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ICC move represents significant blow against culture of impunity

EUROPEAN GREEN PARTY WELCOMES ICC's INDICTMENT OF SUDANESE PRESIDENT OMAR al-BASHIR

Reacting to the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor to request an arrest warrant against Sudan's President, Omar al-Bashir, on charges of crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur, **EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek**, who is also an Austrian MP and is the Austrian Green Party's parliamentary spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, said:

"The decision to press charges against President al-Bashir of Sudan for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur (the first time that charges have been laid against a sitting head of state) marks a significant step forward for the International Criminal Court and sends out a powerful message that no-one, regardless of their official position or status, should be allowed to carry out crimes against humanity with impunity. The International Criminal Court is doing in this case exactly what it was set up to do in 2002 : prosecuting crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Since 2003, Sudanese government forces and government-backed militias known as "Janjaweed" have been responsible for direct attacks on civilian populations and widespread rape, torture and summary executions. The fact that no senior officials have been brought to justice within Sudan itself for these terrible crimes means that the International Criminal Court had no option but to seek the arrest of President al-Bashir."

Ulrike Lunacek concluded: "*I vigorously reject the argument being made by some; that this warrant will block further peace efforts: efforts until now have been in vain. Al-Bashir and other dictators simply need to understand that they cannot wage war against their own population without consequences. The warrant request also does not in any way affect the Sudanese government's obligations to protect the safety of civilians in Darfur and to ensure that all those internally displaced people and refugees are given full and unhindered access to humanitarian relief. We European Greens also reiterate our demand that the Chinese government immediately stops supplying the Sudanese government with*

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military hardware which is being used against the civilian population in Darfur."
