

Sudanese Civil Society Initiative

An Urgent Call for a Conference to Address the Current Crisis: Seizing the Final Opportunity or Allowing Further Chaos?

February 4th 2009

We, the undersigned below members of Sudanese civil society, media, and actors in the public domain, have been in consultations since the presentation of charges by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court against His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sudan. The announcement of these charges and the various official reactions to it has generated confusion and uncertainty about Sudan's political future.

We believe there is an urgent need to engage civic and political leaders, including the two parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), to discuss the current crisis facing Sudan. To this end, we are calling for a conference to discuss the situation holistically, and with the participation and representation of key Sudanese civic and political forces and regional and international stakeholders who are directly contributing to peace, justice and democracy in Sudan.

The proposed conference is a response to many of our concerns about the direction Sudan is heading at this critical crossroads, just two years before the CPA interim period will expire. The reactions of the government authorities, represented by the senior ruling party, National Congress Party (NCP), to the ICC charges are only deepening the crisis and jeopardizing the rights of Sudanese people. The Interim National Constitution, particularly the second Chapter on the basic rights and freedoms, is not being implemented. And there has yet to be a genuine peace process for Darfur that addresses the rights of Darfurians and brings them justice.

Our initiative is based on the belief that democratic transformation is the only solution for the country and a pre-requisite for free and fair elections. We also believe there is a need for a comprehensive process for reconciliation and healing throughout Sudan. This process must start with a strategy for addressing the root causes of conflict in Darfur, because the policies that fuelled that conflict continue to threaten peace and stability in Sudan.

This initiative, by addressing our concerns about the impact of the ICC charges on the peace and stability of the whole country now, will allow

participants to develop a strategy for transforming Sudan's many challenges into opportunities and window of hope.

- **Purpose of the Conference:**

The conference aims to achieve broad consensus within Sudan on a course of action that will lead Sudan out of its current crisis. This includes a practical course of action to consolidate peace processes and democratic transition; to ensure a just and comprehensive solution to the Darfur crisis; to respond to the demands of the marginalized regions in a genuine federal system; and to address chronic social problems such as poverty, poor living conditions for displaced persons, unemployment, corruption, gender inequality and racism.. The conference aims to build trust and foster reconciliation between communities and create a foundation for building a peaceful, free, prosperous and unified Sudan.

In finding the solutions, no one group or vision should dominate. The participants will develop a practical programme of action that will include forming a Government of National Federation to handle the current challenges facing the country. This government will be comprised of all major political actors, who may agree on key positions including the President, and will hold free and fair elections to determine the participation of each party in the executive and legislative bodies.

- **Participants:**

We propose the following stakeholders as participants in the conference, and the following regional and international actors as observers:

- The two principal partners of CPA, the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).
- The major Sudanese political parties: the Umma Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, the Sudan Liberation Movement's main factions, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Communist Party, the Popular Congress Party, the East Front, the Beja Congress, the National Party, USAP.
- Representatives from Sudanese civil society who will be selected by the initiators of the conference.
- Office of the AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur (Observer)
- The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nation-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and United Nation Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) (Observers).
- The Arab League (Observers).
- The African Union (Observers).
- The European Union (Observers).
- The IGAD and its partners, (Observers)

- One representative of each of the permanent members of the UN Security Council (Observers).
- Representatives from concerned Arab and African countries and the neighboring countries of Sudan, such as Qatar and Chad, who will be identified by the initiators (Observers).
- Observers from the academic and research centers working on the Sudan such as Max Planck, the Moi's Centre, Kenya, the Kofi Annan Institute for Peacekeeping missions, the International Crisis Group, Redress, International Center for Transitional Justice, IDEA, the Carter Center for Peace, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, , and representatives of United Nations organizations operating in the area relief and development (Observers).
- All stakeholders should pay specific attention to the representation of women and to the specific impact of all the issues discussed and change sought on women in different parts of Sudan.

- **Preliminary measures before the Conference:**

Agreeing on the initiative and calling for the conference implies acceptance of principles of dialogue, negotiation, reaching compromises and agreements that satisfy different stakeholders. The proposed conference represents reforming the method that led to the current comprehensive crisis. In this respect, there are significant and necessary measures that the government should start implementing as soon as possible. These include:

- Declaration of intent for genuine and sincere implementation of the CPA,
- Declaration and genuine commitment to a cease fire, and ensuring security of IDP's camps by the all parties to the conflict,
- Commitment to a law reform process to make laws consistent with the Interim National Constitution, in particular the National Security Act, Referendum Law, Journalism and Publication Law and the Human Rights Commission Law,
- Amnesty and release of those accused of participating in the 10th May attack on the national capital,
- Ending the practice of arresting, torturing and interrogating civil and political actors, and
- Official acceptance of the principles and mechanisms of the Traditional Justice, including truth, redress, reparation, institutional reform and reconciliation.

