



Coalition for the International Criminal Court
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**AFRICAN STATES PARTIES TO THE ICC MUST STAND UP FOR THEIR
COMMITMENT AND OBLIGATION TO THE COURT**

*Global Coalition Says the Support of African States Parties is Crucial As the Review
Conference Approaches*

Addis Ababa – From 3 to 6 November 2009, African states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) will hold a meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in preparation for the ICC's first Review Conference scheduled to take place in Kampala, Uganda in May 2010. This preparatory meeting aims to address African Union (AU) concerns with the ICC which were triggered by the issuance of an arrest warrant for Omar Al-Bashir, President of Sudan.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) — a civil society network in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity—has sent representative Stephen Lamony, CICC Africa Outreach Liaison and Situations Advisor,

to Addis Ababa ahead of the AU meeting to press the 30 African states who joined the Court to reaffirm their commitment to the ICC's objective to put an end to impunity for the gravest human rights and international humanitarian law violations.

In advance of the aforementioned AU meeting, William R. Pace, convenor of the Coalition penned an editorial titled "African Governments Must Not Backtrack on Promoting Justice and Ending Impunity," which was published in the *Ethiopian Observer* on 29 October 2009 (available online at http://www.ethioobserver.net/justice_ending_impunity.htm) in which he underscores that African states have been very supportive of the ICC since its establishment, adding that "it is...very unfortunate that several issues raised in the AU summit declaration of 1-3 July could seriously weaken the ICC treaty." Further, Pace urges African states parties "to uphold their treaty rights, defend the core principles of the ICC, and provide continued leadership in its future work." Pace concludes that "The African Union's credibility to uphold its own stated commitment to ending impunity is on the line."

In addition, a number of non-states parties to the ICC who have been invited to participate in this preparatory meeting could potentially exert pressure on African states parties to restrain from cooperating with the Court and further entrench the perception that Africa is turning against this new system of international justice.

"African states parties must not let ICC's detractors push them into violating their commitments to the Court. In fact, rather than keep quiet, they must make clear that they will arrest and surrender any suspect wanted by the ICC," said Stephen A. Lamony, Africa Outreach Liaison and Situations Advisor for the CICC.

***Important notice:** The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), an independent NGO movement, is dedicated to the establishment of the International Criminal Court as a fair, effective, and independent international organization. The Coalition as a whole, and its secretariat, does not endorse or promote specific investigations or prosecutions or take a position on situations before the ICC. However, individual CICC members may endorse referrals, provide legal and other support on investigations, or develop partnerships with local and other organizations in the course of their efforts.*

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