



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

www.coalitionfortheicc.org

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**Global Coalition Calls on Singapore to Accede to Rome Statute
*Civil Society Says Singapore and ASEAN Member States Should Support a
Strong ICC***

New York, USA—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on Singapore to increase its support for justice and the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—the world’s first and only permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Singapore is the focus of the Coalition’s Universal Ratification Campaign (URC) for October 2012, a monthly campaign launched to call upon a different country or countries to join the Rome Statute—the ICC’s founding treaty.

In a letter dated 2 October 2012 to Singapore’s Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. LEE Hsien Loong, the Coalition—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC—urged the government of Singapore to prioritize its accession to the Rome Statute.

On the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute, the Coalition recalled Singapore's active participation during the Preparatory Commission, and highlighted the important role that it plays within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). An accession by Singapore would be instrumental in ensuring further ratifications within ASEAN states as well as Asia-Pacific in general, in particular taking into account Singapore's leadership in the region.

"Singapore and other ASEAN member states should support a strong ICC," said Sinapan Samydorai, Think Centre's (TC) director for ASEAN affairs. "Ratifying states should fulfill their obligation to the Rome Statute by enacting national laws to try gross violations of human rights. Considering the recent political conflicts in the region, the promotion of complementarity with the Rome Statute will ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice."

Under the system of complementarity, states parties have primary jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute the international crimes covered by the Rome Statute, with the ICC acting only as a court of "last resort" when and where national jurisdictions fail to address those crimes.

The government of Singapore is assessing several political and legal challenges, including a variety of topics from immunity to extradition. However, many of these issues have been previously examined by other states that have now ratified the Rome Statute. As these concerns are pertinent to many states, the Coalition encouraged Singapore to take note of previous discussions in attempting to surpass these challenges, in addition to emphasizing the significant contribution it could bring to the Rome Statute system.

"Small as it is, Singapore has proven it can play a big role when it led the Friends of the ICC during the formative years of the Court. Let us hope that such contribution can be sustained through Singapore's ratification and active participation in making the Court truly fair, independent and effective," stated Evelyn Serrano, the Coalition's coordinator for Asia and the Pacific.

In its letter, the Coalition also emphasized the recent ratifications of the Philippines, Maldives and Vanuatu as important steps forward in ensuring Asia-Pacific's increased representation before the ICC.

Background: *The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. There are currently seven investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 22 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. The Court issued a judgment in its first trial on 14 March 2012. Two other trials are ongoing. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting eight preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Mali and Nigeria*

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in

150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org

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