



**Opening Remarks by Dr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo,
Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court**

The Time is Now a Conversation About Darfur

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I liked working with Ted Braun. I liked his approach. I admire his ability to describe the despair and the sufferings of the Darfuris and yet to give opportunities for hope and for action.

The title '*Darfur Now*' captures the relevance of his work. Because in Darfur people need our help. Now. And much can be done, by all of us portrayed in the documentary, and by all of you.

In Darfur today, most of the population, 4 million persons, depends on international humanitarian assistance. If organizations such as the World Food Programme are not granted access, they cannot survive,

More than 2 million Darfuris have been forced out of their homes and live in camps. They were forced to leave their land, their homes, their cattle. Their villages were burnt down. Without daily delivery of food by aid workers, they cannot survive. If they move outside the camps, the women are raped, the men killed. They are destitute and desperate.

How did it happen? Not as a result of "climate change" or other "natural catastrophe", not as the consequence of some ancestral tribal strife. This situation is the result of a cold and deliberate system of persecution allegedly masterminded by one man: Ahmad Harun.

Let me tell you about him.

In 2003 and 2004, Ahmad Harun was the Minister of State for the Interior of the Sudan. We have evidence showing he developed and implemented the idea to use Militia/Janjaweed to attack the civilians. Crimes in Darfur were the result of this very well organized system. There were Security Committees coordinating the activities of the militia and the Sudanese armed forces at the local level, reporting to Security Committees at state level. They reported to one person: Ahmad Harun. He is the one who recruited, armed and funded the Militia/Janjaweed. Under his coordination they slaughtered thousands of people and forced the displacement of innocent civilians into camps.

In March 2005, the UN Security Council, requested the intervention of my Office. Three months later, as the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, I launched a criminal investigation.

We reviewed thousands of documents, but mostly, we interviewed victims. And the victims from Darfur, in spite of all the pain, told us their stories. One woman described how they killed her baby and then raped her. A man told us: they forced me to watch as they raped my 8-year-old daughter. I was asking: "why?"

We turned those stories into evidence; evidence showing that Ahmad Harun committed crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The Judges of the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Ahmad Harun on the 27th of April, 2007.

The Government of the Sudan has the ability and the duty to arrest Harun. The Government of the Sudan is refusing to do it.

The law can not be ignored. When the UN Security Council referred the Darfur case to my Office, it recognized and decided that lasting peace requires justice. Now is the time for the UN and international actors to follow through on their decision and to call upon the Government of the Sudan to enforce the arrest warrant.

The international community has to maintain a consistent approach and include justice in any comprehensive solution in Darfur. Experience has taught us that respect for the law is the only guarantee of lasting peace; this is a lesson learned during the last decades of massive violence and atrocities.

But I hear voices proposing to follow a different path; I hear voices proposing to concentrate first on the delivery of assistance and security through political negotiations; I hear voices proposing to postpone enforcing the arrest warrant. Justice, they suggest, can come later, if at all. They are ignoring the law. They are so mistaken, so gravely mistaken.

I hear voices saying that Harun's alleged crimes occurred in the past, and that justice will be a stumbling block to negotiations.. We have heard such voices before. They are mistaken, so gravely mistaken.

They are ignoring the law, as it was ignored when the Rwandan genocide happened in front of our eyes.

They are ignoring the facts in our evidence. The facts that the suffering of Dafuris today is the result of a cold and deliberate system devised by Ahmad Harun.

Let me tell you more about what is happening in Darfur now. Let me explain why there can be no humanitarian, security, or political solution in Darfur if Harun is not arrested and his system dismantled.

There are reports that the humanitarian situation in the camps is worsening; while Khartoum is booming thanks to oil proceeds and foreign investments, the camps are kept in squalid conditions; bureaucratic impediments to the delivery of international aid are systematic; those who dare mention it publicly are expelled; malnutrition rates in the camps are higher than ever; there are attacks against international aid workers ; there are raids against the camps and threats to those identified as local leaders.

The Sudanese Minister of Humanitarian Affairs is supposed to protect the camps and facilitate the delivery of aid. He does not. He will not.

Because since 2005, the Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs is Ahmad Harun. The same man who as Minister of State for the Interior, allegedly attacked civilians and forced people out of their homes and into the camps is today in charge of the camps and controlling the fate of his victims. As Minister, it is Harun who decides how much food reaches the camp, who can go there and who cannot.

Harun has to be removed from office, arrested and surrendered to International Criminal Court in The Hague.

What we can do now?

A documentary such as '*Darfur Now*' can make a difference and raise public awareness of what is happening **today** in Darfur, of what can be done **today** for the Darfuris

We need to hear more voices, different voices, stronger voices, your voices to demand the arrest of Ahmad Harun and break the system that he allegedly developed.

We need more voices, different voices, stronger voices, your voices to demand that any solution for Darfur include justice. The victims cannot wait ; they need justice now.

The international community, the UN Security Council, United Nations Officials, regional organizations, and individual states must be consistent and call upon the Sudan to enforce the arrest warrants. They cannot remain silent.

There are opportunities. On September 21st and 25th, there will be two critical meetings in New York. Ministers and Heads of State from all over the world will meet at UN headquarters to discuss Darfur. Justice must be on the agenda. It is not there yet. The arrest warrants must be on the agenda. They are not there yet.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon was visiting the Sudan last week, looking for a comprehensive solution. As a tragic irony, the same week, the Government of the Sudan appointed a Committee to investigate human rights abuses in Sudan. Who is the head of the Committee ? Ahmad Harun

It is time to stop Harun, it is time to stop impunity in Darfur. Now.

