

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Azerbaijan: Help End Impunity for Mass Crimes by Joining ICC

Support for international justice best demonstrated by acceding to Rome Statute

The Hague—Azerbaijan can best demonstrate its support for the global effort to bring perpetrators of international crimes to justice by joining the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Throughout May, Azerbaijan is the focus of the Coalition’s Campaign for Global Justice, which encourages states to join the Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the only permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of graves crimes.

“Joining the ICC would translate Azerbaijan’s previous statements of support for ending impunity into concrete action,” said Kirsten Meersschaert Duchens, the Coalition’s regional coordinator for Europe. “As the country prepares to take on the rotating chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, accession to the Rome Statute would be evidence of Azerbaijan’s commitment to its affirmed position on international justice, as evidenced by Resolution 1644 (2009) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which urged member states to join the ICC.”

In a letter to President Ilham Aliyev, the Coalition urged Azerbaijan to take the necessary steps to join the 122 other states that are members of the ICC and help put an end to impunity.

Azerbaijan has made several statements at the United Nations Security Council in favor of the ICC—particularly in the context of briefings on the situation in Libya in 2012 and 2013—and included in its 2000 Criminal Code provisions on criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes reflecting the definitions in the Rome Statute.

“Azerbaijan is one of only 12 countries in the European region yet to join the Rome Statute. For the international justice system to be truly universal and therefore effective, all states need to be active and engaged members. Only by joining the ICC, can states ensure that perpetrators no longer find refuge in safe havens where impunity reigns,” said Jelena Pia-Comella, the Coalition’s program director.

Membership in the ICC also extends the protective shield of accountability, and could deter the commission of future crimes against nationals of states which are a part of the system.

“Azerbaijan’s membership would help ensure the protection of its citizens—as well as global citizenry—from the horrors of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity,” Meersschaert Duchens continued.

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42 of the ICC's 122 member states are European.

BACKGROUND: The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

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