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Global Coalition Urges States of Palestine and Israel to Join the ICC

Both countries must demonstrate their commitments to international justice

New York—Both Palestine and Israel should join the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said today.

In two separate letters to Mahmoud Abbas, the president of Palestine, and Shimon Peres, the president of Israel, the Coalition urged both governments to demonstrate their commitment to international justice and the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC.

"As Israel celebrates the new Jewish year in September, we wish that Israel and Palestine will ratify the Rome Statute in this new year," said Dr. Ishai Menuchin, executive director of the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI). "We, both Israeli and Palestinian civilians, need the protection of the ICC against severe human rights violations that are too common around us. We hope that the ICC will defend us from the violence of security forces and terror organizations."

As of today, the ICC has 122 states parties to the Rome Statute and 39 signatories. The Coalition, through its strengthened regional efforts geared towards civil society, parliamentarians, governments and media, is pushing for an increased number of accessions, ratifications and full implementation of the Rome Statute from countries around the world. The rule of law is progressively becoming a building block for the global protection of human rights. As leaders are gradually responding to their citizens' demands for accountability and justice, promoting ratification of the Rome Statute in the region is becoming increasingly important.

Ratification of the Rome Statute would allow Palestine and Israel to shape the future of international criminal justice by participating in all negotiations and decisions of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, including making proposals on any amendments to the Statute.

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 eight investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; Libya; and Mali. The ICC has publicly issued 22 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. The Court issued a judgment in its first trial on 14 March 2012. Two other trials are ongoing. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting eight preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, and the Comoros.

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

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