


Local newspapers:

All newspapers reported on yesterday's Council of Ministers meeting which came out with the decision to not recognize the ICC and reject any resolution for indictment from the ICC.

Rai Alyam carries a statement from the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ali Al Sadig saying that security will be provided to UNMIS, UNAMID and to the embassies of France, UK and USA. He further stated that riots are expected if the President is indicted. The same newspaper reports also the UNMIS has decided to suspend its work for one day...for precautionary measures UNMIS told its personnel to be ready for evacuation.

Al Intibaha reports that Sudanese Workers Trade Union and Civil Society organizations called for expulsion of UN troops from Darfur and south Sudan, the closure of the embassies of France, UK and USA and the expulsion of their ambassadors. The same newspaper carries a statement from Sudan Ulema Council accusing UN of promoting "Zionist" projects. In the statement the council asks the GoS to do the following: 1) Sudan should withdraw from the UN, 2) UN troops should withdraw from Sudan, 3) general mobilization should be declared in the country.

Sudan Tribune carries a statement by the South Sudan Democratic Forum saying that President Omar Hassan Ahmed Bashir "is the head of our state and therefore the symbol of the Sudanese sovereignty under which we all operate. An attack on that symbol is an attack on our sovereignty itself and on all of us. We resent it, we oppose it and we will fight against it...The South Sudan Democratic Forum hereby calls on all the political forces of Sudan to unite, in the face of a very clearly pre-mediated political assault on the sovereignty of our country..."

International and Sudan Tribune website headlines:

- UN chief denies promising Sudan president to press ICC prosecutor (ST)
- Sudan reassures foreigners as demo slams ICC (AFP)
- Sudanese cabinet rejects ICC indictment (ST)
- Sudan: ICC case could provoke violence (AP)
- Sudan braces for ICC charges' impact (BBC)
- Sudanese Protest War Crimes Case Against President at Scripted Rally (NYT)
- Stampede kills 23 at Sudan graduation ceremony (Agencies)

UN chief denies promising Sudan president to press ICC prosecutor

July 11, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) – The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon quickly moved to deny reports that he promised the Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir to work on suspending imminent indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against him.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) quoted Ban as telling Al-Bashir that he "regrets the move of the International Criminal Court to arrest a number of senior state officials".

SUNA also quoted the Sudan's U.N. ambassador Abdel-Mahmood Mohamed as saying that Ban Ki Moon has promised to work on blocking the ICC indictments through his meetings with the P-5 members of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

But Ban's office issued a statement on Sunday saying that he stressed to Al-Bashir during their conversation that he "does not have any influence on the ICC prosecutor".

However Ban Ki-Moon said in an interview published Monday he was "very worried" by the possibility of Sudan's president being indicted for crimes committed in the country's Darfur region.

"It would have very serious consequences for peacekeeping operations including the political process," he told Le Figaro newspaper. "I'm very worried but nobody can evade justice."

Ban underlined that no political process could be effective without the rule of law.

He also indicated to Al-Bashir that he was concerned by a declaration made by Sudan's UN envoy which linked the initiative of the ICC Prosecutor with the two UN peacekeeping operations deployed to Sudan.

Sudan's UN ambassador told reporters that "all options are on the table" if Sudan president is indeed indicted. "The limit is the sky" he responded to a question at the UN headquarters about measures Khartoum could take.

Ban also deplored "the scale and brutality of the deadly 8 July attack" and urged the Sudanese president to "investigate the circumstances of the attack, which left seven peacekeepers dead and 19 wounded".

The outgoing UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Marie Guehenno told a closed UNSC session this week that evidence show that Darfur rebels are not behind the attack on the peacekeepers.

This week the UN Secretary General yesterday had refused to comment on the speculations of Al-Bashir's indictments saying that "as a Secretary General I am not in a position to mention anything officially before the announcement by the ICC".

"In principal I believe that peace and justice should go hand in hand. Justice can be part of a peace process but peace without justice cannot be sustainable" he added.

However Ban Ki-Moon said he will assess the situation after the suspects are named next week.

