**United Nations Security Council must support the International Criminal Court (ICC) bring President al-Bashir of Sudan and all criminals to face justice**

 **8 June 2017**

Today the ICC Chief Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda will be briefing the United Nations Security Council on the situation and the need for accountability in Darfur.

President Niemat Ahmadi and Vice President Fatima Haroun of the Darfur Women Action Group (DWAG), along with a dozen Darfuri activists and DWAG team members, will be at the UN to attend the briefing and show their support to ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda’s commitment to justice for genocide victims in Darfur.

President Omar al-Bashir stands accused of the world’s most heinous crimes - genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. As you all know, President al-Bashir launched the genocidal attacks in Darfur more than 13 years ago by ordering the Sudanese Armed Forces and allied Janjaweed militias to carry out a scorched-earth campaign against the civilian population.

In 2005, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously referred the case of Darfur to the ICC. The ICC investigated and found that serious crimes had been committed against the indigenous people of Darfur. The ICC has since issued four arrest warrants against Sudanese officials including President al-Bashir. However, the Sudanese government continued to obstruct justice as it pursued its genocidal policy in Darfur and Sudan at large.

President al-Bashir of Sudan tactics stretch beyond violence. President al-Bashir has starvation as a means to kill more people and has weaponized rape in order to destroy the fabric and the will of Darfuri society.

To this day, conditions in Darfur have not improved. Over 3 million Darfuris are displaced. They are under repeated attack and they are unable to return to their homes in part because foreigners have occupied most of their lands. Concurrently, the Sudanese government continues to carry out violent attacks against innocent civilians in Darfur – including the January 2017 massacre in Nertiti City that left 13 people dead and 60 people wounded. We are also deeply troubled that there have been allegations of the use of chemical weapons throughout 2016 which still have yet to be investigated by the United Nations.

In addition, we are extremely concerned about the resumption of violence in Darfur. Following the clashes between Sudan Armed Forces and the Darfuri opposition forces, the government forces have extended their attacks against civilian villages and have forced thousands out of their homes

President al-Bashir has continuously used tactics of mass violence, not only in Darfur but in other regions of Sudan, including South Kordofan and the Blue Nile, where nearly one million civilians have been displaced and continue to suffer.

Therefore, DWAG urges all members of the United Nations Security Council and the Rome Statute to stand for justice and accountability by standing against President al-Bashir‘s prolonged impunity. We demand that member states of the United Nations, and especially members of the Security Council and the Rome Statute, abide by the obligations deriving from the ICC arrest warrants for President al-Bashir. They must fulfill their legal obligations by unequivocally supporting the Court and cooperating in arresting President Omer al-Bashir should he enter their territory and then transfer him to The Hague for trial.

DWAG urges you all to use your voice and call upon the member states of the UNSC and the ICC state parties to speak up against impunity, to support the ICC Prosecutor and the ICC with resources and all the necessary tools to effectively fight impunity for al-Bashir and other criminals, and to deliver long-awaited justice for the victims of genocide in Darfur.

We must all stand together to tell our leaders that impunity for the crimes of genocide must not be an option. In the presence of genocide, accountability is required; not only to punish the perpetrators but to end the long suffering of victims, prevent future crimes and establish lasting peace and life with dignity.