

Bashir allies blast ICC

SUDAN: AU, China, Russia call
for rethink on arrest warrant

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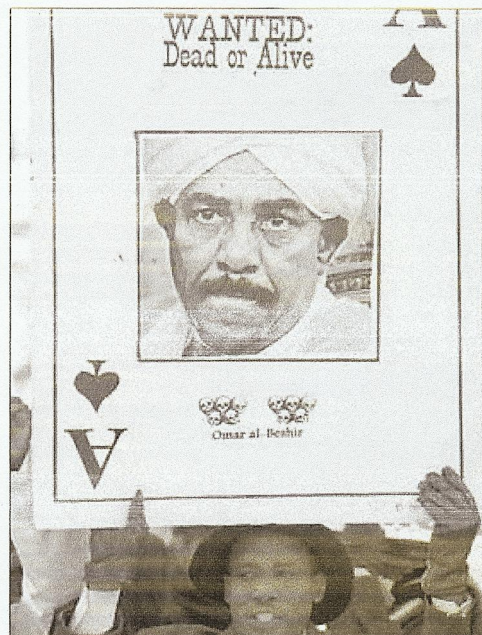
Dismissing the warrant, Bashir said: 'The true criminals are the leaders of the US and Europe.'

PARIS – Sudan's allies rallied round President Omar al-Bashir yesterday after he was issued with an arrest warrant, with China calling for the case to be suspended and Africa warning it would undermine Darfur peace efforts.

While US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the European Union said the veteran leader should appear in court to answer accusations of war crimes in Darfur, a backlash was growing at the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) move.

As African Union (AU) officials held an emergency meeting to discuss the ICC warrant, the first ever against a sitting head of state, SA said it "regretted" the move, echoing complaints by Bashir's chief sponsor, China.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang called on the United Nations (UN) to



WANTED. Anti-Bashir protesters hold a rally earlier this week in New York City. Picture: AFP.

"respect calls by the AU, Arab League and Non-Aligned Movement... and call on the International Criminal Court not to hear this case for the time being".

The ICC issued a warrant for Bashir's arrest "for his alleged responsibility for crimes committed in Darfur" where the UN says 300 000

people have been killed.

China is an ally and military supplier for Bashir's government, and its economy relies on Sudan for oil imports.

Russia has also criticised the warrant, with President Dmitry Medvedev's envoy for Sudan saying it sets a "dangerous precedent".

– AFP.

PRESIDENT BLASTS WEST DURING RALLY

KHARTOUM – Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir yesterday lashed out at the West during a mass rally in Khartoum to protest the international arrest warrant against him for alleged war crimes in Darfur.

"The true criminals are the leaders

Bashir is accused by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of masterminding a campaign of extermination, rape and pillage.

More than 5 000 people joined the rally in Khartoum's Martyrs Square, denouncing ICC prosecutor Luis