On Friday, the Washington Post reported that ICC prosecutors will seek the arrest of Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir for genocide in Darfur, prompting Khartoum to warn of a threat to peace efforts.

UN Staff in Darfur were informed of the new security arrangements, which restrict the movement of civilian personnel. Any threat against the international personnel would require total evacuation. This is the first time since 2004, date of the entrance of the UN humanitarian staff to Darfur, the international organization takes such decision. **(ST)**

Sudan reassures foreigners as demo slams ICC

KHARTOUM **(AFP)** - Sudan vowed on Sunday to guarantee foreigners' safety as around 1,000 protesters slammed the United States and International Criminal Court for an expected indictment of their head of state.

President Omar al-Beshir presided over a crisis cabinet meeting for two and a half hours in a bid to close ranks before the chief ICC prosecutor is on Monday widely expected to name the Sudanese ruler a war crimes suspect.

Ministers rejected any move by the court to prosecute Sudanese leaders for alleged war crimes in Darfur, said state media. ***"As for those who are here in the different diplomatic organisations, we don't think they are going to be under any pressure from the Sudanese citizens. Everything will be secure," said Information Minister Al-Zahawi Malek.***

"Their lives and possessions and all these things are secure. The Sudanese people are very friendly indeed," he added when asked if Sudan could guarantee it would not ask UN officials or foreign diplomats to leave.

"We have this ICC resolution but we don't connect it. Everyone here, while they are in Sudan, will be safe," he said.

Western embassies have advised nationals to limit unnecessary travel and the United Nations has stepped up its security levels amid fears that the ICC's move to charge the sitting head of state could spark violent retaliation.

Western officials fear Sudan could expel members of the UN-led peacekeeping mission in Darfur or aid groups. Contingency plans have been made for an evacuation and non-essential staff have been told to stay at home on Monday.

After the cabinet meeting, the information minister said that Sudan was thinking over what steps to take once a clear decision was announced in The Hague.

He said the cabinet agreed to respond with "legal steps" and to keep the Sudanese public fully abreast of the developments.

Around 1,000 demonstrators rallied in Khartoum outside the Council of Ministers before the crisis government meeting, angrily denouncing the anticipated charges at the government-sponsored protest.

Chanting: "Down, down USA" as well as Islamic slogans and brandishing banners reading: "Khartoum condemns Ocampo accusation" and "You are joking, Ocampo," in reference to ICC chief prosecutor Luis Morno-Ocampo.

Traffic was jammed during the protest which one demonstrator on the sidelines said was instigated by calls on radio and television to support the president, who seized power in an Islamist-backed bloodless coup 19 years ago.

Sudanese officials have been locked in emergency talks for days, requested an Arab League crisis meeting and summoned ambassadors to warn that the government will make a political response to any ICC move on its top members.

Foreign ministry spokesman Ali al-Sadiq said the authorities were stepping up security, particularly around the British, French and US embassies in Khartoum, and predicted "chaos" following any indictment of the president.

Fears have been voiced that naming Beshir could trigger a military response from either Sudanese forces or their proxies against UN and African Union peacekeepers, and embolden Darfur rebels who attacked Khartoum in May.

Sudan has warned that it could "destroy" the already stalled peace process in Darfur and even have a spin off affect on other African countries, which provide the bulk of troops to the UN-led peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

The information minister on Sunday alluded to the travel ban -- which would accompany any formal arrest warrant of Beshir -- in preventing the president from pressing foreign diplomacy and other peace efforts outside Sudan.

Sudan refuses to recognise the ICC or arrest warrants issued for secretary of state for humanitarian affairs Ahmed Haroun and Arab militia leader Ali Kosheib. It says it has established its own court to try Darfur cases.

EU Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso, meanwhile, said on Sunday he had warned President Beshir his country could face UN war crimes charges unless it worked to end the bloodshed in Darfur. "I was two years ago in Khartoum and in Darfur itself. I spoke to president Beshir," Barroso told reporters on the sidelines of a Mediterranean summit in Paris.

