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Armenia: Make ‘Never Again’ a Reality by Joining ICC

Government should speed up constitutional reform to ratify Rome Statute

The Hague—Armenia can pay tribute to victims of past atrocities and ensure protection under the rule of law for future generations by joining the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Armenia is the May 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 to try individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In a letter this week to President Serzh Sargsyan, the Coalition urged Armenia to take the necessary steps to join the 123 other ICC member states and help end to impunity.

“As a country of a nation who has survived through genocide, Armenia should be a pioneer in spreading jurisdiction of international justice and in particular that of ICC,” **said Artak Kirakosyan, chairman of Civil Society Institute Armenia.** “It’s high time to remove the political and legal barriers to ratifying Rome Statute by the Republic of Armenia.”

Although Armenia signed the Rome Statute in 1999, its constitutional court ruled in 2004 that the Statute was incompatible with the Armenian constitution and could not be ratified. However, a constitutional review begun in 2013 could pave the way for necessary amendments to allow for ratification. In March this year, the president approved a reform strategy that provides for such an amendment, however the actual constitutional amendment process may not commence before 2016.

“By joining the ICC, Armenia can pay homage to victims of the past, present, and future and ensure that ‘never again’ becomes a reality by helping to put an end to impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes,” **said Kirsten Meersschaert Duchens, the Coalition’s regional coordinator for Europe.**

BACKGROUND: The ICC is the world’s only 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

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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