



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

[www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)

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**ASIAN CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS FOR STRONGER SUPPORT FOR THE ICC**  
*Follow Lead of the Philippines and Malaysia towards Greater  
Accountability for Serious Crimes*

Manila/New York – Meeting in the Philippines last week, several Coalition members called on Asian governments and other relevant stakeholders to support justice for the most serious crimes by joining the International Criminal Court (ICC), the world's first global, permanent, independent criminal court with jurisdiction over crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. From 11-12 April 2011, civil society organizations from 11 countries within the Asia region met in Quezon City, the Philippines, to set up strategies to advance support for justice and accountability throughout the region, one of the most under-represented regions at the ICC.

Participants adopted final recommendations addressed to Asian governments, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the ICC, the Coalition Secretariat and its members, as well as other international organizations. They called on Asian governments to support justice and accountability in the region and insisted on the role that regional organizations, such as ASEAN and SAARC, can play in this process. NGOs also highlighted the need to take necessary measures to move forward with the implementation of the Rome Statute in domestic legislations.

“States must step up their efforts and commit themselves toward ending Asia's under-representation in the ICC,” says Evelyn Serrano, the Coalition's Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific. “We call on Asian governments to support the fight against impunity, and in particular urge the Philippines and Malaysia to turn their words into action and honor their public commitment to promptly join the ICC,” she adds.

The Philippines and Malaysia appear to be on the verge of joining the Court. In March 2011, the Malaysian government announced publicly that the Cabinet has approved accession to the Rome Statute but still needs to take the final step of depositing the accession instrument at the United Nations. All the relevant agencies within the Philippines' Executive Branch have also endorsed ratification of the Rome Statute, and on 7 March 2011, President H.E. Benigno Aquino III announced that he had transmitted the ICC documents to the Senate for its approval, which is the final step to complete the process.

Currently, only seven Asian states — Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, and Timor-Leste — are ICC members. With additional Asian member states, the under-represented Asia region will have a much stronger voice at the ICC and will be able to participate in a more meaningful manner, especially in the annual Assembly of States Parties (ASP) - the ICC's governing body - where states nominate and elect different officials as will be the case in the upcoming 2011 December elections for new judges and a new chief prosecutor, among other positions.

Participants noted that human rights violations have plagued the region over the past decades and that, in some cases, these violations continue to occur. Joining the ICC thus represents a strong deterrent effect that will contribute toward the prevention of future gross human rights violations in the Asia region, and ultimately contribute to the global fight against impunity.

**Background:** *The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. There are currently 114 ICC states parties to the Rome Statute, the Court's founding treaty. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. There are currently six active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Kenya; Libya; and Uganda. The ICC has publicly issued 15 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least nine situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, and Palestine.*

*The Coalition for the International Criminal Court includes 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 different 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.*

To read the final recommendations and see the full list of signatories, see:

[http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/documents/CICC\\_Asia\\_RSM\\_April\\_2011\\_Final\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/documents/CICC_Asia_RSM_April_2011_Final_Recommendations.pdf)

For more information on the Coalition's campaigns in the Asia region, visit: <http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/?mod=region&idureg=7>

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