

New York, 5 June 2012

H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz

President

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Your Excellency:

We have the honor of writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of 2,500 member NGOs in over 150 countries, campaigning for a fair, effective, and independent Court and increased access to justice for victims of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes.

As part of its Universal Ratification Campaign for the month of June, the Coalition wishes to encourage your government to engage in serious discussions and advances to embrace the new system of international justice enshrined in the Rome Statute, which primarily aims to ensure an end to impunity for the most serious and heinous international crimes. To that effect, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – an institutional cornerstone of a new system of international justice and the only permanent international institution capable of trying atrocity crimes – provides complementarity as a core principle which underlines the importance of domestic proceedings in the fight against impunity.

The Coalition congratulates you and your government on its election to the Human Rights Council on 13 May 2010, a little more than two years ago. The Coalition also takes note of the positive steps your government has taken to consolidate democracy and the rule of law. In the 2010 Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, Mauritania reiterated its commitment to the ideals and principles enshrined in the international legal instruments and voluntarily pledged to support efforts to promote and protect human rights internationally. In line with such commitments and your current efforts, we urge your government to address and move forward with the dossier on Mauritania's accession to the Rome Statute as soon as possible.

By acceding to the Rome Statute and embracing the principle of complementarity, Mauritania will have an opportunity to exercise primary jurisdiction over crimes that could fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC, thus reaffirming its sovereign right to investigate and prosecute these crimes. The ICC gains jurisdiction over these crimes only when a state is unable or unwilling to genuinely do so itself.

Your Excellency, the Coalition recognizes that certain challenges of a legal and political nature can arise in the path to accession. Notwithstanding, we urge your government to effectively surpass these challenges and embrace this new system of international justice. To this end, we would like to reiterate that the Coalition remains at your disposal to address these important issues and thus contribute to a more fruitful debate.

Excellency, we urge you to use your good offices to ensure prompt treatment of the accession dossier. By acceding to the Rome Statute, you will be expressing Mauritania's support for justice and human rights, and reaffirming its commitment to contribute to international justice and peace by taking a vital step to end impunity for grave crimes committed worldwide. We hope to see you among the ICC states parties in the nearest future.

Respectfully,



Brigitte Suhr
Director of Regional Programs



Francis Dako
CICC Africa Coordinator

CC:

H.E. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister

H.E. Hamadi Ould Baba Hamadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

H.E. Abidine Ould Kheir, Minister of Justice

H.E. Messaoud O. Boulkheir President of the National Assembly

H.E. Abderrahim Ould Hadrami, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the United Nations