



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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Global Coalition Calls on Kazakhstan to Join the International Criminal Court

Civil Society Urges Kazakhstan to Affirm its Commitment to Justice and the Rule of Law by Acceding to the Rome Statute

Brussels/New York—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on the Republic of Kazakhstan to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Coalition has chosen Kazakhstan as one of the focus countries for its April 2012 Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), a monthly campaign to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Today, in a letter addressed to H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, 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 Kazakhstani government to submit a bill to Parliament as soon as possible in order to accede to the ICC Rome

Statute, and to fully align Kazakhstan's legislation with all obligations under the Statute, including accession to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC).

"Central Asia is significantly underrepresented at the Court; only Tajikistan is a state party," said William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. "When Kazakhstan joins the international justice system established by the Rome Statute and represented by the ICC, it will give the region a greater voice in the global fight to end impunity, and it will be an important step forward nationally toward greater commitment to justice and accountability," he highlighted.

"It is regrettable that the Kazakhstani government's response at the 7th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review in February 2010 indicated that the Republic of Kazakhstan rejected the recommendation to accede to the Rome Statute," said Bjørn Engesland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC). "We hope that the Kazakhstani authorities will realize the ICC's potential as an instrument to protect victims of serious human rights abuses in the world, and that they will seize the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Statute to move forward with the process in 2012," he continued.

To date, and with Guatemala's recent accession on 2 April 2012, 121 states worldwide have joined the Rome Statute. As a state party, Kazakhstan would assume a role in advancing human rights, accountability, justice and an end to impunity for grave crimes. It would also be able to actively participate in a more significant manner in the annual Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC during which states make important decisions in relation to the administration of the Court, including the election of judges, prosecutors, and other Court officials as well as the adoption of the Court's budget.

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 20 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. The Court issued a judgment in its first trial on 14 March 2012. Two other trials are ongoing. The ICC prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting eight preliminary examinations 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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