

Attacks on Sudan Overshadow African Union Summit Held in South Africa

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A concerted campaign to disrupt the recently-held African Union (AU) Summit in the Republic of South Africa utilized the charges by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against standing Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who was recently re-elected by a wide margin inside the oil-rich northcentral African state.

A war waged against the authority of the government in Sudan has been carried out with the full support of imperialism since 2003. President al-Bashir's government has maintained that it is not guilty of war crimes and genocide in the western Darfur region.

Numerous investigations of the Darfur question has failed to prove genocide against the people of the region. Various imperialist-backed groups have sought to shift public opinion against the African state to no avail. Most anti-imperialist organizations view the situation inside of Sudan as a by-product of the legacy of British colonialism and the continuing interference of U.S.-based intelligence and military agencies along with their allies in Israel and other western-dominated states.

A so-called non-governmental organization (NGO) in South Africa sought to have the Sudanese head-of-state arrested based upon highly questionable indictments issued against him several years ago by the ICC which is based in The Netherlands, a former colonial and slave-holding state in Europe.

Nonetheless, the Sudanese government was reassured by the African National Congress (ANC) led Republic of South Africa that it had no intentions of acknowledging such a court order for the appearance of an African leader since it would violate the AU protocol which waves any such measure in light of the overarching role of the continental body. Bashir was in South Africa at the invitation of the AU which was hosted by the government of President Jacob Zuma.

According to an article published by the Sudan Tribune, "Ibrahim Ghandour, Sudan foreign minister, told state TV that Pretoria informed them that opposition parties moved the case against Bashir in a 'small court' and that they asked them not to worry about it. 'The Foreign Minister of South Africa, assured us that they are proud of the participation of President al-Bashir and that they are responsible for protecting him, adding that this [issue] belongs to them and their opposition and we must not be concerned about it' Ghandour said." (June 15)

A court in Pretoria set a hearing for June 15 summoning the South African government to appear in order to explain why al-Bashir should not be arrested and transferred to The

Hague in order to appear before an ICC court. However, reports on June 14 indicated that al-Bashir was either still in the country attending the AU Summit or was heading back to Sudan.

Sudan prior to its partition in 2011 largely at the aegis of United States imperialism was once the largest geographic nation-state in Africa. As an emerging oil-producing country, Washington sought to control the foreign and domestic policy of the nation during the 1990s.

Since the first decade of the present century Sudan has been under constant criticism and legal persecution over its efforts to protect and secure its sovereignty in the ongoing insurgency in the western Darfur region of the country. In general the corporate and Washington-controlled news reports on Sudan seek to cast aspersion on the government of President al-Bashir.

Nevertheless, al-Bashir and his National Congress Party (NCP) has been able to maintain state control and stave off the persistent destabilization efforts engineered by the U.S. and Israel which supports the rebel movements in Darfur.

AU Was Set to Focus on Women and Economic Development

The themes for this meeting of the continental body focused on the struggle for gender equality and the necessity of economic development based on the interests of Africa.

Prior to the convening of the heads-of-states, a session on the role of women in Africa was held.

The AU has gone on record requiring all 54 member-states to vigorously promote the participation and empowerment of women within all aspects of society including government and economic affairs.

In a document issued by the AU during the summit it states that “The consideration of gender in sectorial development policies of the African Union experienced a breakthrough at level of continental organization as well as in Member States despite the existence of many challenges that still persist in regards to gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa. This political will has led to the adoption of the AU Gender Architecture, whose seventh and latest pillar is the High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Empowerment Women in Africa (HLP on GEWE).

This same contextual report continues noting “The idea of institutionalizing a High Level Panel was adopted during the Fifth Ordinary Session of AU Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs held at the AUC Headquarters on 14 May 2013, during which the Ministers recommended to the African Union Commission to hold an annual High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) in Africa, in a similar manner as the High Level Panel on Peace and Security and the one on Governance and Democracy in Africa.” (AU website)

In theory and program the AU is mandated to work towards at least 50 percent participation of women in political and societal affairs. These efforts are designed to overcome the legacy of slavery and colonialism where the role of women in Africa was severely submerged to a system of exploitation and national oppression which took on a decisively gender

discriminatory character.

African Economic Integration Can Only Take Place under Socialism

Prior to the convening of the AU Summit 26 states signed an accord designed to establish an African Trade Zone with the existing regional organizations in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa as the focus. This was carried out in Egypt seeking to link the entire continent in a program for economic growth and development.

The ANC ruling party in South Africa in hosting the AU Summit wrote on its website on June 11 that “The agreement, signed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), seeks to create a common market from Cape to Cairo. It is effectively the continent’s largest free trade zone unlocking blockages that had previously existed hindering the free movement of goods and investment across the continent. This development is in line with our stated objective of catapulting Africa to take her rightful place as a formidable force amongst regions of the world; ensuring that development and growth come from within the continent itself driven by our combined population of 600 million and combined GDP of approximately a trillion US dollars.”

This AU meeting took place with the backdrop of continuing challenges of economic dependence on imperialism, xenophobic attacks in South Africa and a rising migrant crisis in the Mediterranean where over 2,000 have died so far this year while traveling in unsafe vessels at the mercy of human traffickers.

In order to effectively break with the chains of neo-colonialism and imperialism, the AU member-states must establish their own system of political and economic relations independent of the world capitalism which was built on the profits of slavery and colonialism.

The subordinate position of Africa is directly the result of the failure of the post-colonial states to integrate their political economies against capitalism and reconstruct the continent on a socialist basis. These measures will provide the foundation for development in accordance with the interests of majority and not those of the ruling class both global and national.

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