



Perspectives from the Arab World

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A monthly selection of Arab official, journalistic and academic sources is compiled to give an overview of the main events, opinions and documents from the perspective of the Arab world.

Main issues in Sudan during March 2009

1. Qatari Peace Initiative
2. President Bashir arrest warrant
3. NGOs in Sudan

Introduction

March 2009 was a turning point for the peace process in Darfur. After the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur, Arab and African states aligned themselves to give their support to the Sudanese President. Sudan rejected the ICC decision, arguing that it is part of a "neocolonialist" plan. Meanwhile, an Afro-Arab delegation was sent to the UN headquarters in NY in February between to ask for a one-year delay of the arrest warrant permitted under Art. 16 of the Rome Statute. Later, a letter from the Arab League on the same issue was circulated in New York as a Security Council document.

The arrest warrant issued by the ICC has been an important and historical step towards the achievement of global international

justice, but at the same time it has served as a trigger for the destabilisation of the peace process in Darfur. The Arab perspective on the subject sees the ICC as an instrument of power rather than justice. A big debate on Justice vs. Peace has been taking place since the ICC's decision was made public and many experts, from both the Arab world and beyond, have warned of the danger that further destabilisation of Sudan's central government could lead to the country's disintegration.

In the immediate aftermath of the ICC's decision, Bashir expelled 13 international aid organisations working in Darfur. Since the United Nations relied heavily on these groups to deliver aid in the region, this decision also paralysed at least half of the UN programs in war-torn Darfur. Following declarations of the Sudanese State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmed Haroun, several organisations from Arab and Asian countries applied to work in Darfur to replace the expelled agencies, but currently there are fears of growing humanitarian crises in at least three refugee camps. At the same time, the only rebel group

participating in Qatar's peace process, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), withdrew from the Doha peace talks after the indictment was made public, and new attacks with casualties on refugee camps and peacekeepers were registered in the area during the month of March.

Regional responses include, on the one hand, Egypt sending new troops to reinforce the UNAMID in Darfur, and members of the African Union, the government of Sudan and the UN meeting in Darfur to explore ways of facilitating and accelerating UNAMID's mandate. On the other hand, according to an internet message, Al Qaeda's second-in-command urged the Sudanese to prepare for guerrilla war against the West after the ICC's indictment was declared.

At the end of March, Bashir travelled to neighboring countries like Eritrea, Libya, Egypt and Qatar in search of the support of Arab leaders. The last of these trips was the 21st Meeting of the Arab League, where members officially declared their support to Bashir.

■ Methodology

The main objective of this newsletter is to fill the language gap between Arab media and western audiences. In order to obtain a complete picture of the information published in Arabic, five different sources have been analysed: the web pages of regional organisations, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, official news agencies, Arab think tanks and, finally, Arabic newspapers.

Our main objective was not to cover all the news published about Sudan and the ongoing humanitarian crisis but to take those pieces of news, editorials and opinion articles that reflect the main trends in the Arab media's perception of the Sudanese issue.

Regarding the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and official news agencies, we focused on those states that have a strong interest in and ties with the Sudan Peace Process, i.e., Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates. On a daily basis

we searched through not only official communiqués but also information about the agendas of ministers of foreign affairs and other important officials to determine the foreign policy of a given country toward Sudan and the impact of the Sudan crisis on their political agenda. As for regional organisations, the most important web pages analysed were those of the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. These organisations have led initiatives on Sudanese issues and have a strong interest in them.

Some Arab think tanks and Arab Human Rights organisations were also included in our analysis, but unfortunately their web impact is not very important. Finally, international Arab information news agencies (such as Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya), International Arab newspapers (Ash Sharq Al Awsat and Al Hayat) and national newspapers from Sudan, Egypt and Libya formed part of our research.

March 2009 Arabic News Report

Darfur Peace Process



The Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs says that the parties involved in the Darfur Peace Process are committed to continuing the negotiations

The Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ahmad bin Abdullah Al Mahmud, affirmed that the Justice and Equality Movement is committed to the Darfur Peace process and will continue with the ongoing negotiations. This statement was made after the meeting held with the joint UN-AU mediator on Darfur, Djibril Bassolé, who was visiting Qatar.

