



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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GLOBAL COALITION URGES BAHRAIN AND MOROCCO TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Morocco Can Further Demonstrate its Commitment to the Rule of Law

Rabat/New York—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations—called on Bahrain and Morocco to demonstrate their commitment to international justice and the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and acceding to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC). The Coalition has selected Bahrain and Morocco as the focus for its January 2012 Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), a monthly campaign launched to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute system.

In two separate letters dated 11 January 2012 to King of Bahrain HM Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and King of Morocco HM Mohamed VI, 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—the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

At a time when sweeping changes are occurring across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the Coalition believes that Morocco and Bahrain can further strengthen this growing movement in the region towards ending impunity by joining the ICC.

“Transformational changes in the region require a new impetus to advance government accountability and justice reforms, including through the International Criminal Court,” said Brigitte Suhr, director of Regional Programs. “Morocco and Bahrain are each well placed to lead the field. Morocco initiated significant headway in the area of judicial reforms and should reaffirm its commitment ratifying the Rome Statute, and Bahrain should do the same to show its commitment to put recent violence in the past.”

In the letter, the Coalition highlighted a series of developments in the region relating to the ICC during the past year. This included Tunisia’s accession to the Rome Statute and Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC), the Regional Diplomatic Conference on the ICC held in Doha, and comments made by former International Court of Justice Judge Nabil El Arabi when appointed Foreign Minister of Egypt mentioning ratification as a priority. In addition, the National Transitional Council of Libya looked to the Court in order to ensure justice for the Libyan people and representatives of Kuwait and Palestine have stated their intent to join the ICC.

“The ICC is engendering the trust of people seeking justice and relaying the message that there can be no impunity for crimes against humanity in the region and across the world,” said Leila Hanafi, CICC MENA coordinator. “We call on Morocco and Bahrain to take steps now to join in.”

With Vanuatu’s accession to the Rome Statute on 2 December 2011, 120 states have now acceded to or ratified the treaty. To date, the Arab League, consisting of 22 states, has only 4 states parties to the Rome Statute—Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Jordan and Tunisia. Ratification of the treaty would allow Bahrain and Morocco to participate as states parties in the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC.

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 seven investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 19 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The ICC prosecutor has also made public that it is examining eight situations on four continents: 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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