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Many Approve of ICC Indictment of Bashir: Poll of 7 Muslim and African Nations

Strong Support for UN Intervention in Darfur if Aid Blockage Leads to Deaths

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College Park, MD—A WorldPublicOpinion.org poll of seven majority-Muslim and African nations find that, contrary to the position of their governments, publics in four nations approve of the indictment of Sudanese President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur, one is divided and two are opposed.

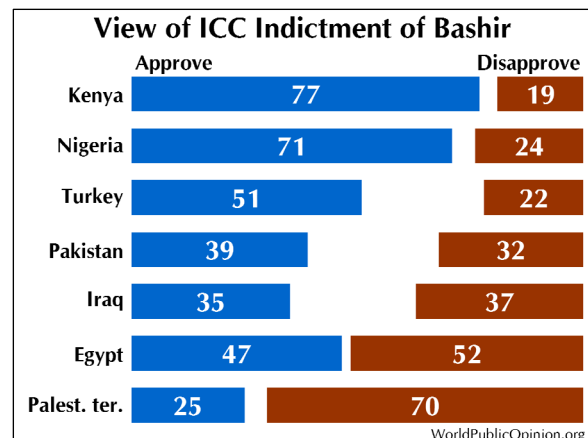
The International Criminal Court indicted Bashir and put out an arrest warrant in March 2009. The Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League and the African Union have all passed resolutions denouncing the indictment. Moreover last week the African Union declared that its members will refuse to cooperate in enforcement. All of the nations polled as part of this study are members of one or more of these organizations.

However large majorities approve of the ICC indictment in Kenya (77%), and Nigeria (71%), as does a modest majority in Turkey (51% with 22% disapproving), and a plurality in Pakistan (39% with 32% disapproving).

“This suggests that leaders of some majority-Muslim and African nations, in denouncing the indictment of President Bashir, are out of step with their people,” comments Steven Kull, director of WorldPublicOpinion.org.

In two nations a majority disapproves of the indictment: the Palestinian territories (70% with 25% approving) and Egypt (52%, with 47% approving). Iraqis are evenly divided (35% approve, 37% disapprove).

The poll of the seven nations (Egypt, Turkey, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq, and the Palestinian territories) was conducted between April 25 and June 6, 2009 with a total of 6,055 respondents. The margin of error for each nation ranges



from +/- 3 to 4.5 percentage points.

In response to the ICC indictment, President Bashir expelled from Sudan many aid organizations providing relief to hundreds of thousands of displaced people living in refugee camps in Darfur. Respondents were asked, “If as a result many people in these camps start dying from hunger and exposure, do you think the UN should bring in food and other aid, escorted by military protection if necessary, even against the will of the government or do you think this would be too much of a violation of Sudan’s sovereignty?”

Support for such a UN intervention is very strong, including among some publics that oppose the indictment. Large majorities would favor it in Kenya (82%), Nigeria (68%), Egypt (61%), the Palestinian territories (60%), as well as a plurality in Iraq (46% to 29%). Only in Pakistan does a plurality oppose the idea (42% to 37%).

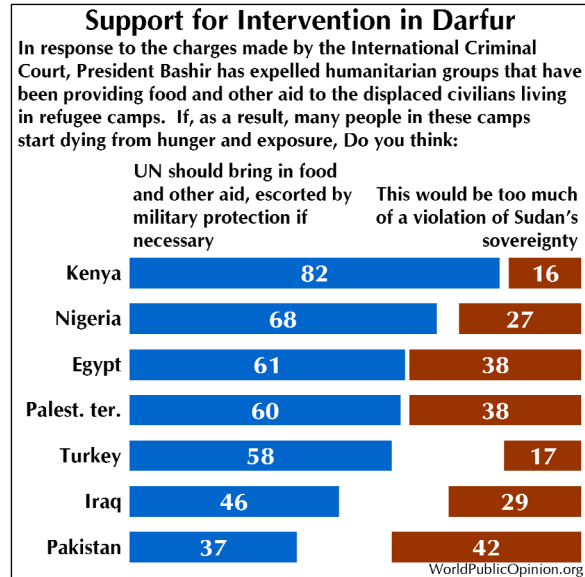
These attitudes are consistent with earlier polling on the concept of the UN having a “responsibility to protect.”

WorldPublicOpinion.org asked respondents from 20 nations whether the UN Security Council has a responsibility to authorize military force to protect people from severe human rights violations. Majorities or pluralities in all 20 nations polled agreed that the Security Council does have this responsibility, including five of the nations in the present poll: Kenya (89%), Egypt (80%), Nigeria (78%), the Palestinian territories (69%), and Turkey (39% to 20%).

In the current poll publics in five nations were also asked whether they have confidence in Bashir to do the right in international affairs as part of a battery that included leaders from many other nations.

Bashir received poor confidence ratings in four of the five nations asked. Most said they have not too much or no confidence in him in Kenya (63%), Turkey (52%), Egypt (51%), and Nigeria (49%). Only in the Palestinian territories did a slight majority (51%) say they have some or a lot of confidence.

Levels of information about the situation in Darfur vary widely among the publics polled. While majorities said they knew some or a lot in Kenya (85%), Egypt (78%), Palestinian Territories (65%), and Nigeria (59%), these numbers dropped below half in Iraq (48%), Pakistan (39%), and Turkey (29%).



Overall those with higher levels of information were more supportive of the ICC indictment, but there were variations between nations. Among those with a lot of information, support was higher than the general public in Kenya (87% as compared to 77%), Turkey (73% as compared to 51%), Iraq (70% as compared to 35%) and the Palestinian territories (37% as compared to 25%). However, in Pakistan disapproval of the indictment was higher among the most informed (60% as compared to 32%). In Egypt and Nigeria there was no clear effect with greater information.

Support for forcible UN intervention in the event that the expulsion of aid organizations leads to large scale suffering also tends to rise with greater information.

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