



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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**INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE DAY: WORLD CELEBRATES 13TH
ANNIVERSARY OF NEW GLOBAL SYSTEM TO END IMPUNITY**

*Coalition Reiterates Call for States to Join the Rome Statute and to Nominate
the Most Highly-Qualified Candidates for 2011 ICC Elections*

New York/The Hague, 15 July 2011 – On Sunday, 17 July 2011, the world will celebrate International Justice Day in honor of the thirteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

International Justice Day is a reminder of the urgency for all States committed to justice to ensure continued support for the Rome Statute's international justice system, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court said today. As it has been the case for many years, the Coalition will commemorate this day in solidarity with victims of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes through a number of worldwide events.

“International Justice Day is a time to reflect on the enormous strides the international community has made towards the ultimate goal of ending impunity for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide with the adoption of the Rome Statute,” said Coalition Convenor William R Pace. “It is also a time to take stock of the colossal amount of work that remains to be done. The post ‘Cold War’ achievements of international justice during the past 15 years are unprecedented. But as most of the world’s ad hoc and special tribunals begin winding down, the ICC will take on even greater importance as the world’s only *permanent* court of international criminal justice,” he added.

“So today, we urge all states, international organizations, civil society and the world’s media to reaffirm their commitment to justice, and to the goal that all nations should ratify the Rome Statute,” Pace stated. “That the ICC has become, within a few years of its establishment, a major actor in global ‘conflict management’ is an astounding development.”

On this date 13 years ago, with the overwhelming support of 120 nations, the Rome Statute was adopted, leading to the creation of the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Today 116 nations have joined the Court and the number keeps growing. A number

of states around the world including the Philippines, Cape Verde, Malaysia and the Maldives are nearing completion of their ratification processes.

“States from Asia and the Arab world have long been under-represented at the Court,” said Brigitte Suhr, Director of Regional Programs. “Now with Tunisia’s recent ratification and several Asian states on the verge of joining, the Coalition’s long time goal of universal acceptance of the Court is advancing. Other Arab states, as well as the remaining P-5 states China, Russia and the United States should also take concrete steps toward becoming part of this system,” she added.

This year, International Justice Day takes place during the nomination period for candidates for upcoming elections of judges to the ICC at the Assembly of State Parties in December 2011. A new prosecutor will also be elected. The elections represent the most significant change to the composition of the Court’s bench and the Office of the Prosecutor in recent years.

“The upcoming elections will shape the Court and the Rome Statute system considerably over the coming years,” said William Pace. “States parties will have a tremendous opportunity to ensure that only the most qualified-candidates are nominated and elected, and that the process is fair and transparent. In so doing they can help to make certain that the Court’s reputation as the pre-eminent international tribunal is that of fairness and effectiveness.”

International Justice Day is also an opportunity for the world community to celebrate the historic advances in ending impunity for the worst crimes in international law. Since 1993, around 200 trials dealing with terrible crimes committed in 12 countries have been held by six international and special tribunals. Similar trials are ongoing at national level. At the ICC, three trials are being conducted, investigations in six countries have been opened, and 18 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear have been issued. Allegations of crimes committed in many other countries are also being considered by the ICC Prosecutor.

Background: *The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 116 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 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 over 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

Experts from human rights organizations members of the Coalition are available for background information and comment. List of experts available upon request to: communications@coalitionfortheicc.org