

Bush may follow Bashir to The Hague

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Former US President George W. Bush could possibly stand trial at the international Criminal Court in The Hague, says an ex-UN prosecutor.

David Crane, an international law professor at Syracuse University, said similar to the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Bush could be an ICC target.

"The principle of law used to issue an arrest warrant for Omar al-Bashir could extend to former US President Bush over claims officials from his Administration may have engaged in torture by using coercive interrogation techniques on terror suspects," Crane was quoted as saying by the New Zealand Herald on Saturday.

"The [Bashir] indictment may even be extended to the former president George W. Bush, on the grounds that some officials in terms of his administration engaged in harsh interrogation techniques on terror suspects which mostly amounted to torture," he added.

Crane is a former prosecutor of the Sierra Leone tribunal that indicted Liberian President Charles Taylor and put him on trial in The Hague.

The United Nations General Assembly chief Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann has also called for the US military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan – which have killed thousands of people – to be investigated by the UN.

"All pretended justifications notwithstanding, the aggressions against Iraq and Afghanistan and their occupations constitute atrocities that must be condemned and repudiated by all who believe in the rule of law in international relations," Brockmann told the Human Rights Council.

"The illegality of the use of force against Iraq cannot be doubted as it runs contrary to the prohibition of the use of force in Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. It sets a number of precedents that we cannot allow to stand."

Moreover, a February poll in the US revealed that 62 percent of Americans favor a criminal investigation or an independent panel to look into the use of torture, illegal wiretapping, and other alleged abuses of power by the Bush administration.

US president Barack Obama has expressed reluctance toward the issue by saying he is "more interested in looking forward than I am in looking backwards."

Despite calls by Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, for setting up a "truth commission" to investigate Bush's misconducts on international level, Bush could only be investigated by a UN Security Council order. This seems to be unlikely

regarding Washington's veto-wielding status at the UNSC.

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