



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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**GLOBAL COALITION CALLS ON VIETNAM TO JOIN THE ROME
STATUTE**

*Civil Society Urges Vietnam to Show Commitment to Justice and join
Fellow Asian States at the International Criminal Court*

New York, USA / Manila, The Philippines—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on Vietnam to demonstrate its commitment to the global fight against impunity by joining the International Criminal Court (ICC)—the world's first and only permanent international court able to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Vietnam is the focus of the Coalition's Universal Ratification Campaign for November 2011, a campaign launched to call upon a different country each month to join the Rome Statute—the ICC's founding treaty.

In a letter dated 1 November 2011 to Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, the Coalition—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society 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—urged the government to heighten its accession efforts and promptly join the ICC.

Vietnam has already taken important steps in this direction. In addition to sending a delegation to the Rome Conference that approved the Rome Statute in 1998, the government sent, in 2006, a delegation of legal experts to The Hague in order to participate in an ICC Study Group. In 2008, following their participation at a high level ICC Seminar organized by the Ministry of Justice and the European Commission Delegation to Vietnam, Vietnamese legal experts embarked on a Comprehensive Study on the ICC with the aim of facilitating the accession and implementation processes. It is now time for the Vietnamese government to build on its commitment and make Rome Statute accession a priority.

Civil society in Vietnam has played an important role in promoting the work and mandate of the ICC within different sectors of Vietnamese society. Furthermore, it has called on Vietnamese authorities to follow the steps of other Asian states that have recently joined the ICC, by highlighting that Vietnam's accession to the Rome Statute would signify one more step in increasing Asia's participation at the Assembly of States Parties.

The ratification by fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states has also been highlighted. "Following Cambodia, the Philippines, as well as prospective ASEAN Member Timor-Leste, Vietnam's membership to the ICC will strengthen ASEAN's voice and the overall regional representation at the ICC," stated Evelyn Serrano, the Coalition's Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific. "Its people's history of sufferings from war and conflicts resonate well with the very reason why the International Criminal Court was created," she added.

119 states have ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute, Cape Verde being the most recent one. To date, 16 states in Asia and the Pacific have joined the Court.

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 active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; 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 Office of the Prosecutor 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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