



ICC: AU SUMMIT DECLARATION DISAPPOINTING AND IRREGULAR. NPWJ CALLS ON ICC MEMBER STATES TO REAFFIRM THEIR CONDEMNATION AND REJECTION OF IMPUNITY

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The text that has emerged from the Heads of State of African Union member States includes a paragraph urging African States not to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC), amid controversy on the procedure by which it was approved, including that fact that a number AU member States were prevented from speaking during the debate.

Statement by Sergio Stanzani and Niccoló Figa-Talamanca, President and Secretary-General of No Peace Without Justice:

"No Peace Without Justice and the Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty condemn this move that calls for non-cooperation with the International Criminal Court. It pits the African Union on the side of impunity against victims of atrocities; it stands with the oppressors against the oppressed.

"We had hoped for much better from the leaders of the African Union, particularly after the consensus reached by African ICC States Parties to reaffirm their commitment to the Rome Statute as a means to put an end to impunity at their meeting in Addis Ababa early last month. More seriously, this text is in contradiction to Africa's commitment to accountability, which is enshrined in the African Union's Constitutive Act.

"We are also disappointed by the irregular and non-democratic way in which the Libyan Presidency of the African Union and the AU Commission has pushed for its adoption, with reports of member States supportive of the ICC being effectively gagged during the debate. We cannot help but despair for the victims of human rights violations in Africa, if this is the way that the African Union, as the body that is supposed to protect them, is being abused by its Presidency and by the AU Commission.

"We urge Africa's leaders, particularly the leaders of those States who are members of the International Criminal Court, to speak out against this declaration, which is squarely against their own interests and indeed against their international legal obligations enshrined in the Rome Statute. In this respect, we commend the leaders of Botswana, whose public statements denouncing this paragraph gives hope to victims across the continent, including particularly in Darfur.

"African States were a driving force and have played a crucial role in the process towards the establishment of the ICC and have been the most active in voluntarily referring cases to the Court. African States should now clearly demonstrate that they stand on the side of their victims, and on the side of justice. The victims deserve better than what they have received from their leaders last Friday."

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No Peace Without Justice is an international non-profit organisation that works for the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and international justice. For mre information, visit our website: <http://www.npwj.org>