DATE: 10/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8394>

Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs attends the signing of the Tripoli chart

The Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs attended in Tripoli (Libya) the signing of the Tripoli charter between the Darfur revolutionary movements, who have agreed upon a set of issues including a peaceful solution to the conflict. They have made a commitment to enter into the Darfur Peace Negotiations in Doha.

DATE: 15/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8464>

Qatari Prime Minister meets Russian Special Envoy to Sudan

Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al Thani received the Russian Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov on the occasion of his visit to the State of Qatar. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation relations between the two countries and issues of mutual concern.

DATE: 22/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8579>

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs meets Sudanese ambassador and JEM representative

During the two separate meetings that the Qatari Minister for Foreign Affairs held with the Sudanese ambassador and with the JEM representative, views were exchanged on the latest developments in the Darfur peace talks in the wake of the signing of the goodwill and confidence building agreement between the Sudanese government and the JEM in Doha and the Tripoli Charter.

DATE: 22/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8584>

President Bashir International Criminal Court Arrest Warrant

A. ARAB LEAGUE REACTION

Resolution on the International Criminal Court decision to issue a warrant for the arrest of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir

The Arab League Council expresses its strong discomfort regarding the International Criminal Court decision, affirms its support to the Sudanese Republic, and believes this decision will affect the Arab and African efforts for a peace process in Sudan. Meanwhile, it supports the Darfur Peace Process and calls on international and regional organisations to continue their efforts for peace in Sudan.

DATE: 04/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Arab League Website (ARABIC)

http://www.arableagueonline.org/las/picture_gallery/payan4-3-2009.doc

Doha Declaration - 21st Arab League summit

Arab leaders expressed their full support for and solidarity with Sudan seeking the rejection of the arrest warrant issued against Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir by the ICC. The leaders expressed their support for Sudan in the face of all threats targeting its security, stability and territorial integrity and for the rejection of all actions that threaten the peace efforts made by the state of Qatar within the framework of the Arab-African Ministerial Committee and in coordination with the mediator of the joint UN-African Union operation.

DATE: 31/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Doha Summit Web Page

<http://www.dohasummit.com/doha1.pdf>

Musa meets Sudanese Vice President

During his trip to Sudan, Amr Musa met with Sudanese Vice President, Ali Uthman Taha, and also with the Sudanese Minister of Justice, Abdel Basit Sabdarat, and with the Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs. They discussed the decision of the International Criminal Court.

DATE: 07/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Arab League Website (ARABIC)

www.arableagueonline.org/las/arabic/news_details_ar.jsp?art_id=1461



Amr Musa travels to Khartoum

Amr Musa, Arab League Secretary General, traveled to Khartoum where he met with the Sudanese president; with the president's advisor, Dr. Mustafa Uzman Ismail, and with the Egyptian ambassador to Sudan, Dr. Abdel Wahab. Amr Musa said the decision of the International Criminal Court will be part of the agenda of the next Arab League Summit in Qatar.

DATE: 07/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Arab League Website (ARABIC)

http://www.arableagueonline.org/las/arabic/news_details_ar.jsp?art_id=1460

Qatari assistant of the Minister of Foreign Affairs says there is a common Arab position on Sudan

This official said that Arab governments hold a common position on the Bashir issue. He affirmed that during the next Arab League Summit, member states will discuss a draft declaration where they will give support to the Sudanese government and will invoke article 16 of the ICC Treaty to ask for a delay of the arrest warrant.

DATE: 26/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8694>

B. GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL REACTION

Meeting in the GCC

The GCC General Secretary met Dr. Mustafa Uthman Ismail, consultant to the Sudanese President, during the Sudanese official's visit to Saudi Arabia. Qatar affirmed that its government supports the Peace Process in Sudan and will keep this policy.

DATE: 16/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: GCC Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.gcc-sg.org/index.php?action=News&Sub=ShowOne&ID=1158>

C. AFRICAN UNION REACTION

Decision on the application by the International Criminal Court prosecutor for the indictment of the President of the Republic of Sudan

AU expresses its deep concern at the indictment made by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) against the President of the Republic of Sudan; this application would seriously undermine the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating the early resolution of the conflict in Darfur. AU urges the United Nations Security Council to defer the process initiated by the ICC.

