

## **Sudan President barred from leaving South Africa**

15/06/2015 12:09 by admin

**Johannesburg:** In an unprecedented development, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, who is on a diplomatic visit to South Africa, has been barred from leaving the country by a court order for "crimes against humanity", but dared the world by attending the 25th African Union (AU) Summit here on Sunday.

The Pretoria High Court on Sunday issued an order that bars al-Bashir from leaving South Africa, the Independent Online reported.

Justice Hans Fabricius issued an interim order preventing the Sudanese president from leaving South Africa, pending a decision of the court, to be made after an urgent application that he be arrested is made.

The judge's order came after granting the state a three-hour period in which to prepare arguments in response to the South African Litigation Centre's (SALC) application that President Jacob Zuma and the National Prosecuting Authority arrest al-Bashir on the 2009 order of the International Crimes Court (ICC).

The ICC issued warrants for arrest of al-Bashir for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Darfur conflict.

The conflict claimed the lives of more than 400,000 people, and left more than two million more displaced.

The SALC made the urgent application following the ICC's order that al-Bashir be arrested immediately after he landed in South Africa to attend the AU summit for which he reportedly reached on Saturday.

As a signatory of the Rome treaty, South Africa is obliged to arrest the president, but the AU has previously refused to heed the ICC call, accusing them of targeting African leaders.

Justice Fabricius said al-Bashir should not leave the country until the urgent application to have him arrested has been heard.

Al-Bashir on Sunday attended the summit, Xinhua news agency reported later in the day.

Dressed in a blue Western suit and looking relaxed, he gave the thumbs-up to photographers as he stood for a group picture with other heads of state and government before the summit kicked off.

The South African government kept silent over the ICC request and calls to several departments for comments went unanswered.

But an unidentified government source was cited by Xinhua as saying that it would be ridiculous to arrest al-Bashir who was invited by South Africa and the AU to attend the summit.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti told the media that ICC was only targeting African leaders.

The AU summit, which was scheduled to start at 11.30 a.m., was postponed for several hours before the Sudanese president came in the open.

Meanwhile, the Independent Online said in a later report that the South African government has requested for more time to prepare to respond to arguments for the urgent application for the arrest of al-Bashir, asking that it be stood down for Monday morning.

Asking for more time, senior state attorney William Mokhari said: "We are dealing with a very sensitive matter here" concerning the "sitting president of another African country".

The case was postponed to Sunday afternoon during an appearance on Sunday morning.

Attorneys for SALC said they would agree to coming back on Monday on the assurance that migration officials at all points of entry were ordered not to allow the Sudanese president out of the country pending finalisation of the case.