

# Al-Bashir stands his ground

**KHARTOUM** – Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir remained defiant yesterday on his trip to Darfur, the western Sudanese region where he stands accused of complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Addressing a rally in al-Fashir, the capital of Sudan's North Darfur province and the site of sprawling camps where tens of thousands of people displaced by

fighting in the area have gathered for aid handouts, al-Bashir cast himself as standing against an international conspiracy after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for his arrest last week.

"They speak as if they are the masters of the world," he told a cheering crowd. "But we will never give up a single Sudanese citizen."

The Sudanese President also warned international aid organisations and diplomats that they must respect Sudan's sovereignty.

On Saturday, al-Bashir appeared at a rally in Khartoum brandishing a traditional Sudanese spear and defended his decision to expel 13 international aid organisations on the grounds that they were "spies" and "thieves". – *Sapa-dpa*.