DATE: 18/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: African Union Website, (Arabic, English, French and Portuguese)

[http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/january/summit/Decisions/ASSEMBLY-AU-DEC.208-240%20\(XII\)%20ar.pdf](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/january/summit/Decisions/ASSEMBLY-AU-DEC.208-240%20(XII)%20ar.pdf)

The screenshot shows the website of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The main headline reads: "Ihsanoglu lauds IIFA role in enriching collective Ijtihad". Below this, it states: "The Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, took part in the 19th Conference of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) hosted by the Sharjah Awqaf [endowment] General Secretariat in the United Arab Emirates. The five-day event kicked off on Sunday, 28th April 2009...more 26/04/2009". Other news items include "The Thirty-Six Session of The Council of Foreign Ministers" and "The Senior Officials Meeting Preparatory to the Thirty-Sixth Session of the council of foreign ministers".

D. REACTION OF THE ORGANISATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

OIC Secretary General strongly rejects the ICC indictment against the President of Sudan

The Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, has expressed his deep disappointment over the announced indictment by the International Criminal Court against Sudanese President Bashir and strongly rejected this decision. The Secretary General expressed his concern that this action could undermine the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating an early resolution of the conflict in Darfur.

DATE: 04/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Organisation of the Islamic Conference Website (ARABIC)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=1971

OIC Secretary General calls for avoidance of double standards in dealing with the Sudanese crisis

The Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, met on Saturday, March 14, 2009 with President Bashir in Khartoum, where they discussed political developments related to the Darfur crisis. He expressed the solidarity of the OIC with the Sudanese people regarding the arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court against the Sudanese President.

The Secretary General stressed the rejection of the OIC of the double standards pertaining to the issue of justice, particularly with regard to the extradition of those accused of committing war crimes in Darfur. He expressed his confidence in the Sudanese judicial system to deal with this issue.

DATE: 15/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Organization of the Islamic Conference Website (ARABIC)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=1994

E. QATARI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Qatari Premier: the Sudanese president is welcomed in Qatar

The Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister confirmed that Qatar will invite all Arab countries' leaders to take part in the Doha summit, including Sudan. He added that the Sudanese president is welcomed in Qatar.

DATE: 10/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8404>

President Bashir received a verbal message from the Emir of Qatar

The message was conveyed by Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister when the Sudanese President received him at the Sudanese Presidential Palace. The message referred to the close relations between the two countries and means of further enhancing them.

DATE: 24/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8664>

Qatari Premier: the government and people of Qatar support Sudan

In a press conference before leaving Sudan, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim underlined the support of the government and people of Qatar to Sudan.

Regarding the Darfur Peace Process he said that the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) will take part in the talks that will take place after the Arab Summit on March 30 and 31.

On the participation of the Sudanese President in the Arab Summit, he stated that the State of Qatar has invited President Bashir, but the decision to attend is to be taken by the Sudanese authorities.

DATE: 24/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=8659>

F. EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Egyptian Foreign Minister sent messages to his counterparts among the permanent members of the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary General

Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit has sent messages expressing Egyptian points of view regarding the means to overcome the Sudanese crisis with the International Criminal Court. Egypt called for all concerned international and regional parties to hold an international conference in order to reach a common view on Sudan's different issues.

DATE: 07/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/ugentmes732009

G. SUDANESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs says the ICC decision is aimed at blocking Chinese influence in Africa

The minister said that the ICC arrest warrant is part of a plan to blockade Chinese influence in Africa. The ICC issued this decision at a moment when Sudan and China are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relationships and when many cooperation programs are in process. He said that Sudanese cooperation with China is strategically important.

DATE: 19/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (ARABIC)

<http://www.mfa.gov.sd/arabic/newsViewer.php?id=%202990>

News Agencies

A. AL JAZEERA

A new section on Darfur is on the web page, entitled "Bashir and the Criminal Court"

This section includes: Basic Facts, Personalities, Agreements, Chronology, Legal actions, Questions and Comments (Is Bashir's detention a judicial decision or does it mark the politicisation of international institutions?), Photos.