- **Themes of the Conference:**

1. Practical Programme for a Political Solution to Darfur Crisis (each party/ participant presents its proposal)

2. Constructive legal cooperation with the International Criminal Court (each party/participant presents its proposal)
3. Healthy Legal Environment: Reform of the Judiciary and Laws (each party/participant presents its proposal)
4. Transitional Justice (each party/participant presents its proposal)
5. Economic Reform and Development as National Priorities: to ensure improvement of living conditions for the majority of Sudanese, and to address social problems in the marginalized regions, particularly in Darfur, and to prevent the impacts of the international financial crisis on the poorest Sudanese (each party/participant presents its proposal)
6. The Upcoming Elections and the Conditions of Freedom and Fairness (each party/participant presents its proposal)
7. Reforming and Developing the Public Service System (each party/participant presents its proposal)
8. Eradication of Corruption (each party/participant presents its proposal)
9. Systems of Regional conflicts and their impact on Sudan (each party/participant presents its proposal)
10. Attraction of Unity (each party/participant presents its proposal)
11. Government of National Federation: The formation of this government should ensure commitment to the CPA, cooperation instead of confrontations with international community. It should also ensure broader political, civic and regional representation. (each party/participant presents its proposal)
12. Presentations about the programme of the Government of National Federation (each party/participant presents its proposal)
13. Guarantees and Commitments to the Programme agreed upon, including the role of Regional and International bodies in implementation (matrix and timeframe)

- **Organizing the Conference:**

- 1.** High Preparatory Committee will be formed from the proposed participants after quick preliminary consultation led by the initiators of the proposal.
- 2.** Upon an approval of the High Preparatory Committee, the Conference Secretariat will be formed from the initiators of this proposal and include those who are relatively independent and acceptable to the various parties. The Conference Secretariat is to work mainly to get the political support, to run the preparatory dialogue, in addition to supervising the preparation of the conference's documents and compiling the final recommendations in one document.
- 3.** The Secretariat will make arrangements for the conference, facilitating deliberations and mediating between actors to reach agreed-upon resolutions and recommendations, in addition to securing financial and logistical resources.

4. Sudanese political actors will present their practical perspectives on the above themes for deliberation, to be included in the final recommendations document of the Conference.

5. The Secretariat will ask the Regional and International concerned institutions, in addition to academic and research centers to participate as observers and to prepare working papers and recommendations on issues of the specialized nature of the above themes.

6. The congress could be held at any city accepted by participants.

- **Time:**

We urge holding the conference at the soonest possible date. The proposed High Committee should meet as soon as possible to agree on the conference secretariat and the preparatory arrangements.

Finally,

We, the undersigned below initiators of this proposal, from the Sudanese civil society, media makers, and actors in the public domain, believe that our initiative and the proposed conference represent an opportunity out of the current crisis. Participation in the conference reflects a genuine will to realize peace and justice in Darfur as well as unique opportunity for the promotion of peace, democratic transformation and development as articulated in the CPA.

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No.	Name	Title
1	Salih Mahmoud	MP and Human Rights Defender
2	Monim Elgak	Human Rights Defender
3	Alhaj Warrah	Head of Editorial Committee (Ajrass Alhurria)
4	Mohamed Aldouma	Chairperson of Dafur Lawyers Association
5	Shameldin Dawelbat	Civil Society Activist
6	Prof Babiker M. Alhassn	Chairperson of Khartoum University Staff's Union
7	Amal Abass Alagab	Head of Editorial Committee (Alshahafa)
8	Haydar Almokashfi	Writer and Advisor to Editorial of Alshahafa
9	Magdi Elnim	Human Rights Defender
10	Rabah Alsadeg	Writer
11	Almahboub Abdelsalam	Writer
12	Sedig Umbada	Academic and Human Rights Defender
13	Dr Murtada Aljali	Editor of Ajrass Alhurria Newspaper
14	Alsadeg Ali Hassan	Secretary of Dafur Lawyers Association
15	Mohamed Suliam	Darfur Journalists Association
16	Prof Omar Algarai	Academic and Writer
17	Dr Mohamed Jala Hashim	Writer and civil society activist
18	Faiz Alshakh Alselak	Editing Director of Ajrass Alhurria
19	Dr Nahid Mohamed Alhassan	Writer and Women Rights Defender
20	Hadia Hasaballah	Writer and civil society activist
21	Rasha Awad	Journalist and civil society activist
22	Dr Albaqir Afif	Academic and Director of Alkhatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment
23	Abdelrahman Ismail	Chairperson of Nuba Mountain Students' Association
24	Yai Josif	Writer and Journalist
25	Azahari Alhaj	Secretariat of civil society
26	Dr Aisha Alkarib	Sudan Organization for Research and development
27	Maha Zain	Civil Society Activists
28	Nada Mustafa Ali	Researcher and Women Rights Defender
29	Alrashed Saeed Yagoub	Editor of TTU newsletter
30	Abdelsalam Hassan	Lawyer and Consultant Redress
31	Abuzar Alamin	Journalist
32	Ala Eldin Bashir	Writer
33	Mustafa Seri Sulima	Journalist
34	Mohamed Nagi	Editor of Sudantribune electronic web

35	Abdelbaji Jibrel	Darfur Centre for Relief and Rehabilitation
36	Gama Dalman	Journalist
37	Mithyang Shrellio	Journalist
38	Dr Hisham Omar Elnour	Academic and civil society activist
39	Amal habani	Journalist and civil society activist
40	Atim Saimon	Academic and writer
41	Abdelmoneim Suliam	Journalist
42	Motasim Alamir	Secretary of Civil Society
43	Ahmed Alsayed Albashir	Editing Director of Almouragib newspaper
44	Abdelkarim Ahmed	Civil Society Activist
45	Essam Jabr Allah	Civil Society Activist