudan's most senior leaders, Beshir was given roars of support as he stood to sign the landmark legislation.

The law paves the way for national elections due next year as part of a 2005 north-south peace deal in a move towards democratic transformation.

The African Union warned the indictment of Beshir would create a power vacuum that risked "military coups and widespread anarchy".

Tanzanian Foreign Minister Bernard Membe, speaking on behalf of AU chair President Jakaya Kikwete, urged the ICC to defer bringing charges "because there is a risk of anarchy in a proportion we have not seen in this continent."

The Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have also voiced concern that Ocampo's action could undermine peace efforts in Sudan, and the United States called on all parties to stay calm.

The US government said it was bolstering security for its staff in Sudan and press secretary Dana Perino said President George W. Bush is "gravely concerned" by increasing violence in Darfur.

US ambivalent on charge against Sudan leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — For years, the Bush administration has taken a strong stance denouncing atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region and labeling them genocide.

Yet it offered only an ambivalent response when the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court filed genocide charges against Sudan's president.

For all its criticism of President Omar al-Bashir, the administration is reluctant to take steps that lend legitimacy to a court whose jurisdiction it has questioned and whose treaty it refuses to sign.

The administration offered some praise Monday for prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's charge.

"In our view recognition of the humanitarian disaster and the atrocities that have gone on there is a positive thing," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

McCormack emphasized, however, that the U.S. view of the ICC is well known.

"We make our own determinations according to our own laws, our own regulations with respect to who should be subject to war crimes and genocide-related statutes. The ICC is a separate matter, and we are not part of the ICC," he said.

Some analysts say the administration is conflicted.

"I think there is probably a tension within the administration between those who would find the ICC to be an irritant and an obstacle to peace efforts in Darfur, whereas there are others who may be arguing that this might facilitate those efforts," said David Scheffer, director of Northwestern Law School's Center for International Human Rights.

As U.S. ambassador at large for war crimes issues in the Clinton administration, Scheffer negotiated the 1998 Rome Statute, which established the ICC. Clinton signed it in Dec. 31, 2000. The document was never submitted to the Senate for ratification, and the Bush administration withdrew the signature.

The Bush administration opposes the court because of suspicions that its jurisdiction is too broad and fears that American servicemen fighting abroad or the officials who command them might not be safe from politically motivated prosecution.

The administration's mixed feelings about the ICC are not new. Despite its frequent criticism of the ICC, it effectively allowed the investigation of al-Bashir when it abstained on a U.N. Security Council resolution in 2005 instead of using its veto. That gave the court the authority that led to Monday's indictment.

"At least as a matter of policy, not only do we not oppose the ICC's investigation and prosecutions in Sudan but we support its investigation and prosecution of those atrocities," John Bellinger, the State Department's top legal adviser, later told The Associated Press.

The State Department also strongly supported ICC indictments in 2005 of five Ugandans accused of war crimes in the country's two-decade-old civil conflict.

The move against al-Bashir may be raising another concern, however, because it is an indictment against a current head of state.

"The U.S. is concerned about keeping U.S. officials and particularly the head of state out of the court's jurisdiction," said Madeline Morris, a professor at Duke Law School. Nonetheless, McCormack says the United States already is considering a recent request from the ICC for information involving Darfur but not al-Bashir.

"The basis of a response probably would be what information we had," he said.

Irish Times Editorial

"Systematic delays and disgraceful indecision have characterised international approaches to Sudan's political future and deployment of humanitarian forces in Darfur. This legal jolt should bring its future to greater international attention and prospective action." - **Irish Times**.