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Global Coalition Calls on Haiti to promptly ratify Rome Statute of the ICC

Civil society encourages Haiti to take a strong stand against impunity

New York/Lima, Peru—The Republic of Haiti should take the necessary steps towards ensuring Haiti's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the near future, the Coalition for the ICC said today.

In a letter dated 3 June to the president of Haiti, the Coalition recalled recent findings made by the United Nations Independent Expert on the human rights situation on Haiti, who submitted his report to the Human Rights Council during its 25th session. In its report, the Independent Expert Gustavo Gallón signaled that among the key challenges that have contributed to the commission of human rights violations in Haiti are the weakness of the rule of law and the need to address past violations and impunity. In this regard, the Coalition referred to recent judicial decisions that provide an encouraging message of Haiti's willingness to address such impunity.

Haiti's task of addressing past human rights violations comes at a crucial time in which the international community must take an important stand against impunity.

"A clear and unequivocal message in this direction can certainly be transmitted by Haiti by joining the ICC," expressed Michelle Reyes Milk, the Coalition's regional coordinator for the Americas. "Ratification of the Rome Statute is also an opportunity to enhance the national judicial system, given that, under the principle of complementarity, the Rome Statute recognizes the primary jurisdiction of States to investigate and prosecute alleged perpetrators of crimes under International Law included in the Rome Statute."

In its letter, the Coalition also reflected on the pivotal role played by the late former Prime Minister Arthur Robinson of Trinidad and Tobago in the establishment of the Court, following his passing last month. Through his incessant advocacy, Robinson ensured crucial support to the ICC from Caribbean states since the early days.

"Caribbean states have honored the legacy left behind by Arthur Robinson throughout the past two decades, through strong support to the Rome Statute system. We are confident that each and every Caribbean state—including Haiti, Bahamas and Jamaica—will be a part of the Court in the near future," said Jelena Pia-Comella, program director at the Coalition for the ICC. "Haiti's ratification of the Rome Statute will not only reaffirm its commitment to international justice but also signifies a key step in the country's stabilization process, contributing towards the restoration of a society based upon Rule of Law."

Ratification by Haiti by 1 October would also allow it to participate as a state party in the upcoming 13th Assembly of States Parties, to take place in New York on 8-17 December, and vote in the election of six new judges to the ICC bench.

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.

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

CONTACTS**In New York:**

Ms. Jelena Pia-Comella
Program Director
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +1 (646) 465-8524
pia@coalitionfortheicc.org

Mr. Dan Verderosa
Communications Officer
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: + 1 646 465 8524

verderosa@coalitionfortheicc.org

In Lima:

Ms. Michelle Reyes Milk
Regional Coordinator for the
Americas
Coalition for the ICC

Tel: +1 (646) 360-5082

reyes@coalitionfortheicc.org

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