"I said to him it would be better for him to show as soon as possible real commitment to cooperate with the United Nations and the international community. If not, some action like this one could happen."

The African Union, which has far warmer relations with Sudan than the United Nations, on Saturday warned that ICC plans to prosecute government officials could jeopardise peace efforts in Darfur. Darfur rebel groups have expressed delight at the prospect of an ICC arrest warrant for Beshir

Sudanese cabinet rejects ICC indictment

July 13, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Amid high expectations of the indictment of President Omer al-Bashir tomorrow, the Sudanese cabinet in an emergency meeting held today reaffirmed its rejection to the ICC decisions on war crimes or crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

The Sudanese Council of Minister headed by the President al-bashir and attended by his two deputies, Salva Kiir Maydrit and Ali Osman Mohamed Taha reiterated its rejection to recognize the International Criminal Court or indictment issued by the Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

The meeting was held after the leakage of the imminent indictment of the Sudanese president in the second case to be filed by the ICC prosecutor to the pretrial Chamber on Monday 14 July.

The Cabinet called on the international community to halt "irresponsible political blackmail" and to take the necessary steps to achieve peace and settlement in the country.

However, the Sudanese government praised the "solid position undertaken by regional and international organizations, friendly and brotherly countries for the benefit of our people and government."

Thousands of ruling National Congress supporter organized a protest today in the capital against the ICC and its expected indictment of Monday. Outside the meeting, hundreds of demonstrators carrying flags and pro-government banners, chanted slogans against the US Administration and the ICC Proscutor.

Holding banners reading "Ocampo is a plotter against Sudan's people," "You are jocking Ocampo", and chanting "Down, Down USA!" "With our souls, with our blood we die for Bashir," the protesters marched through the streets of Khartoum towards the offices of the United Nations.

Al-Bashir briefly emerged from the Cabinet meeting and went to the roof of the building to wave at the cheering crowd. But he did not address the supporters. Officially, it was said that the demonstration was organization by labor groups in the different government institutions.

The cabinet, in a statement issued following the emergency meeting, said resolved to implement the signed peace agreements and to run the general elections in the country.

It also stressed that "the issue of Darfur is the cause of the people and Government of Sudan, and the state is working with all its effort to solve it; without dictation from anyone but the national conscience and the duty of national responsibility." (ST)

Sudan: ICC case could provoke violence (AP)

KHARTOUM - Sudan's ruling party warned Sunday there will be more violence in Darfur if the country's president is indicted for crimes against humanity and genocide as hundreds of people rallied in Khartoum to show their support for the longtime leader.

In Sudan, the ruling National Congress Party called the case against the al-Bashir "irresponsible cheap political blackmail" that has no legal basis, according to a statement from the party that was broadcast on state TV. It also warned there would be "more violence and blood" in Darfur if an arrest warrant is issued against the president, TV reported.

Al-Bashir huddled with Cabinet ministers and advisers Sunday, weighing how the government would respond to any action taken by the ICC. Sudan has also asked the Arab League for an emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers.

Outside the meeting, hundreds of Sudanese, many carrying flags and pro-government banners, demonstrated to show their support for al-Bashir, who seized power in a 1989 coup. Others held signs ridiculing the ICC and its prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo of Argentina. "Ocampo is a plotter against Sudan's people," one banner read.

Al-Bashir briefly emerged from the Cabinet meeting and went to the roof of the building to wave at the cheering crowd. He did not say anything.

Sudan's state TV said the protest was organized by Sudanese labor groups.

"The different worker organizations are standing against any plot targeting the national sovereignty and expressing their support to the leadership," the TV said.

The report also said the country's Justice Minister Abdel Basset Sabdarat assured the demonstrators that his ministry was "ready to confront this plot." He did not elaborate.

One of the participants at the Cabinet meeting, Essam Youssef, told reporters afterward that Sudanese politicians agreed to send "a strong message to the international community that we stand with all our power against anybody ... who seeks to impose sanctions or target our head of state."

"This action violates Sudan's sovereignty and its people's values and dignity," said Youssef, an ally of al-Bashir who also heads the country's Muslim Brotherhood movement.

