

Statement on Behalf of the Georgian Coalition for War Crimes Documentation
8th Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to represent the Georgian Coalition for War Crimes Documentation at the 8th Assembly of States Parties.

The aforementioned Coalition was set up in response to the short but deadly armed conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation in August of last year.

A wide range of actors including international intergovernmental organizations such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union as well as international NGOs, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and local civil society from both sides of the conflict have documented mass scale human rights violations and international crimes falling under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. More specifically, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including: willful killing, torture, extensive destruction and appropriation of property, and intentionally directed attacks against civilian population and objects, among others.

Nonetheless, more than a year after the end of the conflict, very little has been done to bring those responsible before justice. Both countries to the conflict accuse each other of committing war crimes but fail to respond to the allegations concerning their own wrongdoings.

While authorities from Georgia and Russia have shown no genuine will to carry out effective investigations that might lead to the identification and punishment of those responsible, the response of the international community in relation to the issue of accountability has been limited to political statements that have had no effect.

Mr. President,

Against this background and considering ongoing tensions in the region, the Georgian Coalition believes that the opening of an investigation by the International Criminal Court could have a profound impact on the ground and would also play a preventive role for the future reoccurrence of the heinous violations of fundamental human rights.

Accountability will first and foremost serve the tens of thousands of victims who remain displaced as a result of ethnic cleansing, whose property has been destroyed and many of whom lost their family members.

Thank you.