

**ON INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT FOR ISSUING AN ARREST
WARRANT FOR SUDANESE PRESIDENT OMAR HASSAN AHMAD
AL-BASHIR -- (Extensions of Remarks - March 12, 2009)**

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SPEECH OF
HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009

- Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a resolution commending the International Criminal Court for issuing an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. This resolution reaffirms our nation's commitment to supporting a multifaceted approach to bringing about peace and stability in the Darfur region. After over six years of conflict in Darfur, six years of government-led genocide against its own people, six years of murder, rape, torture, and oppression, I applaud the international community for taking a major step forward in the name of justice, humanity, and the rule of law.
- Madam Speaker, no leader who commits such horrific crimes should be allowed to remain free. President al-Bashir has directed the Sudanese government's efforts to use the very worst kinds of crimes to carry out an active program of oppression. While the roots of this conflict run deep, combining a complex mix of racial, tribal, religious, political, geographic, and environmental matters, surely there can be no excuse to engage in the kind of violence that President al-Bashir has inflicted on the people of Darfur. It is well past time to bring him to justice.
- I laud the International Criminal Court for issuing a warrant for President al-Bashir's arrest. This was a long time coming. The ICC owes a great deal to the grassroots efforts of a wide range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights groups, individual

experts, and other activists for keeping up the pressure on the international community to act.

- This warrant has not yet resulted in an arrest, nor even in a cessation of hostilities. In fact, President al-Bashir responded to the warrant by expelling over a dozen international aid agencies from the region, further threatening the lives of well over 1 million people who depend on these organizations for food, water, shelter, health care, and personal safety. Such is the measure of the Sudanese government and its leadership. But this warrant is a major step forward. When the international community begins to hold leaders responsible for their unconscionable crimes, we begin to prevent such abuses from occurring in the future.
- Madam Speaker, I am under no illusion that this arrest warrant--even if it results in President al-Bashir's arrest and removal from power--will end the conflict in Darfur. This warrant is yet another step on the long road to ending this conflict and achieving some measure of stability in the war-torn region. But it will require a comprehensive approach combining positive political, economic, social, and even military efforts. The United States, for one, needs to build on the ICC's momentum by immediately committing to an intense diplomatic effort. I welcome Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's affirmative remarks on the ICC's warrant, and I further encourage President Obama to appoint a full-time, high-level envoy to the region. We can and we must build on the ICC's efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the atrocities in Darfur.
- I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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