



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

7 May 2013

Global Coalition Calls on Turkey to Join the Fight against Impunity

Civil society urges Turkey to uphold its commitment to justice and the rule of law by joining the ICC

Brussels—Turkey should reaffirm its commitment to eradicating the culture of impunity and strengthening the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said.

Turkey is one of the focus countries this month of the Coalition's Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), an initiative which aims to secure universal acceptance of the Rome Statute. In a letter sent to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan this month, the Coalition urged Turkey to fulfill its past pledges to join the ICC.

"At the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in June 2010, the head of the Turkish delegation, Ismail Aramaz, reiterated Prime Minister Erdogan's commitment of 2004, but Turkey has yet to make any concrete progress towards accession to the Rome Statute," said Virginie Amato, the Coalition's senior advocacy and programme officer for Europe. "As a key international player, Turkey's accession to the Rome Statute could strengthen the global voice at the Court and result in a more robust and meaningful participation in the global effort to establish a truly fair, effective and independent ICC."

In October 2004, Erdoğan pledged before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that "Turkey will soon approve the Rome Statute after completing its internal preparations and will become part of the International Criminal Court". The government subsequently adopted the third National Program for the Adoption of the European Union (EU) *Acquis*, in December 2008, which includes a reference to the ICC and Turkey's ongoing efforts to complete the necessary work for its accession to the Rome Statute.

At the eighth session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in May 2010, Turkey accepted recommendations made by several states to consider adhering to the Rome Statute. Two years from now, at the 21st session of the UPR, Turkey is due to report on the implementation of recommendations accepted during the

previous cycle.

“Turkey is seeking election to the UN Security Council for 2015-2016. Advancement towards accession to the Rome Statute made before the elections would be a strong sign that Turkey shares the commitment of almost two-thirds of the world’s nations to achieving justice and the rule of law through the Rome Statute system,” said Brigitte Suhr, the Coalition’s director of Regional Programs. “Accession to the Rome Statute of the ICC by October 2014 could strengthen Turkey’s candidature.”

“Turkey has long stated its intention to accede; it is time for Turkey to honor its commitments and join in the growing movement to end impunity by acceding to the Rome Statute now,” said Öztürk Türkdöğen, spokesman for the Turkish Coalition for the ICC. “Now is the time to review and address any constitutional and legislative issues that have prevented accession by Turkey,” he added. “It is also critical that Article 38 of the current constitution providing that no citizen would be extradited to a foreign country on account of an offence, except under obligations resulting from being a party to the ICC, be maintained in the new constitution.”

The Coalition will be travelling to Turkey this month to hold bilateral meetings with Turkish government officials and civil society, in addition to holding several events with the Turkish Coalition to raise awareness of the ICC. Coalition Steering Committee member, FIDH, will hold its 38th FIDH Congress in Istanbul, with speakers including ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and ICC President Judge Sang-Hyun Song.

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, Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; Libya; and Mali. The ICC has publicly issued 20 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's Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting seven preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea and Nigeria.*

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org.

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