



HURINET-U, NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE AND UCICC LAUNCH MAJOR INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE UGANDAN SOCIETY IN ICC REVIEW CONFERENCE

Kampala, 27 May 2009

The Human Rights Network-Uganda (HURINET-U), the international organisation "No Peace Without Justice" (NPWJ) and the Ugandan Coalition for the International Criminal Court (UCICC) this week launched a nation-wide initiative in Uganda to highlight the importance of the Review Conference of the International Criminal Court, which will be held in Kampala in June 2010. The initiative seeks to ensure the effective participation of civil society during the Review Conference, to spread awareness and understanding among the Ugandan public of the Review Conference and of the International Criminal Court (ICC) more broadly and to create avenues of engagement between the States Parties of the ICC and Ugandan civil society.

The initiative will consist of activities conducted both before and during the Review Conference. Between October 2009 and April 2010, HURINET-U, NPWJ and UCICC will organise a series of missions to Uganda by high-level representatives of State Parties to the Rome Statute to meet with the local population and victims of conflicts under investigation by the ICC. The missions form part of a broader public engagement and information campaign by HURINET-U and UCICC that will include regional seminars and debates on the ICC.

During the Review Conference, HURINET-U and UCICC will put in place a "Peoples Space" to show case human rights work related to the work of the Court, situations before the Court and victims' experiences. The "People's Space" will be an open forum for the exchange of ideas related to the ICC through public and media outreach, and events allowing Civil Society participants to express opinions or concerns about ICC issues. HURINET-U and UCICC will facilitate the active participation at this event and in the Review Conference itself of Ugandan and international Civil Society groups.

HURINET-U, No Peace Without Justice and UCICC believe that hosting the International Criminal Court Review Conference in Uganda provides an unprecedented opportunity to enhance public support for the ICC in Africa and for African States Parties to reaffirm their unequivocal commitment to the Rome Statute and the principles underlying it.

The Review Conference can also enhance the independence of the ICC in the eyes of the people of Uganda if they are given an opportunity to see first-hand that the Court does not answer to any one Government, person or institution, but is founded on the firm commitment of more than one hundred states parties, 30 of which are African countries.

The Review Conference comes at a critical time for the ICC, particularly for the Court's relationship with Africa. HURINET-U, NPWJ and UCICC call on the ICC Assembly of States Parties and on fellow members of the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court to give their full support to this important Uganda-wide initiative in order to ensure that the Review Conference is accessible to the people of Uganda and Ugandan civil society. We also urge State Parties to the ICC to participate in and support this initiative in order to use the opportunity of the Review Conference to engage with victims and communities affected by the Court's work. In particular, we call upon the Government of Uganda to fulfill its commitment to maximizing civil society participation in and access to the Review Conference, including by providing all possible support and cooperation to this initiative.

For further information, contact:

HURINET-U
Muhammed Ndifuna
executive@hurinet.or.ug

Tel: +256.414.286.923

No Peace Without Justice
Alison Smith
asmith@npwj.org

Tel: +32.486.986.235

UCICC
Joseph A. Mamoba
ucicc_uganda@yahoo.com or
ucicc@hurinet.or.ug

Tel: +256.414.286.923