<http://www.aljazeera.net/nr/exeres/1d08e867-8b6a-4bff-8564-9d26604a4019.htm?>

Bashir visits Cairo in his second trip abroad after the ICC arrest warrant

During this trip he had a meeting with President Mubarak and the Egyptian president reaffirmed his support to the Sudanese government.

DATE: 25/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Al Jazeera News Network (ARABIC)

<http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2BE1B7B5-8D5E-4296-966A-560293275924.htm>

Newspapers

Five scenarios after the ICC arrest warrant

According to this article, the ICC decision generates five possible scenarios for the Sudanese government. These are: to discuss and renegotiate the current situation in Darfur and the arrest warrant; to establish an agreement involving European states so they can support Khartoum in order to reach a consensus; the possibility that Arab and African states might obtain a delay of the arrest warrant by invoking article 16 of the ICC statute; an internal change in the Sudanese Government that would lead to the submission of Bashir to the ICC; or the fifth and final scenario is that as the ICC does not have power in Sudan, the arrest warrant will not be executed.

DATE: 05/03/2009

SOURCE: Ash Sahaqi Al Awsat (ARABIC)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=11055&article=509715>

Sudan's interest and Bashir's interest.

By *Elias Harfoush*

All those who have opposed the ICC warrant for the arrest of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir did not do so in order to clear the president's name or for the purpose of confronting the "colonialist scheme" being implemented by ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo, as the Sudanese government has accused him. (...)

DATE: 05/03/2009

SOURCE: Dar Al Hayat (ENGLISH)

<http://64.26.31.21:2010/opinion/OPED/03-2009/Article-20090305-d6fb543-c0a8-10ed-01a8-2e9288175d98/story.html>

Arab lawmakers condemn ICC move against Bashir

The Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (APU), a regional grouping of 22 Arab parliaments, has called on the UN Security Council to suspend the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

DATE: 6/03/2009

SOURCE: Arab News (ENGLISH)

<http://www.arabnews.com/services/print/print.asp?artid=119944&d=6&m=3&y=2009&hl=Arab%20lawmakers%20condemn%20ICC%20move%20against%20Bashir>

The American solution to the Sudanese crisis: Presidential elections where Bashir cannot be a candidate

According to sources consulted by this newspaper, Washington says that Sudan must reach a complete peace agreement and that for this to be achieved, parliamentary and presidential elections should be held this year in which Bashir must not be a candidate. This would be an acceptable solution to the issue.

DATE: 07/03/2009

SOURCE: Ash Sahaq Al Awsat (ARABIC)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=509826&is-sueno=11056>

Iran and Hamas dispatch solidarity missions to Sudan president

Iran and the Palestinian militant group Hamas have shown their support for Sudan's president, sending top officials to the Sudanese capital and denouncing the international warrant for his arrest on charges of war crimes in Darfur.

DATE: 7/03/2009

SOURCE: Haaretz (ENGLISH)

www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=1069198

SLM leader to mobilise African and Arab support for ICC arrest warrant

Abdel Wahid Al-Nur, leader of the Sudan Liberation movement, has said that he is planning a series of contacts with African and Arab countries to mobilise them to defend the ICC arrest warrant against the Sudanese president.

DATE: 7/03/2009

SOURCE: Sudan Tribune (ENGLISH)

http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id_article=30408

Khartoum 'rejects' Darfur conference

Sudan will not be present at the international conference on Darfur attended by Britain, France and the US, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ali Karti said yesterday (...)

DATE: 14/03/2009

SOURCE: Gulf Times (ENGLISH)

www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/printArticle.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=278614&version=1&template_id=37&parent_id=17

Arabs view indictment of Sudan president as act of imperialism

Luis Moreno Ocampo, the International Criminal Court prosecutor general, last week issued an indictment against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. This made him an instant hero for civil rights activists, and the enemy of Arab opponents of "new imperialism".

DATE: 15/03/2009

SOURCE: Haaretz (ENGLISH)

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=1071071>

According to governmental sources Al Bashir's trip to the Gulf is a "security issue"

Sudanese officials said that a security commission will make the necessary arrangements for all the trips abroad of President Bashir. According to this information Sudanese Air Force will protect the president's plane while it is in Sudanese airspace.

