

Status of Campaign for the Establishment of the Court

Comments by Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin, Asian Network for the ICC, at the UNCA Press

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The Prepcom has concluded several important instruments this week, and at the same time we have made significant gains in the ratification campaign.

We started this Preparatory Commission session with 38 ratifications. We are ending it with 42, which takes us more than two thirds of the way towards the 60 ratifications required for the Rome treaty to enter into force. We have had ratifications in the last week and a half from Nigeria, Liechtenstein, the Central African Republic and yesterday the United Kingdom. Just prior to the opening of the Prepcom, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia also ratified, which has enormous significance because of the region's past and recent history, and of the domestic controversy surrounding the transfer of former President Slobodan Milosevic to the ad hoc tribunal in the Hague.

The ratification of the UK, the strongest supporter of the United States within the European Union, is also of particular importance because of the timing. During the past week US Senator Jesse Helms has made significant attempts to pass anti-ICC legislation that is completely unprecedented, and has done so with the support of the US administration. The UK decision to finalize the ratification process at the same time that this is going on in Washington underscores how truly isolated the US government is in its opposition to the treaty.

The Coalition has a campaign goal to achieve the necessary 60 ratifications by July 17, 2002, the fourth anniversary of the adoption of the treaty. It is now extremely likely that we will

exceed this goal, and some are estimating that we may even have 60 by the end of this year.

The accelerated pace may be due in part to the widespread view among international lawyers that the ICC could have taken up the crimes committed in the September 11th attack on the United States. It is also due to the fact that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan identified the ICC treaty as a priority treaty for ratification during the Children's Summit and the General Debate; while both were postponed, many countries were preparing to ratify in response to this call. We still expect that Peru, Poland and Switzerland will join the States Parties shortly.

In addition to most Western European countries, we have strong support for the treaty in sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America. We still have a lot of important work to do in Asia, in the Middle East and in Central and Eastern Europe. We plan to continue our work after the 60 ratifications have been obtained, to ensure that the Court has universal support, which is important both for its effectiveness and its legitimacy.