



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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**EI SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA MUST CONSOLIDATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

*Civil society calls on the two countries to follow the steps of Guatemala and accede to
Rome Statute of the ICC*

New York, USA / Lima, Peru—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court—a network of over 2500 civil society organizations—called this week on El Salvador and

Nicaragua to accede to the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court.

In two letters dated 5 November 2012 to Presidents Mauricio Funes from El Salvador and Daniel Ortega from Nicaragua, the Coalition highlighted the 10th anniversary of the ICC as a historic moment in international justice. Furthermore, it expressed that 2012 has borne witness to the Court's first conviction as it completed the case against Thomas Lubanga, as well as the Court's ongoing work in other areas.

The ICC is one of the most important achievements in international law and represents a key mechanism in the global fight against impunity. To date, the Rome Statute has been ratified by 121 states across the world, 16 of them in Latin America. "A few months ago, Guatemala took a significant step by accepting the Court's jurisdiction. Now is the time for El Salvador and Nicaragua to take similar measures and thus consolidate Latin America's support to the ICC," said Francesca Varda, the Coalition's Americas coordinator.

El Salvador's decision that the Rome Statute is compatible with its constitution is a positive development, which brings the country one step closer toward accession. Notwithstanding, Salvadorian civil society has highlighted the need for El Salvador to stay true to its commitment regarding the ICC and move the process forward quickly.

"The Salvadorian Coalition for the ICC enthusiastically welcomed the remarks made by the current president during his electoral campaign, where he committed to promoting the accession to the Rome Statute during his administration. However, it is surprising to note that as the 2009-2014 government's plan of action moves forward, no further measures are being adopted in order to conclude the accession process. We trust that this commitment will not become a broken promise," stated Wilfredo Medrano, coordinator for the Salvadorian Coalition for the ICC.

In Nicaragua, the government's position vis-à-vis the Court remains unaltered. Despite the fact that Nicaragua has included several Rome Statute crimes within its domestic criminal legislation, accession to the Rome Statute is currently not part of the political agenda. Civil society representatives in Nicaragua have frequently called on the government to reconsider its position regarding the ICC.

"On behalf of the Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH), we consider that Nicaragua must accede to the Rome Statute as a demonstration of its commitment in the fight against impunity, as a means to dissuade the commission of international crimes within its territory, as well as to cooperate with the International Criminal Court. We therefore urge the government of Nicaragua to initiate the accession process, by eliminating all barriers that block this fundamental step. It is imperative to join the group of nations across the world that are calling out: no more crimes against humanity," declared Norwin Solano, a lawyer at CENIDH.

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. There are currently seven investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 22 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. The Court issued a judgment in its first trial on 14 March 2012. Two other trials are ongoing. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting eight preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Mali and Nigeria

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

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