



PRESS STATEMENT

The Hague/Kinshasa, 26 February 2014

PGA members condemn the visit of President Al Bashir to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and call the Congolese authorities to fulfil their obligations to cooperate with the International Criminal Court under the Rome Statute of the ICC

On 25 February 2014, President Al Bashir arrived in the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to attend the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) summit in Kinshasa, which will be held on 26-27 February 2014. In 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Al Bashir, President of Sudan for having allegedly committed genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict in Darfur.

Hosting Mr. Al Bashir is contrary to the legal obligations of the DRC as a State Party to the ICC to cooperate with the Court by executing the pending arrest warrant issued by the ICC against the President of Sudan for the serious crimes he allegedly committed against thousands of defenceless civilians in Darfur.

By abiding to its obligations, the DRC would demonstrate its solidarity with the victims of Darfur as well as its commitment to respect human rights, the Rule of Law and international law, which does not recognize any immunity for heads of states when they are accused before a competent international tribunal of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community

PGA considers that it is imperative to depoliticise the cooperation with the International Criminal Court through the adoption of comprehensive implementing legislations including strong cooperation provisions, such as the one that that National Assembly of the DRC, under the leadership of PGA members, will examine during the next parliamentary session due to start in March 2014.

Parliamentarians for Global Action therefore joins with others to call on the government of the DRC to comply with its obligations under international law and towards the international community, to arrest Mr. Al-Bashir and to surrender him to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

PGA members from around the world expressed:

"I condemn the visit of President Al Bashir of Sudan in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is a violation of international law, as Mr. Al Bashir is sought by the International Criminal Court since 2009 for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in Darfur. While the DRC is benefiting from the work of the Court on its territory, this is an affront to the victims of Darfur, and I therefore urge the Congolese authorities to respect their obligations under international law to arrest and surrender those against whom the ICC has issued an arrest warrant." **Ms.**

Barbara Lochbihler (Germany), Member of the European Parliament.

"In solidarity with the victims of the conflict of Darfur I call on the Congolese authorities to abide by their international obligations to arrest Mr. Al Bashir. As Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC had referred its situation to the Court showing how much it respects this independent judicial institution and it is thus crucial that the DRC continues to show its support to the Court and its commitment to fight impunity not only in their own country by not succumbing to political influence and by fulfilling its duty as State Party to the International Criminal Court." **Hon. Mariame Traoré, MP (Côte d'Ivoire), Chair of the PGA group in Côte d'Ivoire**

“I strongly condemn the lack of cooperation of DRC with the Court. Complying with an ICC Chambers decision and arresting a person that is under an arrest warrant like President Al Bashir is one of the duties that DRC has as a member states of the Rome Statute. As we all know, the ICC has no international police, and for that reason it fully relies in the cooperation of its member states. I truly hope that this situation is remedied and that actions are taken in order to arrest persons that are under warrant of arrest when they travel to State Members of the Rome Statute. I fully support the adoption in all State Members of legislation implementing the Rome Statute which include strong cooperation provisions following the example of many countries such as my own, Uruguay.” **Dip. Felipe Michelini, MP (Uruguay), Convenor of the International Law and Human Rights Programme of PGA**

*“I thank PGA for the move taken to call for the arrest of President Al Bashir by the Congolese Government in keeping with the ICC warrant of arrest issued in 2009. As a State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, the DRC has obligation to adhere to what it has signed. Not to conform to its own obligation is to encourage and legitimize impunity. I therefore urge DRC to give effect to President Al Bashir's arrest without any further delay. **No person should be above the law.**”* **Hon Dr Bernadette Lahai- Former PGA Chairperson, Sierra Leone Parliament and Former Executive Committee Member**

“I call on the DRC authorities to cooperate with the International Criminal Court. This action will be seen by the international community as a significant contribution to the victims of Darfur and at the domestic level it will be an act of good governance”. **Hon. Paul Dehe, MP (Côte d'Ivoire)**

About PGA

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is the largest transnational network of Members of Parliaments from all regions of the world who, in their individual capacity, support the effective operation of the ICC and domestic jurisdictions to end impunity.

Members of PGA have contributed to 76 of the 122 ratifications of, or accession to the Rome Statute to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. The PGA Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute system receives support from the European Commission, European Union and the Governments of Liechtenstein, The Netherlands and Switzerland and Humanity United.

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On-line access to PGA ICC Campaign:

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