



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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Global NGO Coalition Welcomes Seychelles as 112th ICC State Party

CICC Says Africa Advancing Step by Step towards Ending Impunity for the Gravest Crimes

New York, NY/ Cotonou, Benin – On 10 August 2010, the Republic of Seychelles deposited its ratification instrument of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to the UN Headquarters, hence becoming the 112th State Party to the ICC Treaty.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) — a civil society network of 2,500 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 — commends Seychelles for its decision to join its 30 African counterparts as a State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

This historic step follows the formal approval of the Rome Statute ratification by Seychelles' National Assembly in July 2010. "Today's ratification is a major step forward for the fight against impunity in the African region thanks to the commitment of the government of Seychelles and civil society," said Francis Dako, CICC Africa Coordinator. "Seychelles' decision to join the Court amid recent anti-ICC decisions from the 15th African Union Summit is commendable and will hopefully encourage other African states to follow its steps."

The Coalition is now looking forward to Seychelles' next steps to fulfill its obligations under the Rome Statute, including fully implementing the Statute in its national law, cooperating with and providing political support to the Court, and acceding to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC).

"Throughout the campaign to establish the ICC and until today African governments and civil society have played a key role in supporting justice," said CICC Director of Programs Tanya Karanasios. "Today's ratification by the Seychelles is another step in the march towards ending impunity for the gravest crimes."

Africa is the most heavily represented region at the Court: there are 43 African signatories to the Rome Statute, 31 African states that have ratified or acceded to the ICC treaty and approximately 20 African countries that have final or draft legislation that would incorporate Rome Statute crimes and/or enable cooperation with the Court in their national laws. The input, involvement and support of the majority of African states has been vital to both the founding of the ICC and to its continued fair, effective and independent functioning.

BACKGROUND

112 countries have joined the ICC, which 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 unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of crimes contained in the Statute.

To date, the ICC has opened investigations in five situations: the Central African Republic; Darfur, Sudan; Uganda; Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya and it has publicly issued twelve arrest warrants and three summonses to appear. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least eight situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea and Palestine.