



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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States Must Take Lead in Elimination of Violence against Women

*Global Coalition Renews Calls for States to Uphold Commitment to Rome Statute
Landmark Gender Standards to End Violence against Women*

The Hague/ New York— By ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and implementing its landmark gender provisions domestically, states can protect women's rights and ensure justice for grave gender-based crimes, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court said today. 25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The Rome Statute's provisions targeting sexual crimes represent a historic advance for international justice. The Statute is one of the first international treaties to extensively address gender-based crimes as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and in some instances, genocide. Specifically, the Statute recognizes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilizations, gender-based persecutions, trafficking of persons particularly women and children, and sexual violence as among the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women helps bring into sharper focus the urgency of the work of the ICC to end impunity for crimes against women. It also serves as a reminder for ICC states parties to move forward with effective and comprehensive legislation implementing Rome Statute crimes so that protection of women's rights are guaranteed at both national and international levels. The Coalition and women's organizations around the world will continue their tireless efforts after today's celebration to ensure that violence and persecution of women are treated as the serious criminal and humanitarian law violations that they are.

Coalition members' statements in honor of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

"As we celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we call on the new ICC chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, to ensure that under her watch, gender crimes in the Rome Statute are fully investigated and effectively prosecuted. Women and girls' experiences of violence in armed conflict should not be downplayed because any decision to exclude crimes of sexual violence against child soldiers, especially girls, denies their right to reparation as was seen in the case against Thomas Lubanga." **Oby Nwankwo, executive director, Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre, Nigeria**

"The Rome Statute is such an important step when it comes to the work to combat violence against women. The inclusion of gender provisions in the Statute was a clear statement for the first time that rape in conflict is a crime against humanity and a war crime. That was a clear signal that war crimes are war crimes no matter if the victims are men or women. We are sure that without the Rome Statute the subject of sexual violence in conflict would not be as high on the international agenda." **Lena Ag, secretary general, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation**

"Despite the robust inclusion of gender provisions in the Rome Statute, justice remains elusive for most victims of sexual violence. On taking her oath of office in June this year, the ICC's first woman Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, stated that investigating and prosecuting gender-based crimes will be a priority for her office. This commitment is necessary and welcome. Yet, it is only part of the equation. Today, Amnesty International urges national authorities to step up and make good on the promise made ten years ago in Rome to deliver justice to victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including for the victims of crimes of sexual violence. On one hand, states must provide the Court with the cooperation and resources it needs to effectively investigate and prosecute crimes of sexual violence and other gender-based crimes. On the other, authorities must take urgent action to removing obstacles at the national level to the effective investigation and prosecution of crimes of sexual violence. The critical steps towards achieving this include reforming national law to include definitions of sexual violence that are consistent with the highest standards under international law, improving women's access to justice, and putting in place effective systems of protection and psychosocial support that take into account the particular situation and requirements of victims." **Lori Galway, head of office, Amnesty International Centre for International Justice**

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 23 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 currently conducting preliminary examinations analysing alleged crimes committed on the territory of Honduras, Republic of Korea, Afghanistan, Mali and Nigeria, as well as checking if genuine national proceedings are being carried out in Guinea, Colombia and Georgia.*

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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