

ICC President in corruption scandal over Bashir

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Reuters ICC

President – Judge Silvia Alejandra Fernández de Gurmendi alleged to have received funds in her bank account to ‘buy witnesses for use against Gen Bashir’

By Jessica A Badebye in Nairobi – Kenya

The president of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is facing calls to resign after it emerged that she may have received financial rewards said to be in millions of dollars to ensure the indictment of Sudanese President Omar al Bashir.

Information reaching **The London Evening Post** here say that between 2004 and 2015, Argentinian-born ICC President Judge Silvia Alejandra Fernández de Gurmendi allegedly received into her private bank accounts at Banco Popular in the Virgin Islands, the First Caribbean Bank in the Bahamas and the Congregation B’nai Israel unexplained funds mounting to over US\$17million that was allegedly used to bribe witnesses that enabled the ICC to indict the Sudanese leader.

The funds are alleged to have been channelled through Judge de Gurmendi’s accounts by Barting Holding Ltd, Atlantic Corporation, Genesis International Holdings and Napex International, all of which are offshore financial companies, who allegedly made wire transfers ranging from US\$150,000-US\$250,000 to the judge’s bank accounts. It is alleged that these funds were made

available to Judge de Gurmendi during the time that President Bashir was under investigation and the ICC was looking for evidence to indict him.

It has been further alleged that funds channelled through Judge de Gurmendi's accounts were allegedly distributed by her to groups in Darfur including the Sudan Liberation Movement, formerly the Darfur Liberation Front founded by Abdul Wahid al Nur and others in 2002. Appointed ICC President in March last year, de Gurmendi is alleged to have used the funds to 'recruit, coach and fake evidence and witnesses to testify against President Bashir'.

ICC President – Judge Silvia Alejandra Fernández de Gurmendi alleged to have received funds in her bank account to 'buy witnesses for use against Gen Bashir'.

The scandal has led to Pan African Forum Chief Dr David Nyekorach Matsanga to call upon Judge de Gurmendi to resign from her position. He argued that it was improper for an ICC judge to receive unexplained colossal sums of money which outmatch her annual salary. He added that her resignation would allow proper investigations to take place at OTP hence an account on how she continued to receive large sums of money into her private accounts from 2004, the year Sudan President Bashir was indicted by the court on charges of crimes against humanity, to 2015.

Matsanga argued that the indictment against President Bashir now looks to have been carried out through the corrupting of senior ICC officials. "We thought ICC was created to catch dictators in Africa but instead its witch hunting," relented Matsanga. He added that on the directives of the then UN Secretary General Koffi Anan, former ICC chief prosecutor Louis Moreno-Ocampo was handpicked to be the ICC chief prosecutor to execute what he described as "Anan's plan to molest Africa", which he said has been internationally exhibited by the mode of investigation employed so far in African cases at the ICC in The Hague.

Citing ICC investigations in Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya and Egypt during Ocampo's tenure as ICC chief prosecutor, Dr Matsanga said he has already provided evidence to the ICC that show Ocampo's involvement in Bashir's case. "We have a huge dossier of evidence against Ocampo and others that worked with him," he said. He added that the evidence he has acquired include video and audio tape evidence as well as bank statements that show the movement of huge sums of money to buy witnesses in order to facilitate the case against Gen Bashir.

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