On Saturday, a government spokesman said al-Bashir's indictment would be "disastrous" for the region and could affect the work of humanitarian organizations.

Mahjoub Fadul Badry did not specify what actions might be taken, but there are fears the charges could provoke reprisals against international aid workers and UN African Union peacekeepers already experiencing difficulties in doing their work.

A U.N. spokeswoman said Sunday the peacekeeping force was on security alert but still relying on the Sudanese government for protection inside the country. Some foreign staff not directly working on emergency or humanitarian relief operations could be "temporarily relocated," said Shereen Zorba, deputy UNAMID spokeswoman. Zorba stressed that any disruption to humanitarian work in Darfur could have disastrous consequences. "The people of Darfur have already suffered unimaginable suffering and should not be subjected to more tragedy," she said.

[Sudan braces for ICC charges' impact \(BBC\)](#)

The BBC's Laura Trevelyan at The Hague says it is widely expected that the prosecutor will name President Omar al-Bashir as a suspect.

The stage is set for an epic confrontation to unfold, pitting a prosecutor against a president, and the interests of justice against those of peace.

Diplomats and senior UN officials expect Mr Moreno-Ocampo to seek an arrest warrant for President Bashir, accusing him of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Sudan's government does not recognise the court and last year refused to hand over two suspects, including a minister accused of committing war crimes by the prosecutor.

Even before the charges have been announced, the political fallout has begun.

Sudan's permanent representative to the UN, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamad, told me that this would be disastrous for the security and stability of the country. He said the government condemned in the strongest possible terms the move by what he described as "this criminal Ocampo".

Diplomatic sources tell the BBC that Sudan wants the work of the prosecutor to be suspended by the UN Security Council, which originally asked Mr Moreno-Ocampo to investigate crimes in Darfur. Khartoum could lobby China, Russia and South Africa for support. Those countries might all agree that the prosecutor's work is not helping the already fragile situation in Darfur, and believe in principle that trying to arrest a head of state constitutes interference in the affairs of a sovereign nation.

However, Western diplomats say it would be hard for any of the 106 nations that recognise the court to stop the prosecutor from doing his job, since that would undermine its very creation.

Unease over the implications of all this are widespread.

Alex de Waal from the Social Science Research Council in New York told the BBC that pursuing justice in the absence of having achieved peace and stability is a very risky one. While Mr de Waal says there is no doubt that President Bashir has been a repressive leader, he questions whether it is wise to indict him while he is still in power, as it might actually make things worse for the Sudanese people.

Senior UN officials are concerned about retaliatory attacks against the fragile joint UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (Unamid), whose troops Sudan fears could be used to arrest those indicted by the ICC. UN officials are also worried about the impact this could have on the situation in southern Sudan, fearing anti-government groups in the south and the west will be emboldened if they perceive the president as having been weakened.

However, Richard Dicker of New York-based Human Rights Watch told the BBC that the expected request for an arrest warrant for Mr Bashir was a major step in limiting impunity for the horrific acts committed against the people of Darfur since 2003. Mr Dicker said that this would send the message that no-one was above the law. The request by the ICC prosecutor to arrest a sitting head of state would generate intense debate, but it was crucial to bring justice to the people of Darfur, he added.

Sudanese Protest War Crimes Case Against President at Scripted Rally in Capital

By LYDIA POLGREEN, DAKAR, Senegal (**NYT**) — Thousands of people took to the streets of Sudan's tense capital on Sunday in a carefully choreographed protest against the expected request by the International Criminal Court to arrest President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on war crimes charges.

Students and members of the ruling National Congress Party were bused to the center of the capital, Khartoum, where they waved banners denouncing the international court and the United Nations...

Sudan's state-run television station broadcast a statement from the National Congress Party saying that the court's actions would cause "more violence and blood" in Darfur, The Associated Press reported...

There is rising alarm in diplomatic circles, though, that charges against Mr. Bashir could jeopardize the vast aid and peacekeeping efforts in Darfur and undermine attempts to find a political settlement to end the crisis.

