

Bashir Sweeps Sudanese Elections

President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan has recently sought to legitimise his rule through elections held from the 13th to the 15th of April. Although there were over 44 other parties contending, a sweeping victory for the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) was a foregone conclusion. There were several small victories for independent candidates, some even defeating NCP candidates, but major opposition parties called for a boycott, citing electoral irregularities as the reason why they could not fairly compete. Bashir received 94 percent of votes in the presidential election and the NCP won 323 of 426 parliamentary seats.

Bashir's candidacy is in itself a broken promise following his announcement in 2011 that he would stand down, a statement made in a period of regional uprisings in the Arab Spring. He has been in power since wresting control of Sudan with a military coup in 1989. Stating the need for 'fresh blood', Bashir ruled out seeking re-election in 2015.

The recent history of Sudan is stained with blood, and much of it is on the hands of Bashir and his associates. The Darfur Crisis led to an ongoing genocide, as African farmers and others have been systematically displaced and murdered at the hands of government-supported militias.

As a result of these atrocities, Bashir has the dubious honour of being the first sitting head of state to be issued with an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court. In 2009 he was indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The arrest warrant remains in force.

For residents of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, the suffering continues. René Cassin seeks to bring attention to their calls to end their murder and displacement. Although the leadership of Nuba Mountains tribes is fragmented, the call to halt their persecution must be united, and the pressure maintained on the Sudanese Government.

Bashir maintains his iron grip on power, a hold that will only become firmer after his concocted election victory. Nonetheless, Bashir must still be held to account for his actions in the Sudanese genocide in the recent past in order to prevent future tragedy. The families of victims will always remember the results of a vicious civil war, and so should the international community – we must end the culture of impunity for crimes against humanity.