



Coalition for
the International
Criminal Court

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High-Level Board of Directors Convene at the International Criminal Court for First Meeting of the Victims Trust Fund

(New York, April 22, 2004) – For the first time ever, a Trust Fund for Victims has been established as an integral part of an international criminal tribunal to help to address the suffering of victims of the worst crimes. The Trust Fund forms an essential part of the Court’s innovative mandate towards victims, and is an acknowledgment that justice for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes cannot be met by retribution alone. Board members met this week at the premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands, to begin developing criteria that will guide the operations of this new initiative.

The establishment of the Victims Trust Fund was provided for in the treaty creating the ICC as part of a series of unprecedented steps to fully acknowledge the rights and needs of victims. In particular, the Statute allows for victims’ active participation in the criminal justice process and enables them to claim reparations from perpetrators. The Trust Fund complements these efforts, and its activities and projects will provide concrete means by which victims’ broader needs may be addressed.

“The Victims Trust Fund is a historic effort to widen the scope of justice to not only punish perpetrators, but also to restore dignity to victims,” said William Pace, convenor of the NGO Coalition for the ICC, a global advocacy group. “The International Criminal Court recognizes that victims need to be treated as more than silent partners, but instead as active participants in the justice and healing process,” he said. “The moral authority and integrity of the Fund’s first Board is a reflection of the historic importance of this effort,” he added.

The members of the Board, who represent the five UN regional groups, are: Her Majesty **Queen Rania Al-Abdullah** of Jordan; His Grace **Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu**, former Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa; His Excellency **Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki**, former Prime Minister of Poland; His Excellency **Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez**, former President of Costa Rica; and **Madame Minister Simone Veil**, former Minister of Health of France and former President of the European Parliament.

Voluntary contributions from individuals, organizations, corporations, governments and other sources will constitute a portion of the resources of the Trust Fund, which will also include money and other property collected through fines and forfeitures imposed by the ICC. Funds could be allocated for expenses such as medical costs, school fees for orphans or reconciliation projects for communities, or be directed to non-governmental organizations and other groups for projects that will directly assist victims and their families. The Trust Fund will be guided by a strict set of criteria to be determined by the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC.

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Note to the Editor: For more information about the Trust Fund for Victims, please visit:

- The web site of the Coalition for the ICC:
<http://www.iccnw.org/buildingthecourtnew/victims&witnesses.html>
- The web site of the ICC: <http://www.icc-cpi.int> ,or for press inquiries, contact ICC Public Information Officer Claudia Perdomo at claudia.perdomo@icc-cpi.int
- The web site of the Campaign for the Victims Trust Fund: <http://www.victimstrustfund.org/>

To make a donation to the Victims Trust Fund: Contributions in US dollars may be made to: ICC Victims Trust Fund, JP Morgan Chase Bank, New York, USA, Account Number: 400932776, ABA Routing Number: 0002, Swift Code: CHASUS33, Fed Wire Number: 021000021. Contributions in Euro may be made to: ICC Victims Trust Fund, Fortis Bank, The Hague, The Netherlands, Account Number: 240005201, IBAN Number: NL39FTSB0240005201, Swift Code: FTSBNL2R..

A brief and *unofficial* biography of each of the members of the Board follows:

Former Costa Rican President, **Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez**, won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end the cycle of violence in Central America. Dr. Arias Sánchez earned a doctorate in political science at the University of Essex and, following the adoption of what is widely regarded as the “Arias Peace Plan,” earned some fifty honorary doctorate degrees. He is the author of several books about peace and politics, and founded the Foundation for Peace and Human Progress with the monetary award from the Nobel Prize.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa gained international prominence in 1984 when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work toward “a democratic and just society without racial divisions.” He continued his work to facilitate South Africa’s transition from Apartheid as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He holds numerous honorary doctorates at leading universities in the United States, Britain and Germany.

Former Polish **Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki** was the first post-Communist leader in Eastern Europe. He subsequently served as a UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia. Following the massacres of Srebrenica and Zepa, territories designated as “safe havens,” Mr. Mazowiecki resigned from that post. He has held numerous positions within the government of Poland and served in the Polish parliament.

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah is a human rights campaigner and the wife of His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein of Jordan. Following the births of their three children, Her Majesty Queen Rania launched numerous initiatives to further access to education, technology and micro-credit financing in Jordan. Among other projects, she has also launched the Child Abuse Prevention Project to protect children at risk of abuse and modify public attitudes towards violence against children.

Madame Minister Simone Veil, a survivor of Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, rose to prominence through positions with the French Ministry of Justice and as Minister of Health. She is widely recognized as a campaigner for women’s and children’s rights. She was elected the first president of the European Parliament in 1984, and also served as the President of the Judicial Group for the European Parliament. She holds numerous honorary degrees and decorations for her work.