DATE: 18/03/2009

SOURCE: Ash Sahaq Al Awsat (ARABIC)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=511433&is-sueno=11068>

Sudanese president sends a letter to Saudi King

The Sudanese vice president had a meeting with Abdallah ben Abdel Aziz where he delivered a letter that President Bashir sent to the Saudi Head of State. In a telephone conversation, the Sudanese Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmad Harum, said that the NGOs working in Sudan were devoted not only to humanitarian services but also intelligence activities.

DATE: 23/03/2009

SOURCE: Ash Sahaq Al Awsat (ARABIC)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=11073&article=512099>



Abu Tayyib Ocampo. By Tariq Alhomayed

"A leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ali Gerasha, banned President Bashir from traveling to Doha, because self-preservation is one of the most important requisites in Islam. He said "Muslim scholars have agreed upon the five requisites, and self-preservation is second only to the safeguarding of religion." The question that comes to mind: Where were those who issued fatwas when it came to Darfur? Where were their fatwas to stop this humanitarian crisis?"

DATE: 24/03/2009

SOURCE: Ash Sahaq Al Awsat (ENGLISH)

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=2&id=16170>

Jordan dissents from Arab position on ICC warrant for Sudan's Bashir

The Jordanian government reiterated that it will fulfil its obligations under the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC) despite the arrest warrant for Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

DATE: 24/03/2009

SOURCE: Sudan Tribune (ENGLISH)

http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id_article=30619

The man that does not like Bashir

According to Talaha Yibril (Saudi writer) there are three Argentinean personalities that are very famous; the first is Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the second Diego Maradona, and the third, the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo. The lawyer asserted in a press conference: "Possibly it will take a month or two months, a year or two years, but at the end Bashir will have to face the charges". This article gives a short biography of Moreno Ocampo in order to make him known to Arab readers.

DATE: 25/03/2009

SOURCE: Ash Sahaq Al Awsat (ARABIC)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=45&issueno=11056&article=509729&search=&state=true>

Bashir and Sudanese sovereignty

An article written by Abdallah Eskander where he says that to the Sudanese authorities, Bashir's detention is a case of sovereignty and national dignity rather than just a case of international justice, and that Sudanese concerns must be taken into account.

DATE: 25/03/2008

SOURCE: Al Hayat (ARABIC)

<http://www.alhayat.com/opinion/03-2009/Item-20090324-39835cac-c0a8-10ed-000c-e0bbc9d8b316/story.html>

Bashir and Sudan's sovereignty. By Abdullah Iskandar

Following the International Criminal Court's decision to issue a warrant for President Omar al-Bashir's arrest for serious human rights violation charges concerning the Darfur crisis, the Sudanese authorities are stirring up the issue of national sovereignty and dignity. (...)

DATE: 25/03/2009

SOURCE: Dar Al Hayat (ENGLISH)

<http://english.daralhayat.com/opinion/OPED/03-2009/Article-20090325-3e3aeac4-c0a8-10ed-000c-e0bb3b0362dc/story.html>

Egyptian – Sudanese Summit

In a press conference after Bashir visit's to Egypt, the Egyptian Foreign Minister said his government does not accept the court's manner of dealing with the Sudanese president. Abul Geit said that Bashir and Mubarak discussed ways to secure the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

DATE: 26/MARCH/2009

SOURCE: Al Ahram (ARABIC)

<http://www.ahram.org.eg/Index.asp?CurFN=fron1.htm&DID=9898>

Other relevant Information and documents

- African Union: 18-19 March 2009- Meeting of High Level Panel on Darfur, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/march/panale/Press%20Statement%20AUPD.pdf>
- Organisation of the Islamic Conference: 27 March 2009 - Emergency Meeting of the Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives in New York (See Annex 1)
- Arab League of States: Decision of the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court regarding His Excellency President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of the Republic of the Sudan (See Annex 2)

