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ICC Rome Statute to Enter into Force in Palestine*Global Coalition welcomes 123rd state to join International Criminal Court*

New York/The Hague—The entry into force this week of Palestine’s accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is a step towards accountability and justice for victims in one of the world’s longest-running conflicts, the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Following the deposition of its instrument of accession to the Rome Statute in early January, Palestine will become the 123rd state to join the ICC on 1 April. The Hague-based Court will have jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed within Palestinian territory, and over Palestinian nationals, from that date forward.

“The Rome Statute’s entry into force in Palestine gives hope to victims in both Palestine and Israel that they might see justice done and the conflict brought to a peaceful end,” said **William R. Pace, convener of the Coalition for the ICC**. “The international community must now stand with victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, support the ICC process and efforts to promote accountability at the national level.”

For many years, civil society has been working to encourage Palestine and Israel to join the ICC. In 2013, the Coalition called on both to join the Court as part of its Campaign for Global Justice.

“The ICC can provide accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity that were allegedly committed against the protected Palestinian civilians and their properties,” said **Issam Younis, general director of the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights**. “It is another important step that moves us closer towards justice.”

“All Israeli citizens who hold human rights and democratic values dear should support Palestine’s bid to join the ICC,” said **Dr. Ishai Menuchin, executive director of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel**. “It is time that universal values and norms become the framework through which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is viewed and resolved. It is time that complaints of torture and suspicions of war crimes be examined by the Israeli justice system. Otherwise, they will be investigated by The Hague.”

“Civil society is now calling on Palestinian authorities to bring their national laws in line with the Rome Statute to allow for full cooperation with the ICC and effective domestic investigations into alleged atrocities,” **Pace added**.

Last December, Palestine made a declaration under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute retroactively accepting the ICC’s jurisdiction from 13 June 2014. The ICC prosecutor has opened a preliminary examination to determine whether to proceed with a full investigation

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into grave crimes allegedly committed during that timeframe.

As a state party to the Rome Statute, Palestine can now participate as a member state during sessions of the ICC's governing body, the Assembly of States Parties, including nominating and voting for judges and other elected Court officials.

Palestine is the third state from the Middle East and North Africa region to become party to the Statute, following Jordan and Tunisia.

Background: There are currently nine active investigations before the ICC: the Central African Republic I & II; DRC; Darfur, Sudan; Kenya; Libya; Uganda; Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. The ICC has publicly issued 31 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Two trials are ongoing. There have been two convictions and one acquittal.

Nine preliminary examinations are currently ongoing. Four examinations are in Phase 2 (subject matter jurisdiction), including Palestine, Honduras, Ukraine, and Iraq. Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea and Nigeria have entered Phase 3 (admissibility). The Office of the Prosecutor has concluded preliminary examinations relating to Venezuela, Palestine, the Republic of Korea and the Comoros referral, declining in each case to open an investigation.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in over 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. www.coalitionfortheicc.org