**Sudan protecting war crime suspects, ICC tells UN**

Judges at the International Criminal Court want action on crimes committed during the Darfur crisis where more than 300,000 have died since 2003

May 26, 2010

The Globe and Mail

*http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/africa-mideast/sudan-protecting-war-crime-suspects-icc-tells-un/article1581193/*

The Sudanese government is protecting suspects wanted for war crimes in Darfur instead of arresting them to face trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC), judges told the UN Security Council on Wednesday.

The formal notification by pre-trial judges at the ICC, the world’s first permanent war crimes court, is aimed at increasing pressure on Sudan and its president Omar Hassan al-Bashir, also charged with war crimes by the Hague-based court.

Mr. Bashir is due to be inaugurated on Thursday after being declared the winner of Sudan’s first open elections in 24 years last month. The UN’s top two officials in Sudan will attend the ceremony despite calls by human rights groups for a boycott.

The ICC, which has no police force and depends on authorities in states that have signed up to its charter to make arrests, had asked Sudan’s government to arrest Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmad Harun and senior Janjaweed militia commander Ali Kushayb.

“The Security Council is vested with the power to address and take any action in respect of Sudan’s failure to co-operate with the court,” pre-trial judges wrote in their decision.

Mr. Harun is charged with 42 counts and Mr. Kushayb 50 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur, where fighting has claimed the lives of more than 300,000 since 2003.

The ICC prosecutor asked judges for a ruling a month ago, arguing that no measures to arrest either suspect had been taken. It was the first such request by the prosecutor at the tribunal, established in 2002 as the world’s permanent war crimes court to try individuals for genocide, war crimes and other major human rights violations.

Although 111 countries are signatories to the Rome statute establishing the ICC, Sudan is not one of them. Neither are core Security Council members Russia, China and United States.

The ICC opened its investigation into Darfur in June 2005, following a referral to the court by the U.N. Security Council.

In March 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Bashir, who has snubbed the court and denied the allegations as part of a Western conspiracy against his government.