

Malaysian Bar Council

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PRESS RELEASE

Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

to promote peace and oppose crimes against humanity

The atrocities committed upon the people of Palestine have once again brought to the fore the importance of international institutions that are constituted to bring the perpetrators of such vicious acts to book.

Israel's recent attacks against Gaza amount to nothing less than crimes against humanity. The Malaysian Bar therefore welcomes in principle the Parliamentary resolution, moved by the Malaysian Government on 12 January 2009, to establish a UN-sponsored War Crimes Tribunal to investigate these acts.

We hope that the current ceasefire will hold, and that the people of Palestine and Israel will have some semblance of peace for now. However, there can be no lasting peace without bringing to justice those who committed these crimes against humanity.

We are witnessing more and more acts of horror being perpetrated by aggressive forces upon innocent and, very often, defenceless people. The reaction of nations that choose politics over human rights and morality, and which refuse to denounce or contain such acts, is disappointing. We must therefore turn to enduring institutions set up by the international community that call such acts to account. It is thus imperative that nation states subscribe to these institutions, to give them the moral and legal authority to deal with blatant human rights and humanitarian abuses worldwide.

One such institution is the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In line with Malaysia's call to the United Nations, and to provide leadership by example, we call upon the Government to immediately become party to the Rome Statute of the ICC so as to influence the promotion of international peace and stability. The ICC is an independent and permanent Court that seeks to strengthen the rule of law around the world. The threat of punishment against States, and their leaders, that commit the most heinous of crimes will serve as a deterrent.

The ICC is a tribunal that receives widespread respect, and if fully supported, will go a long way towards bringing about lasting peace by punishing all those who perpetrate crimes against their fellow human beings.

Dato' Ambiga Sreenevasan
President
Malaysian Bar
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