



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

[www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)

**CONTACT:**

**In Amman:** Abeer Al-Khraisha  
Middle East and North Africa Regional Adviser, CICC  
Tel: +962 6 5921 723  
Email: [alkhraisha@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:alkhraisha@coalitionfortheicc.org)

**In The Hague:** Oriane Maillet,  
Head of Communications, CICC  
Tel: +31 70 311 10 82  
Email: [maillet@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:maillet@coalitionfortheicc.org)

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**TUNISIA EXPRESSES INTENT TO RATIFY THE ROME STATUTE**

*First Steps of Interim Government Include Commitment to Human Rights*

**Amman, Jordan** - The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) welcomes the important commitment made by the Tunisian Government toward accession to the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

During a press conference after the first cabinet meeting of the interim government in Tunisia on 2 February 2011, Mr. Taieb Baccouch, Minister of Education and Interim Government Spokesperson, indicated that the interim government was prepared to adhere to many important international human rights treaties, including the Rome Statute.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court applauds the interim government's early commitment to justice. Tunisia's ratification would send a strong message to the Arab world, which is under-represented at the ICC - the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

"It is a historic moment for Tunisia. It is a historic moment for the Arab world," stated Souhayr Belhassen, President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and former Vice-President of the Tunisian League for Human Rights. "The time has come for our countries to join the international community in the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes, and to make the strongest commitment for justice and redress for victims of grave atrocities," she added.

The Tunisian government can ratify the Treaty by a presidential decree as laid out by Article 28 of the current Constitution. After the elections, which are due to occur later this year, the law would go into effect once ratified by the future parliament.

“It is a priority for the government and its commitment is serious because it decided to ratify the Rome Statute just in its second meeting,” said Coalition member Dr. Amor Boubakri, Professor at the University of Sousse and Member of Amnesty International–Tunisia. “The Rome Statute will be ratified by a presidential decree because the present parliament cannot adopt the text for its political affiliation to Ben Ali’s regime. But the supposed presidential decree-law will be enough to bind the Tunisian state vis-à-vis Rome Statute,” he explained.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region at this time has one ICC state party - the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a member of the League of Arab States, which ratified the Rome Statute in 2002. Two other members of the League of Arab States, the Comoros Islands and Djibouti, are also states parties to the Rome Statute, having ratified in August 2006 and November 2002, respectively.

Supporting ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC is a cornerstone objective to ensure a truly global and universal membership at the ICC. In order for the Rome Statute system to succeed, an increasing majority of the world's nations must support the Court and its founding treaty. The Coalition focuses its efforts in particular in regions under-represented at the ICC, such as Asia and the Middle East, and continues to advocate strongly in non-party states on the importance of joining this fundamental international justice system, created by the Rome Statute and represented by the ICC.

***Background:*** *The ICC is the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. There are currently 114 ICC states parties. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. There are currently five active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda, and Kenya. The ICC has publicly issued 12 arrest warrants and three summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least ten situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, South Korea, Nigeria, and Palestine.*

*The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. For additional information, please visit: [www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)*

*Coalition NGO experts are available for interviews and background. List available upon request to [maillet@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:maillet@coalitionfortheicc.org)*

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