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**NCICC calls for immediate arrest and surrender to ICC of President Al Bashir**

Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court NCICC condemns the hosting of President Omar Al Bashir by the Nigeria government and calls for his immediate arrest and surrender to the trial chambers of the International Criminal Court in The Hague for atrocity crimes in Darfur for which he is charged. Failure of Nigeria to do so will be a brazen disregard of its international treaty obligation under Article 89 of the Rome Statute of the ICC which it has ratified since 2001. Such failure also undermines the pursuit of international justice, peace and security which are the objectives of the ICC.

Nigeria nominated a judge to the court in 2011, and has made previous contributions to the setting up and continued functioning of the court. It will amount to grave diplomatic blunder for the Jonathan administration to invite and give full ceremonial reception to war crime indictee, in disregard of millions of victims of Darfur atrocities and their families, some of them Nigeria citizens, who are still crying for justice.

The ICC is the only credible institution to fight impunity in the world, and when ICC is undermined it is a direct support for impunity. In Darfur in Sudan, and in many parts of Africa, victims of massive violations of human rights, including civilians not involved in direct armed conflict have been victims of pillaging, killing, rape, torture etc. The national institutions and political leaderships in most of the countries in the continent are incapable, unable or unwilling to provide redress to victims. From Rwanda to Uganda, Central Africa Republic to Sudan, the ICC has given hope of justice to millions of hapless victims of war atrocities, who otherwise would live and die without getting justice.

We have this morning filed a suit at the Federal high court Abuja seeking for arrest warrant of President Omar Al Bashir. The judiciary in this country has the responsibility to implement legal obligations created by treaties undertaken by Nigeria. As a state party to the Rome statute of the ICC, Nigeria is under legal obligation to execute within its national jurisdiction the arrest warrants issued by the trial chamber of the ICC against Mr Al Bashir while in its national territory.

It is not an excuse that African Union is calling its members not to cooperate with the ICC. The obligation of State Parties to the ICC, who have ratified the treaty, is stronger and legally binding than mere resolution of the African Union. Moreso Nigeria judge is in the chambers of the ICC.

Failure to do so will further deteriorate Nigeria’s diplomatic reputation under this administration and questions the government commitment to fight impunity here in Nigeria and in Africa.

**Chino Obiagwu**, chair Steering committee of NCICC

**Dr Abiola Akiyode**, Vice Chair NCICC

**Mrs Oby Nwankwo**, Treasurer NCICC