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All Eyes on Tiger

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International court issues warrant for Sudan's president

THE HAGUE (Reuters)—The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on Wednesday for war crimes in Darfur, a decision that could spark more regional turmoil.

The warrant is the first issued against a sitting head of state by the Hague-based court, which stopped short of including a count of genocide over a conflict that United Nations officials say has killed as many as 300,000 people since 2003.

The court, set up in 2002, indicted Bashir on seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, which include murder, rape and torture. The three-judge panel said it had insufficient grounds for genocide.

"His victims are the very civilians that he as a president was supposed to protect," ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo told reporters, adding that Sudan's government is obliged to execute the warrant. "It could be in two months or two years, but he will face justice."

Hundreds of demonstrators protested against the arrest warrant in central Khartoum. Bashir, 65, has dismissed the allegations made by the ICC, the world's first permanent court for prosecuting war crimes, as part of a Western conspiracy.

"It is a flawed decision," said Sudanese presidential spokesman Mahjoub Fadul. "We do not recognize it."

Hours after the warrant was issued, Sudan revoked the licences of at least six foreign aid agencies, giving no reason for the decision, aid officials said. "This will have a major impact on humanitarian work in Darfur," said one aid official.

U.N. and other agencies are running the world's largest humanitarian operation in Darfur, a mainly desert region in western Sudan. U.N. officials say up to 300,000 have been killed there, while Khartoum says 10,000 have died.

CONTINUED ON P5 WORLD

Calls from Canada to rescue lawyer in China



Lawyer Gao Zhisheng at his hometown in northern Shaanxi Province at the beginning of 2006. THE EPOCHTIMES

MPs, activists call for release of missing rights lawyer

By MATTHEW LITTLE
Epoch Times Staff

Gao Zhisheng was one of China's most highly acclaimed lawyers before his defense of human rights brought the fury of China's ruling communist party upon him.

Canadian parliamentarians and human rights defenders recently spoke up for Mr. Gao at a Parliament Hill press conference after he "disappeared" following his release of a letter that detailed nearly two months of torture he suffered while imprisoned in 2007.

"The electric shock batons were thrust all over me, and my full body, my heart, lungs and muscles began jumping under my skin uncontrollably. I was writhing on the ground

'A person of what I would call singular courage and bravery'

— MP Irwin Cotler describing Gao Zhisheng

in pain, trying to crawl away," he wrote. "Every time when I was tortured, I was repeatedly threatened that, if I spelled out later what had happened to me, I would be tortured again. I was told, 'This time it will

happen in front of your wife and children."

Mr. Gao "is by any measure, plain and simple, a human rights hero," said Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada at the Monday morning press conference.

Mr. Neve said Mr. Gao was at the very forefront of human rights advocacy in China and part of a small but courageous group of attorneys who have tried to defend human rights in Chinese courts, often only to end up themselves as victims of the same abuses their clients suffered.

"That most certainly, aptly describes Gao Zhisheng, his brave defense of human rights and the grueling personal cost he has paid," said Neve.

CONTINUED ON P2 NATION

Jewish students brace for 'Israeli Apartheid Week'

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

University campuses across Canada and around the world are bracing this week for a controversial annual event that Jewish groups and students say fuels hate.

Taking place in more than 40 universities around the world, Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) is expected to be even more intense than usual this year in the wake of the recent Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Taking the stance that Israel is an apartheid state that resembles South African apartheid, in Canada IAW consists of a week of lectures, films, and actions and is organized by groups such as Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) and Solidarity with Palestinian Human Rights.

There are concerns that the tensions on some university campuses—where pro-Palestinian activists have already had run-ins with students who support Israel—could worsen during the week.

A near-riot in mid-February at Toronto's York University necessitated police intervention to escort Jewish students to safety. An angry mob of about 100 pro-Palestinian activists began banging on the glass doors of York's Jewish student club Hillel, shouting racial slurs at the students inside.

'I was called a dirty f---ing Jew'

— Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York University

"I was called a dirty f---ing Jew," says Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York and one of the besieged students.

Ferman says an "environment of intimidation" exists on campuses for Jewish students in general these days but especially during IAW, and that the event does nothing to foster "civil discourse and dialogue."

"This type of anti-Israel sentiment leads only to threats, harassment and intimidation. The reality is that true academic freedoms can't exist in this atmosphere. There's no discussion or debate—it's one side attempting to scare and bully the other."

IAW, which is backed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid among other groups, began at the University of Toronto in 2005 and has since spread to universities in other countries.

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies has called IAW a "racist event" with the purpose of "spreading hate and animosity among students, faculty and community." Critics say the event provides a forum for unrestrained Israel-bashing.

However, SAIA spokesperson Golta Shahidi says the mandate of her group and IAW is to raise awareness "about the situation of Palestinian students under a Zionist state" and within that framework to oppose all forms of discrimination including anti-Semitism.

"We make it very clear not to equate Zionism with Judaism," she says, adding that "a number of Jewish anti-Zionist groups" are represented in and supportive of IAW.

CONTINUED ON P2 NATION

Budget approved, opposition moves to reroute spending

By MATTHEW LITTLE
Epoch Times Staff

OTTAWA—The Conservative's stimulus budget got final approval in Parliament Wednesday but with no word as to whether it will be adjusted to accommodate an opposition motion that calls for half the infrastructure spending to be routed through the gas tax fund.

Gerard Kennedy, the opposition Liberal legislator for Parkdale-Highpark, tabled the motion last Thursday. It was supported by both the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP in a vote yesterday.

The budget contains \$18 billion in stimulus spending. The Liberal motion calls for half of all infrastructure stimulus spending to be delivered through the gas tax fund.

The gas tax fund takes money from gasoline taxes and returns it to municipalities for infrastructure spending on a per capita basis. Municipalities have to invest the money according to federally-ap-

proved eligibility criteria.

This mechanism has proven highly successful at delivering infrastructure money to municipalities. As part of their stimulus package, the Conservatives have doubled the gas tax fund.

Early critics of the budget, including the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, were quick to slam it for not using the gas tax mechanism to make sure stimulus spending made it to communities quickly.

Mr. Kennedy said there had been no acknowledgement from the government that they would adjust their budget guidelines to align with the motion, but that it is "bound to take this into account in some fashion."

"It really has to justify why it wouldn't use this method. There's no application process that can get dollars out there adequately in time to projects. They don't have the staffing, they don't have the preparation in place. Any government would face a certain amount of challenge," he said.

In tabling his motion, Kennedy criticized the Conservatives for failing to get

'This is the way to get the most money out in the quickest period of time to the greatest effect.'

— Gerard Kennedy, Liberal MP

previously announced spending out the door, citing a performance review that found the Tories had delivered only four

per cent of spending announced.

He noted that that number stood in sharp contrast to 95 per cent of gas tax monies that were successfully delivered.

The Conservative infrastructure money is linked to conditions and requires municipalities to match the funds. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), an organization representing municipalities across the country, has indicated money should be distributed via the gas tax mechanism, although a spokesperson for the group said in a recent interview that the organization was still finalizing its position.

Mr. Kennedy said the Conservatives had little choice but to use the gas tax mechanism to get spending out if it is to meet Liberal demands to get money out the door.

"They need to do something like this, and we expect them to do it if they expect to stay as the government over a longer period of time."

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