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**Global Coalition Urges Morocco to Join the International Criminal Court***Ratification would bolster commitment to ending impunity*

**New York/The Hague**—Morocco should take the necessary steps to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Morocco is the February 2014 focus country for the Coalition's Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), a monthly campaign launched to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute system.

"As a state party, Morocco would be able to actively participate in the annual Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC during which states make important decisions in relation to the administration of the Court. Morocco could also present candidates for future elections of judges and prosecutors, potentially enhancing Morocco's leadership role in the international justice scene," **said Dr. Bahija Jamal of the Moroccan National Coalition for the ICC.**

In a letter to Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane, the Coalition urged Morocco to demonstrate its commitment to international justice and the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC—the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The Coalition also highlighted a series of developments in Morocco and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, such as the current, unprecedented level of engagement by Arab League states with the ICC, in addition to increasing public awareness of international law. Morocco has expressed its commitment to the rule of law and good governance. Its revised constitution, which recognizes the commitment of Morocco to the fight against impunity, is testimony of the country's dedication to international justice.

"Morocco's 2013 seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council further solidifies the country's commitment to international law and human rights," **said Leila Hanafi, the Coalition's regional coordinator for the MENA region.**

During this period of change in the MENA region, the Coalition believes that Morocco can further strengthen the growing movement in the Middle-East towards ending impunity by joining the ICC. To date, the Arab League has only four states parties to the Rome Statute--Jordan, Djibouti, the Comoros Islands and Tunisia--and nine signatories.

The rule of law is becoming a building block for the protection of human rights in several states in the region and thus promoting ratification of the Rome Statute is becoming increasingly opportune. Morocco recently ratified new conventions and protocols, passed laws promoting good governance and launched national dialogues on reforming justice systems. As many constitutional reform processes are occurring in the MENA region, the Rome Statute is yet another treaty body that can set higher standards nationally.

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**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.

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