



## Asian Network for the International Criminal Court

### MEDIA RELEASE

## **“ International Experts Urge the Government of Bangladesh to Join the International Criminal Court (ICC)”**

A five member international team of independent expert on International Criminal Court (ICC) concluded its lobby mission in Bangladesh today following meetings with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of Science and Technology, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Secretary, the Attorney General, Chairman of Law Commission, Vice Chairman of Bar Council, various NGOs and other members of civil society.

The delegation arrived in Bangladesh on 15 May 2002 at the invitation of the Asian Network for the International Criminal Court (ANICC) on their last leg of Asian tour that included the Philippines, Japan, Republic of Korea and Nepal, to impress upon the Government to ratify the Statute of the ICC and to join the first assembly of the State Parties to shape the formation of the first ever International permanent Criminal Court.

Bangladesh signed the Treaty on 17 September 1999 and since then, 67 States including all European Union countries have ratified it. The Statute will come into force on 1 July 2002. One hundred and thirty-nine States have signed the Statute.

The ICC is expected to become operational sometime in April or May 2003 and the headquarter in the Hague following the election of the Judges and other officials of the Court. The delegation urged the Government of Bangladesh to ratify early and to nominate candidate for the Judge of the ICC. Timely ratification would not only offer Bangladesh the opportunity to participate in the election of judges but will enhance Bangladesh's continued commitment to international law, justice and peace. The delegation noted that Bangladesh already has internal laws in place against international crimes that will be strengthened following ratification and implementation. Once operational, the Court will deal with perpetrators of major crimes of international concern; genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression, once this is defined more precisely and is designed to protect, punish and deter individuals responsible for crimes under international law.

The delegation held productive discussions with the Government of Bangladesh and are encouraged to note the Government's strong support for the ICC and its ratification. The international experts extended their full support to Bangladesh in its ratification and implementation process, and encouraged the NGOs and other activists to continue work on ICC.

The delegation included professor Dr. Lyal Sunga of University of the Hong Kong, Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin, attorney at Brussels Bar and advisor, Asian network for the International Criminal Court (ANICC), Barrister David Matas, Director of International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Developments, and Amnesty International Canada, Ms. Joanne Lee, an Australian Lawyer, Ms. Ilaria Bottigliero of Graduate Studies in Geneva and Ms. Niza Concepcion of Forum Asia for Human Rights and Development, Philippines and Mr. Fayazuddin Ahmad, Coordinator [Program], ANICC, as the facilitator of this tour.

**18 May 2002**

**Dhaka**

**Bangladesh**