



FACT SHEET: ICC Prosecutor Issues Request for Arrest Warrant for Sudanese Defense Minister Hussein

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By Enough Team

Today, the Office of the Prosecutor, led by Luis-Moreno Ocampo has requested International Criminal Court, or ICC, to issue an arrest warrant for First Lieutenant-General Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein, a senior Sudanese military officer who served as Minister of the Interior from 2003 to 2007 and as has been the Minister of Defense since 2007. The Prosecutor took this action based on the alleged crimes he committed in Darfur from August 2003 to March 2004 as a senior security official for the Sudanese regime. The Enough Project welcomes this important step to end impunity and bring Hussein to justice for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Today's announcement, however, is not only the first step towards holding another senior Sudanese official responsible for his crimes in Darfur, but also stands as a reminder to the international community of the progress that has yet to be made in bringing Sudanese officials to justice before the ICC. Indeed, in the press release, Ocampo's office stated that the public announcement of the request was to "encourage further public focus on the Government of Sudan policy and actions, and promote cooperation in taking action to arrest Mr. Hussein and the 3 other individuals subject to ICC warrants..."ⁱ Hussein continues to hold a place at the center of the Sudanese security apparatus, and the Enough Project believes that he shares responsibility for the ongoing crimes committed by the regime in Abyei, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, all of which are outside the jurisdiction of the ICC. The inability of the ICC to investigate crimes committed in the Three Areas effectively allows individuals such as Hussein, and others, to perpetrate crimes in these areas without international judicial recourse. The international community should, therefore, immediately explore steps to expand the ICC's jurisdiction to include crimes committed in the Three Areas.

This fact sheet explains who Hussein is and where he stands in the security apparatus of Sudan, sets out the allegations laid against him by the ICC and describes the crimes for which the Enough Project believes he shares responsibility in Abyei, Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

Who is First Lieutenant-General Abdel Rahim Mohammed Hussein?

First Lieutenant-General Abdel Rahim Mohammed Hussein is a member of the Khartoum "Inner Circle," a group that includes three Sudanese officials against whom the ICC has issued arrest warrants, particularly President Omar al-Bashir and Ahmed Harun, currently Governor of South Kordofan. Hussein served as the Minister of Interior between 2003 and 2007, during which his mandate included responsibility for police, the Popular Defense Forces, or PDF, civil defense, drug control, and prisons.

While Interior Minister, Hussein also served as Special Representative of the President in Darfur. In these two roles he was in charge of coordinating the efforts of the police, armed forces, National Security Service, and the Janjaweed militias incorporated as reservists in Darfur. He also supervised Ahmed Harun, who reported to Hussein during the period cited in the request for an arrest warrant.ⁱⁱ

As Defense Minister, Hussein has *de jure* responsibility for command and deployment of the Sudanese Armed Forces, or SAF. He is currently the second highest-ranking individual in SAF, after Bashir himself, and is the highest-ranking Sudanese official in charge of military operations. Importantly, Hussein is the highest-ranking member of the Air Force, which gives him personal command for the deployment of air assets, as well as the responsibility for the planning and execution of air force operations.

From his position in Khartoum's inner circle, Hussein is alleged to have played a pivotal role in implementing the regime's genocidal "counter-insurgency" strategy in Darfur. As the Minister of Defense, Hussein adopted in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei the strategy and tactics previously used in Darfur., Hussein currently directs the indiscriminate aerial bombing of civilians, forced mass displacement, the use of irregular militias against civilian villages, arbitrary arrest and detention, and extrajudicial killing, just as he did in Darfur. Alleged crimes committed outside Darfur are not within the ICC's jurisdiction as set out by UN Security Council resolution 1593 (2005).