MARCH 2009. ARABIC MEDIA TRENDS

- According to the analysis of regional Arab organisations' web pages throughout this period, the topic of Darfur features very little.
- Arab Foreign Affairs Ministries tended to avoid open or official support to President Bashir, at least in their web pages.
- There are few official communiqués on this matter (the most important being the Egyptian one).
- The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on Arab official declarations giving support to President Bashir. In this regard, different Sudanese embassies in the Arab World published statements where they emphasised the idea that Arab governments are supporting Sudan.
- Apart from Sudanese newspapers, Darfur is not present in the Arab press on a daily basis. There is no news on the subject, but rather propaganda.
- Regarding the Arab Media, only Al Jazeera and the international Arab newspapers (Ash Sharq Al Awsat and Al Hayat) show an interest in Darfur, as reflected in the publication of many articles on the issue.
- When Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya refer to those issues (Sudan, Darfur, Bashir) they tend to use simple direct speech, or in some cases they do not condemn Bashir's conduct (for example during his trips to Eritrea and Egypt).

Chronology - March 2009

4 MARCH

- The International Criminal Court issues a warrant for the arrest of Sudanese President Bashir on five counts of crimes against humanity and two counts of war crimes.

5 MARCH

- Bashir expels 13 international aid organizations, accusing them of working with the ICC on the arrest warrant. Three local groups are also shut down.
- JEM rebels pull out of the second round of peace talks scheduled to be held in Doha in April and demand that the aid groups are allowed to return.

7 MARCH

- Leaders from Iran and Hamas visit Khartoum in support of Bashir.

10 MARCH

- Sudan's opposition leader Hassan Al-Turabi is released from prison without explanation.

12 MARCH

- Three Médecins Sans Frontières staff are kidnapped.

14 MARCH

- Médecins Sans Frontières aid workers get released.

17 MARCH

- UNAMID peacekeeper shot dead in the second attack on peacekeepers in western Sudan since the ICC's arrest warrant was issued.

18 MARCH

- US President Obama names Scott Gration as his special envoy to Sudan.

24 MARCH

- Sudanese man shot dead in latest violent attack against aid workers in the region.
- Jordan dissents from Arab position on ICC warrant against Bashir.
- Bashir visits Eritrea.

26 MARCH

- Bashir visits Egypt.
- Bashir visits Libya.

27 MARCH

- Emergency Meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives in New York.

30 MARCH

- Egypt sends new troops to reinforce UNAMID.

30-31 MARCH

- 21st summit of the Arab League in Doha, Qatar.

31 MARCH

- Bashir visits Saudi Arabia.
- Members of the African Union, the UN and the Sudanese Government meet in El Fasher, North Darfur, to talk on ways to facilitate and accelerate UNAMID's mandate

■ Annex 1. Organization of the Islamic Conference: 27 March 2009 - Emergency Meeting of the Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives in New York

Final communique of the Expanded meeting of the executive committee of the organization of the islamic conference (oic) at the level of permanent representatives held in new york on 27 march 2009 on the icc's move targeting he the president of the republic of the Sudan.

In continuation to the position repeatedly expressed by the OIC's various organs on the burning issue of Sudan and the International Criminal Court (ICC) and following the serious situation arising from the ICC's move against His Excellency Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, an Emergency Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives in New York was convened on 27 March 2009 at the UN headquarters to discuss the issue.

The meeting in its deliberations, recalled the last emergency session of the OIC Expanded Meeting of the Executive Committee at the Level of Ministers held in Jeddah on 4th August 2008 and the statement of H.E the Secretary General of the OIC Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu on the 4th of March 2009 in which he strongly rejected the ICC move describing it as void and lacking sound reasoning.

It then finally agreed on the following:

1. The meeting reiterated its respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, unity and non-interference in the internal affairs of the Sudan, a victim of this machination, and called on the international community to do the same.
2. The meeting considered the recent action by the ICC targeting HE President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir as unwarranted, totally unacceptable and further noted that this action would not only undermine the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating the early resolution of the conflict in Darfur and promote long lasting peace and reconciliation in the Sudan, but also lead to destabilization of the country and the region.

