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WHY IS BOTSWANA BEHAVING AS A EUROPEAN PUPPET?

There is growing concern about Botswana's position regarding the attempts by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to indict, arrest and extradite Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir with regard to the conflict in Darfur. The ICC, established in 2002, has increasingly come to be seen as a European Court. The ICC is overwhelmingly dominated and funded by Germany, Britain, France and Italy, Africa's old colonial masters.

Botswana led the struggle for independence from European colonialism and has a proud record of Pan-African solidarity. On September 30, 1966 Botswana became the independent Republic of Botswana with Sir Seretse Khama its first President. Sir Seretse was a leading figure in fighting for and asserting African independence. It comes as a great surprise therefore that his son, a subsequent President of Botswana, Ian Khama, has been party to decisions fundamentally undermining African independence and re-establishing European domination of African affairs.

In a landmark demonstration and re-statement of African independence from its European ex-colonial masters, the July 2009 African Union summit in Libya decided not to co-operate with the International Criminal Court's attempt to arrest Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir. The declaration urged African leaders to refuse to arrest any African indicted by the ICC.

Botswana, however, has stated that it would not support the African Union decision. The Botswana Government spokesman, Jeff Ramsey, stated that Botswana will cooperate fully with the court. **The overwhelming majority of Africans see this as an act of gross disloyalty on the part of the Botswanan government.**

For all the ICC's claims to represent the 'international community' but the simple fact is that **ICC member states represent only 27% of the World's population.** Russia, China, India, Pakistan and the USA, amongst many other countries, have not signed the Rome Statute establishing the ICC.

While the ICC claims to be an international court, it has studiously ignored any white, western involvement in alleged war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere and has focused exclusively on Africa. It has only ever taken 'action' on African 'situations'. The ICC position appears to be

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2 / ...

that only black Africans commit international crimes and it has only ever sought to indict and arrest black Africans.

Indeed, the ICC has been described as the 'European Guantanamo Bay' – except that it is only for black Africans. And from a legal and procedural point of view the ICC has been a disaster. It has spent half a billion Euros and has still not completed its first trial – a trial in which the prosecution has abused due process, made extraordinary legal blunders and where necessary has simply made things up as it went along.

The ICC is seen as a European attempt to destabilise Africa and acquire, secure and exploit Africa's natural resources by intervention (the ICC focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, two of Africa's most resource rich countries is not coincidental). Even the BBC has reported that "many African leaders see it as a Western institution seeking to interfere in their own internal affairs".

The ICC's highly selective, politically motivated, interventions have only served to exacerbate and prolong violent conflicts taking place on the continent of Africa. These one-sided western-derived actions have made conflict-resolution more difficult to achieve locally.

There are many questions that must be asked in Botswana and elsewhere:

- Why is Botswana behaving like a European puppet on ICC issues?
- Whose decision is it to support a discredited, illegitimate, European court and its attempts to destabilise Africa?
- Why is Botswana the only African country cold-bloodedly supporting this European assault on African sovereignty?
- Why is Botswana breaking African solidarity, the single most important weapon against western interference in Africa?
- Is Botswana scared that it will lose European economic aid? Is it putting economic bribery before solidarity with Africa and the AU?

ICCwatch director Marc Glendening comments:

"The ICC has picked on African countries such as Uganda, DRC, Sudan, Chad, Guinea and Kenya. If and when Europe wants a bigger share of Botswana's diamonds or other resources, or if it suits a new western strategic plan, Botswana could be next."

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3 / ...

“ICCwatch has already been approached by individuals, groups and political parties in Botswana who are opposed to the supine position of their government in relation to the ICC.”

For more information concerning ICCwatch's critique of the International Criminal Court, please refer to www.iccwatch.org

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