

Kenya not lobbying for ICC pull-out: minister

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA: Kenya is not lobbying for an African withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, its foreign minister said last week as African leaders prepared to debate the issue.



The 54-member African Union (AU) delegates were attending a two-day meeting to debate a possible mass withdrawal from the Hague-based court over claims it targets Africa unfairly.

The AU has specifically demanded that proceedings against Kenya's leadership linked to 2007/08 post-election violence be dropped.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto are charged by the ICC for crimes against humanity following the election violence that left 1,500 people dead.

However, Kenyan Foreign Minister Amina Mohamed said her country was not seeking a co-ordinated withdrawal, instead calling on the court to better represent African interests.

"We are a state party, we have co-operated for five years. What would pulling out do for us? Seriously, we established this court, it's ours," Amina Mohamed said.

"A massive pull-out doesn't do anything for us, but a court that serves our interests, all our interests, will do enough for us," she said.

Kenyan lawmakers in September supported a motion to withdraw from the court. If successful, the country would be the first to leave.

However, leading African figures including Kofi Annan and Desmond Tutu have urged African leaders not to withdraw support from the ICC.

Among 122 signatories of the ICC's binding treaty, the Rome Statute, 34 are African - the largest regional representation.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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