

Statement Expressing African Civil Society Support for International Justice

We, the participants of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) Africa Strategy Meeting held in Kampala, Uganda from 27 to 29 May 2009,

Recalling the ratification of the International Criminal Court by thirty (30) African states and their commitment to fully support the work of the International Criminal Court;

Further recalling the Resolution on Strengthening International Justice in Africa made by NGOs during the NGO Forum of the 45th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights on 9-11 May 2009 in Banjul, The Gambia;

Recognizing that the International Criminal Court represents the aspiration to end impunity in the world;

Conscious of the efforts by the International Criminal Court to conduct investigations and provide justice to thousands of victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and other grave human rights violations that shock the conscience of humanity;

Bearing in mind that countless victims of mass atrocities in Africa rely on the International Criminal Court to provide justice where national justice systems are not able to do so;

Acknowledging that for those victims and potential victims of mass atrocities, the establishment of the International Criminal Court has had a significant deterrent effect and has helped prevent further occurrence of atrocities in some countries;

Noting with great concern the reported pressure on some African countries to suspend their support for the Court or even formally withdraw from the Rome Statute;

Hereby urge the *African States Parties* to the Rome Statute to:

Commit to respect the principles established under the Rome Statute and not to take any steps that could undermine the functioning of the Court;

Consider the negative impact any decision to withdraw support would have on the development of international justice, the fight against impunity and the rule of law in Africa and other parts of the world;

Fully support the work of the International Criminal Court, which represents the last resort for the thousands of victims of grave human rights violations who cannot obtain justice at the national level;

Fully cooperate with and assist the International Criminal Court in its investigative and prosecutorial mandate;

Encourage all states that have not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities, and to fully implement their provisions into national law in order to be able to prosecute crimes nationally and to cooperate better with the Court;

Strongly urge the *African Union* to:

Adhere to the principles elaborated in the Constitutive Act by supporting justice and the rule of law;

Establish a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between the African Union, Civil Society, the International Criminal Court, and other relevant bodies;

Further strongly advise *the International Criminal Court* to:

Engage robustly with key government officials, civil society actors, and the general public in Africa to counter negative perceptions and widely inform on its activities on the ground;

Hold hearings in African States as an important symbolic move to bring justice closer to African victims and to facilitate access to justice for victims and relevant communities.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

1. Network Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (Sierra Leone)
2. International Commission of Jurists - Kenya
3. Advocates for Public International Law (Uganda)
4. Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (Uganda)
5. Women's Synergy for Victims of Sexual Violence (DRC)
6. Justice Plus (DRC)
7. Social Action for Peace and Development (DRC)
8. The Kenyan Human Rights Commission
9. Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)
10. Central African Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CAR)
11. Foundation Humanus (Cameroon)
12. Environment, Natural Resources and Development (DRC)
13. Association of Women Jurists (Cape Verde)
14. Group Lotus (DRC)
15. Volunteers' Collective for the Rebirth of the Congo (DRC)
16. Coalition Burkinabe for the International Criminal Court (Burkina Faso)
17. Ivorian Coalition for the International Criminal Court (Côte d'Ivoire)
18. Association of Women Jurists (Côte d'Ivoire)
19. Civil Resource Development and Documentation Center (Nigeria) (CICC Steering Committee member)
20. Ugandan Coalition for the ICC (Uganda)
21. Human Rights Network-Uganda (CICC Steering Committee member)
22. No Peace Without Justice (CICC Steering Committee member)
23. DRC National Coalition for the ICC (DRC)
24. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (CICC Steering Committee member)

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a network of more than 2500 members in 150 countries working for a fair, effective and independent ICC and improved access to justice nationally and internationally for victims of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. In the context of the CICC's 2009 Africa strategy meeting in Kampala, Uganda CICC member organizations released the above statement to call on their governments to recommit themselves to the ICC.