



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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**Global Civil Society Coalition Welcomes the Philippines as the
117th State Party to the International Criminal Court**
Manila Continues Southeast Asia's Push towards Ending Impunity

Manila/New York—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court, a global network of some 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations in 150 countries, commends the Philippines for its decision to join the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC). By depositing its instrument of ratification at UN headquarters today, the Philippines has agreed to recognize the jurisdiction of the ICC—the world's first and only permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide—over its territory and nationals and has accepted obligations to cooperate with the Court.

The Philippines was an active participant at the 1998 United Nations Diplomatic Conference to draft the Rome Statute, signing it in late 2000. The Philippines' ratification, together with that of Bangladesh last year and the advanced processes in Malaysia and Maldives, is evidence of an important shift towards a stronger commitment to the ICC and its principles in the Asia region, which has been historically under-

represented at the Court.

In the Philippines, civil society and many governmental actors have advocated for ratification throughout the last decade, playing a pivotal role in garnering public attention and keeping the ICC on the political agenda. A visit from ICC President Judge Sang-Hyun Song in March 2011 helped catalyze the final ratification steps, prompting the Philippines President Benigno Aquino III to transmit the Rome Statute to the senate for approval.

“This ratification is indeed a high moment for all those who have worked tirelessly to get to this stage of our long struggle to give justice to victims and to end impunity in the Philippines,” said Evelyn Balais-Serrano, a pioneer in the campaign for the ICC ratification in the Philippines and CICC coordinator for Asia-Pacific. “It is a reaffirmation of every Filipino’s desire to hold perpetrators accountable for human rights violations,” Balais-Serrano emphasized.

On December 2009, an “Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and other Crimes Against Humanity” was passed by the Philippines senate, incorporating ICC crimes into Philippine law. Now, to facilitate the fulfillment of its cooperation obligations to the Court, the Coalition calls on the Philippines to enact cooperation legislation and to accede to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC).

“This ratification is a culmination of more than ten years of campaigning and capacity-building through which we have engaged all relevant agencies, especially the security sector who had earlier expressed apprehension on the jurisdiction of the ICC,” said Loretta Ann Rosales, former co-chair of the Philippine Coalition for the ICC and now chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission. “We take pride in having all these agencies endorse the ICC ratification and in finally getting a national consensus on joining the Court,” stated Rosales.

The Coalition for the ICC maintains an active campaign throughout the Asian region and, with seven Asian states already part of the Rome Statute system and several more finalizing their ratification procedures, Asian membership in the ICC is growing.

“Now that the Philippines has firmly stepped up in favor of accountability, we urge other Asian states—among them Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal and Indonesia—to take the final steps necessary to make good on the governments’ promises to become ICC states parties,” said Brigitte Suhr, director of regional programs for the Coalition for the ICC.

Background: *The ICC is the world’s first, permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 117 ICC states parties. 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 six active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda, Kenya and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 18 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The ICC prosecutor recently requested authorization from judges to open an investigation in Côte d’Ivoire. His office 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

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