



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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Global Coalition Urges the United Arab Emirates to Join the International Criminal Court UAE Can Strengthen Movement to End Impunity in the Middle East

Amman/New York – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations—called on the United Arab Emirates to demonstrate its commitment to international justice and the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The CICC has selected the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the focus for its April 2011 Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), a monthly campaign launched to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute system.

In a letter dated 4 April 2011 to HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Coalition urged the UAE to demonstrate their commitment to international justice and the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC—the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

At a time when sweeping changes are occurring across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the Coalition believes that the UAE can further strengthen this growing movement in the region towards ending impunity by joining the ICC.

“We are currently witnessing a dramatic period of change in the region, and we hope that the United Arab Emirates will see this renewed call for ratification as an opportunity to show how seriously it takes the values at the heart of the Rome Statute,” said William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition. “By demonstrating its commitment to justice, the UAE can strengthen the historic movement towards ending impunity currently being witnessed in the Middle East.”

The Coalition recently welcomed the approval by the interim Tunisian Government of Tunisia’s accession to the Rome Statute and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court (APIC). Soon after the Tunisian experience came Egypt, where newly-appointed Foreign Minister Nabil El Arabi has mentioned ICC ratification as a priority. Kuwait has also repeatedly stated its intention to ratify the Rome Statute; and replied on 13 September 2010 to the recommendations made by the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review regarding the Rome Statute with utmost priority, stating that “its ratification by the concerned authorities is underway.”

“The UAE has been active in the working group of the Crime of Aggression and contributed in its discussion. It has also participated as an observer in the ASP meetings of the ICC,” said Abeer Al-Khraisha, CICC Regional Advisor for the Middle East and North Africa. “It is hoped that UAE will enhance its commitment to international justice by ratifying to the Rome Statute.”

To date, the Arab League, consisting of 22 states, has only 3 states parties to the Rome Statute – Jordan, Djibouti, and the Comoros Islands – and nine signatories. Ratification of the treaty would also allow the UAE to participate as a state party in the 2011 Assembly of States Parties to the ICC—the Court’s governing body—during which states make important decisions in relation to the administration of the Court, including the election of judges and prosecutor. A year from now, six judges, the prosecutor and deputy prosecutor will complete their terms of office. If the UAE ratifies in time, it can nominate candidates to these crucial posts and participate in these important elections.

Background: *The ICC is the world’s first, permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 114 ICC States Parties. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. There are currently six active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Kenya; Libya; and Uganda. The ICC has publicly issued 15 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least ten situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, and Palestine. The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org*