

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

7 July 2014

Ukraine: New Government can End Impunity by Joining ICC

Global Coalition calls for full ratification of Rome Statute to ensure accountability for grave crimes

The Hague—Ukraine’s new government should commit to ending impunity for mass atrocities by becoming a full member of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Ukraine is the July focus of the Coalition’s Campaign for Global Justice, which encourages states to join the ICC Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the only permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In a letter to President Petro Poroshenko, the Coalition urged Ukraine to ratify the Statute without delay.

“Particularly during these difficult times for Ukraine, our leadership must be committed to the principle of justice. Aggression, crimes against humanity, war crimes must all be fully and fairly investigated to make sure that impunity does not apply to the worst human rights abuses,” said **Roman Romanov, Rule of Law Program Director at the International Renaissance Foundation in Ukraine**. “Ratification of the Rome Statute is a necessary step for Ukraine to demonstrate this commitment.”

Developments in Ukraine since November 2013 have put the issue of accountability firmly on the table.

“The events in Ukraine over the past months are more than concerning, but if the new government joins the ICC, it will contribute to the development of a culture of accountability, as opposed to one of impunity,” said **Kirsten Meersschaert Duchens, Europe regional coordinator at the Coalition for the ICC**. “Full ICC membership is the only sure way to ensure justice for victims of grave crimes.”

On 17 April 2014, Ukraine filed a declaration accepting the jurisdiction of the ICC over alleged crimes during the so-called Maidan protests between 21 November 2013 and 22 February 2014.

During a mission to Kiev in June 2014, Coalition Steering Committee member, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), asked state officials to extend the temporal jurisdiction of the Court provided for in the April declaration.

“The temporal limits of the declaration leave outside of ICC jurisdiction very serious events that might deserve the attention of the prosecutor, such as the situations in Crimea, Odessa, and the eastern regions of the country,” said **Karim Lahidji, FIDH President**. “The absence of such an extension could lead to a temporal gap in the ICC jurisdiction, creating an impunity haven for those responsible of atrocities, and inequality amongst victims of very serious crimes.”

Although Ukraine signed the Rome Statute in 2000, its constitutional court ruled in 2001 that the Statute was incompatible with the Ukrainian constitution, effectively preventing ratification ever since.

On 14 May 2014, 199 members of the parliament proposed a draft amendment to the constitution to

CONTACTS**In The Hague:**

Kirsten Meersschaert Duchens
Head of the Hague Secretariat,
Europe Regional Coordinator
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +31 70 311 1087

meersschaert@coalitionfortheicc.org

Niall Matthews

Head of Communications
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +31 70 311 1085

matthews@coalitionfortheicc.org

In Kiev:

Roman Romanov
Rule of Law Program Director
International Renaissance Foundation
Tel: +380 44 482 03 63

romanov@irf.kiev.ua

In Paris:

Arthur Manet
Press Officer
International Federation for Human
Rights

Tel: +33 6 72 28 42 94

press@fidh.org

In New York:

Jelena Pia-Comella
Program Director
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +1 (646) 465-8524

pia@coalitionfortheicc.org



address this obstacle.

“The Verkhovna Rada draft is a welcome step in the path to membership of the ICC and we hope that it receives the further support it requires so that we can soon count Ukraine among the Court’s members,” **added Meersschaert Duchens.**

In 2007, Ukraine became the first non-state party to ratify the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court. The government subsequently committed to implementing all measures necessary to secure Rome Statute ratification as part of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement signed on 27 June 2014.

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.

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