3. The meeting regretted and rejected the selectivity and double standard applied in relations to issues of war crimes and crimes against humanity which adversely affect the credibility of the international legal system.
4. The meeting reaffirmed the respect for immunity of Heads of State in accordance with the Vienna Convention of 1961 and its inviolability, and expressed its unflinching solidarity with the Sudan under the leadership of President Omar al-Bashir, and conveyed full support for the various endeavours of the Government of the Sudan to achieve genuine national reconciliation, lasting peace and stability within the context of a sovereign and united country. Accordingly, the meeting appealed to all Sudanese parties and other stakeholders to recommit themselves to the peace process as the only viable way to resolve the conflict in Darfur.
5. The meeting welcomed the efforts by the Government of Sudan towards expediting the investigations and trials of those who may have committed suspected war crimes in Darfur, cognizant of the capability of the Sudanese judiciary.
6. The meeting called upon the UN Security Council to assume its responsibility and suspend indefinitely the move by the ICC against the President of the Sudan. The meeting further called on the ICC to revoke its decision. In this context, it requested the OIC to coordinate its efforts with the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and any other groupings at the UN and elsewhere to collectively tackle and achieve this objective.
7. The OIC, at its various levels, will continue to remain seized of the issue.

■ Annex 2. League of Arab States: Decision of the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court regarding His Excellency President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of the Republic of the Sudan

Letter dated 16 March 2009 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith resolution 7069 adopted by the extraordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States, held at the ministerial level in Cairo on 4 March 2009, regarding the decision of Pre-Trial

Chamber 1 of the International Criminal Court against the President of the Republic of the Sudan, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir (see annex).

I should be grateful if, pursuant to Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yahya Mahmassani Ambassador

Annex to the letter dated 16 March 2009 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council [Original: Arabic]

Decision of the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court regarding His Excellency President Omar Hassan A. al-Bashir of the Republic of the Sudan

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the ministerial level in extraordinary session on 4 March 2009,

Having heard the presentation made by the head of the delegation of the Republic of the Sudan and the statements of the other heads of delegation on the issue,

Reaffirming its previous resolutions on the matter,

Decides

- 1.** To express its profound concern regarding the issuance by the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court of a warrant of arrest for Mr. Omar Hassan A. al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan;
- 2.** To affirm its solidarity with the Republic of the Sudan in confronting any designs against its sovereignty, unity and stability; its belief in the competence and independence of the judiciary of the Sudan, inasmuch as it was entrusted with the original responsibility for achieving justice; and its rejection of any attempt to politicize the principles of international justice and use them to diminish the sovereignty, unity and stability of States;
- 3.** To express its profound regret at the inability of the Security Council to invoke article 16 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in order to defer the actions that have been taken by the Court;
- 4.** To affirm the immunity enjoyed by Heads of State pursuant to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;
- 5.** To affirm that the issuance of the warrant pre-empts all African and Arab efforts to defuse this crisis, disregards the requirements for justice and the attainment of stability and peace in the Sudan, as well as the considerations involved in resolving the situation in Darfur, in particular the implementation of the peace agreement in southern Sudan and preparations for general elections in the second half of

2009, and poses an enormous challenge to efforts aimed at achieving peace and implementing the peace agreement in the south;

- 6.** To request the Security Council to assume its responsibility for maintaining civil peace and stability in the Sudan, in view of the assiduous efforts being made by the Government of National Unity to achieve peace throughout the country, and to call upon the Permanent Members of the Security Council to reach a unified position in order to safeguard peace and stability in the Sudan and provide an opportunity to make progress towards a political settlement of the crisis in Darfur;
- 7.** To request all parties in the Sudan not to allow efforts aimed at achieving a political settlement of the crisis in Darfur to be undermined, nor to allow the creation of a climate of instability in the country that would threaten the prospects for achieving peace in Darfur or the south, or any efforts detrimental to the security situation on the ground;
- 8.** To call upon regional and international parties to participate by offering appropriate assistance to and creating a suitable climate for the political process that aims to reach a settlement between the Sudanese Government and the armed movements in Darfur, and to avoid taking any action that would impede progress towards comprehensive civil peace in the Sudan;
- 9.** To continue joint efforts between the League of Arab States and the African Union, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement, to consider the consequences of the issuance of this warrant with the Security Council, including the dispatch of a joint high-level Arab-African delegation to the Council in order to defer the action taken by the Court;
- 10.** To remain in session in order to follow developments in the situation and prepare for the presentation of the matter to the forthcoming Arab