South Africa’s ruling party supports ICC exit ahead of al-Bashir ruling

July 5, 2017

All Africa News

<http://www.africanews.com/2017/07/05/south-africa-s-ruling-party-supports-icc-exit-ahead-of-al-bashir-ruling/>

The African National Congress (ANC), South Africa’s ruling party says it still stands by its position that the country should pull out of the Rome Statute and by that the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The party said the government should continue to explore legal avenues that will ensure that they leave the ICC. An earlier process in that direction was halted by a court which ruled that the instrument of withdrawal was ‘unconstitutional and invalid.’

The High Court issued a ruling earlier this year after the case was brought before it by the main opposition, Democratic Alliance (DA). Pretoria official wrote to the United Nations to withdraw its exit application.

The ANC’s position comes as the country awaits the ICC’s verdict on Thursday July 6. The ICC is to state whether South Africa violated international law by refusing to arrest Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir who was on an official visit to the country in 2015.

The Eye Witness News portal quoted a national executive committee member Miriam Saohatse as saying the ANC had only reaffirmed a decision taken at its conference in 2012 to no longer be a member of the Hague-based court.

“The ANC delegates and commission are still committed to the resolution that South Africa should withdraw,” she said.

The ANC just ended its national policy conference which will prepare the way for a December congress at which they are expected to choose a successor to embattled leader, President Jacob Zuma.

South Africa’s issue with the ICC

South Africa’s moves of dropping its ICC membership following its highly controversial failure to arrest Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir during an African Union (AU) summit in Johannesburg in June 2015.

On the eve of al-Bashir’s arrival in South Africa, the ICC issued several calls for his arrest to the South African government. Bashir was allowed to leave after the summit, a court subsequently ruled that the government was wrong to have allowed him to leave despite the ICC warrant of arrest.

It was in light of this event that Jeff Radebe, a minister in the presidency, announced that South Africa was reconsidering its participation in the ICC.