



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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

**For more information, contact:**

**In Manila:** Evelyn Balais-Serrano  
Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: +632 456 6196 or +632 926 7882  
[serrano@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:serrano@coalitionfortheicc.org)

**In New York:** Brigitte Suhr  
Director of Regional Programs  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: (+1) 646 465 8540  
[suhr@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:suhr@coalitionfortheicc.org)

Michelle Reyes Milk  
Outreach Liaison for Asia-Pacific  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: (+1) 646 360 5082  
[reyes@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:reyes@coalitionfortheicc.org)

**In The Hague:** Oriane Maillet  
Head of Communications  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: (+31) 70 311 10 82  
[maillet@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:maillet@coalitionfortheicc.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GLOBAL COALITION CALLS ON PACIFIC STATES TO JOIN THE ROME STATUTE**

*Civil Society Urges Kiribati, Micronesia, Niue, Palau,  
Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu to Increase Pacific  
Region's Voice at International Criminal Court*

**New York, USA**—As part of a global and region-wide effort, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on Pacific states that have yet to ratify the Rome Statute—Kiribati, Micronesia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu—to heighten their ratification efforts and join the International Criminal Court (ICC) as soon as possible.

As part of its global campaign for universal support for the Court, the Coalition calls upon different countries each month to ratify the Rome Statute, the ICC's founding treaty. This month, the Coalition is focusing on Pacific states yet to ratify the treaty. In letters dated 12 January 2012 to the governments of each targeted Pacific state, the Coalition for the ICC—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society organizations 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—urged immediate action to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute.

The recent landmark accession to the Rome Statute by Vanuatu on 2 December 2011 which brought the number of states parties to the Rome Statute to the symbolic number of 120—the number of states that voted in favour of the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998—contributed toward increasing the Pacific voice within the ICC. It also brought the total number of ICC states parties in the Asia-Pacific region to 17. Notwithstanding this advance, Pacific states remain under-represented within the Rome Statute system.

“Pacific countries' participation in the Rome Statute system will be crucial as the Asia-Pacific region as a whole tries to catch up with the rest of the world in shaping the new mechanism of international justice that is the ICC” said Evelyn Balais-Serrano, regional coordinator for Asia and the Pacific of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. “With ICC membership, they stand to gain as they strengthen their own judicial and legal systems.”

As of 2 December 2011, 120 states have ratified the Rome Statute. Of these, eight belong to the Pacific region: Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, Nauru and Vanuatu. Over the past years, several actors, including ICC officials and civil society organizations, have taken important initiatives to promote further ratifications within Asia and the Pacific.

**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 active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 19 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is examining eight other situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria and Palestine.*

*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)*

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