Crimes in Darfur (as set out by the ICC)

- Alongside ICC-indictee Ahmed Haroun, Lieutenant-General Hussein was allegedly central to the commission of mass crimes in Darfur.
- His direction was pivotal in the implementation of the "counter-insurgency" operations in Darfur. The attacks on Darfuri villages followed a consistent pattern: SAF surrounded communities, the air force used indiscriminate bombing, which was then followed by foot soldiers—including regular forces and Janjaweed militias—entering the village and killing, raping, and looting the civilian population.ⁱⁱⁱ
- ICC Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo stated, "The evidence shows that this was a state policy supervised by Mr. Hussein to ensure the coordination of attacks against civilians"^{iv}
- Hussein recruited, mobilized, funded, armed, trained, incited, and deployed the Janjaweed militias "with the knowledge that these forces would commit crimes against humanity and war crimes."^v
- He directed forces that committed murder, rape, torture, inhumane acts, pillaging, and the forcible transfer of civilian populations.^{vi}
- Under his direction, ground and air forces specifically targeted civilian populations.

Ongoing Crimes in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (Outside the ICC mandate)

- Hussein was Defense Minister and in charge of deployment and utilization of air assets during the period of aerial attacks on civilian populations, which was pivotal in the implementation of the Government of Sudan's "pacification" of rebellions in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan state and Blue Nile state.^{vii}

- As in Darfur, Hussein and the Government of Sudan are utilizing the tactic of arming proxy militias.
- Again, Hussein paired up with Ahmed Haroun, the current the Governor of South Kordofan.
- In both Blue Nile and South Kordofan SAF and irregular forces have been implicated in extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, attacks on civilians, torture, looting and destruction of private property, aerial bombardments of civilians, and mass displacement, under the direction of Hussein.^{viii}
- In South Kordofan, the ethnic Nuba are targeted specifically, causing some rights groups to accuse the Government of Sudan of ethnic cleansing.^{ix}
- The Sudanese air force, which is led by Hussein, has conducted indiscriminate bombings of civilian villages in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. SAF Antonovs under Hussein's direction have been devastating to the civilian population.^x
- The Government of Sudan is preventing humanitarian access to the states, causing forced displacement across the border into South Sudan and Ethiopia.^{xi}

Crimes in Abyei (Outside the ICC mandate)

- As Sudanese Defense Minister, Hussein directed the use SAF heavy artillery bombardment to take control of Abyei town and the surrounding areas.
- The bombardment was followed by armed PDF and Misseriya militia elements, who entered the town and committed mass atrocities against civilians in a pattern of attack consistent with SAF and militia operations in Darfur.
- SAF tactics caused thousands of civilians to flee their homes.

ⁱ ICC Press Release, "ICC Prosecutor Presents New Case in Darfur" 2 December 2011.

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Sudan Tribune, "ICC prosecutor requests arrest warrant for Sudan's defense minister"

<http://www.sudantribune.com/ICC-prosecutor-requests-arrest,40887> [accessed 2 December 2011]; Sudan Tribune, "Aerial bombardment in Sudan's Blue Nile State driving refugees into Ethiopia, UN"

<http://www.sudantribune.com/Aerial-bombardment-in-Sudan-s-Blue,40568> [accessed 2 December 2011]

^{viii} UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Preliminary report on violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in South Kordofan from 5 to 30 June 2011" August 2011 [accessed 1 December 2011]

^{ix} Radio Netherlands Worldwide, "Ethnic cleansing of Nuba people in Sudan: report"

<http://www.rnw.nl/international-justice/article/ethnic-cleansing-nuba-people-sudan-report> [accessed 1 December 2011]; Sudan Tribune, "South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains: Ethnic cleansing once again"

<http://www.sudantribune.com/Ethnic-cleansing-once-again,38972> [accessed 2 December 2011]

^x Enough Project, "Field Dispatch: Refugees from Blue Nile Recount Atrocities, Government's Targeting of Civilians" http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Overview%20Sherkole_0.pdf [accessed 1 December 2011]

^{xi} Sudan Tribune, "Acquiescence before mass human destruction in Sudan's border regions"

<http://www.sudantribune.com/Acquiescence-before-mass-human,40556> [accessed 1 December 2011]