

His Excellency Mr. Trương Tấn Sang,  
President of Vietnam

*Re: Vietnam's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)*

Your Excellency,

We have the honor of writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations in 150 countries, advocating for a fair, effective, and independent Court as well as increased access to justice for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

As part of its Campaign for Global Justice for the month of November, the Coalition respectfully calls on Vietnam to accelerate its progress towards ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Your Excellency, Vietnam has demonstrated its commitment to the international justice system created by the Rome Statute on numerous occasions. Although it did not sign the treaty, Vietnam actively participated in the 1998 Rome Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. In October 2007 –and many times since- it stated that it was seriously considering ratifying the Rome Statute. And it accepted numerous recommendations to consider ratifying the Rome Statute over the course of the first (2010) and second (2014) cycle of its Universal Periodic Review.

Vietnam has also taken positive measures to integrate the principles of international humanitarian law into its national legal system. The 1999 Penal Code of Vietnam provides to some extent for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. The Coalition recognizes the commitment to ending impunity evidenced in such legislation and is encouraged by the fact that it provides a base for implementing the elements of the Rome Statute.

The Coalition welcomes Vietnam's continued engagement in activities aimed at eventual ratification of the Rome Statute. Pursuant to the 2012 signing of the EU-Vietnam Comprehensive Framework Agreement which recognized the importance of the ICC and included a pledge to consider joining, Vietnam has engaged in sustained dialogue with the EU concerning potential ratification. Also encouraging are the workshops on the ICC jointly organized in 2008 and 2012 by the Ministry of Justice and the EU.

We appreciate the above efforts Vietnam has made, and we hope that they may soon come to fruition. The momentous act of joining the ICC would be a clear demonstration of the progress Vietnam has made in bringing domestic legislation in line with international standards, and would lead to due recognition of its efforts by important partners.

Your Excellency, the Asia-Pacific –and ASEAN in particular- is significantly underrepresented in the ICC: only two ASEAN states have ratified the Rome Statute. Universal ratification is essential to the effective function of an international system of justice capable of ending impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes as envisioned in the Rome Statute. By ratifying the Rome Statute, Vietnam would not only benefit from the increased reach of an institution capable of bringing the perpetrators of mass atrocities to justice and the consequent deterrent to violence in the region; it would also be established as a leader in ASEAN on international justice.

We urge your Excellency to use your good offices to ensure the speedy completion of the ratification process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amielle Del Rosario', written in a cursive style.

Amielle Del Rosario  
Asia-Pacific Regional Coordinator