After being briefed on the prosecutor's case on Friday, the ***African Union's Peace and Security Council issued a statement expressing its "strong conviction that the search for justice should be pursued in a way that does not impede or jeopardize efforts aimed at promoting lasting peace," and "reiterated the A.U.'s concern with the misuse of indictments against African leaders."***

Andrew S. Natsios, the former United States envoy to Sudan, bluntly condemned the prosecutor's plans on the blog Making Sense of Darfur, which is published by the Social Science Research Council.

"Without a political settlement, Sudan may go the way of Somalia, pre-genocide Rwanda or the Democratic Republic of the Congo: a real potential for widespread atrocities and bloodshed as those in power seek to keep it at any cost because of the alternatives," he wrote. "This indictment may well shut off the last remaining hope for a peaceful settlement for the country."

Khartoum was relatively calm on Sunday despite the protests, which were tightly scripted and not violent. Embassies and aid organizations urged their workers to stock up on food and water, and some evacuated workers from Darfur.

United Nations officials struggled to find ways to protect the roughly 9,000 peacekeeping troops in the Darfur region. Originally sent to protect civilians from the cataclysmic violence — 300,000 people have died, according to the United Nations, and 2.5 million have fled their homes — the peacekeepers have found themselves increasingly in the crosshairs of the rising chaos in the region.

"People are afraid," a senior peacekeeping official in Darfur said in a telephone interview. "Anything can happen."

Ban Ki-moon, secretary general of the United Nations, called Mr. Bashir on Saturday to express concern about the safety of United Nations personnel in Sudan and to stress that the work of the court was independent from the rest of the United Nations, his office said in a statement.

The secretary general also said he was "gravely concerned about the scale and brutality" of a brazen attack on a convoy of peacekeepers returning from a patrol to investigate reports of atrocities committed by a government-allied rebel group in Darfur.

The attack...has led some officials to suspect that Sudanese government-trained militias were behind the ambush. Ali al-Sadig, a government spokesman, said Sudan's government condemned the attack, adding that evidence investigators had gathered pointed to one of the rebel factions in Darfur.

The peacekeeping force in Darfur, a joint operation of the United Nations and the African Union, could be a prime target of violence and government anger after the announcement by Mr. Moreno-Ocampo, the prosecutor. Already strained by the deteriorating security in Darfur, the force could collapse, United Nations officials said.

"We are a consent-based organization, and if consent is withdrawn, you are looking at a radically different and terrifying situation for the people on the ground," said one official at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, speaking anonymously because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

Anti-genocide and human rights advocates have cheered the decision to request charges against Mr. Bashir, calling it a victory in the battle against impunity. They point out that similar objections, that war crimes charges would hinder peace, were raised in other such cases, including when international courts charged leaders with committing war crimes in Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslavia.

Hussein Abu Shartai, a spokesman for displaced Darfurians living in Kalma, one of the region's largest and most volatile camps, praised the prosecutor, calling the request for an arrest warrant "the moment we have all been waiting for."

There were intense consultations at the United Nations on Friday among Security Council members, including Russia and China, which oppose the indictment, and others, including the United States, that say the indictment should be allowed to proceed...

Stampede kills 23 at Sudan graduation ceremony

July 13, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — A stampede killed 23 people at a Sudanese football stadium on Sunday as a graduation ceremony for youth embarking on their national service was being held, said police and hospital officials.

"Crowds trying to get into al-Mureikh football stadium in Omdurman led to the deaths of 23 people. The majority of them are women and children, and 36 people were injured who are now in Omdurman Hospital," said Sudanese police in a statement.

Relatives flocked to the stadium in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman to watch youth graduate after their basic training before the onset of their one-year obligatory military service.

Morgue official Talal Mohamed said 23 bodies, including children, were brought to the morgue after the incident in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman.

The graduation celebration still went ahead in the presence of Defence Minister Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein and Presidential Adviser Nafie Ali Nafie.

Witnesses at the stadium said there were huge numbers of people pushing at the doors and access was poorly organised. They heard ambulance sirens but did not see those who were killed. (Agencies)