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Global Coalition Calls on Sudan to Ratify International Criminal Court Treaty

In Light of Current ICC Investigations, Ratification Would Make Real Sudan's Assertions about Willingness to Cooperate

(New York, 23 January 2006) – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court – an international coalition of more than 2,000 non-governmental and civil society organizations that support the International Criminal Court (ICC) – has today called on Sudan to ratify the ICC treaty which Sudan signed on 8 September 2000. In a letter sent to Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the CICC urges Sudan to prioritize its ratification of the Rome Statute – the treaty that created the first permanent global court capable of trying individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – especially in light of the ICC's current investigation into alleged war crimes in Sudan.

In light of both the 31 March 2005 United Nations Security Council referral to the ICC of the Darfur situation in Sudan and the fact that Sudan is currently hosting the African Union at the African Union summit taking place today and tomorrow in Khartoum, Sudan faces increasing scrutiny by the international community. As the CICC letter stresses, the al-Bashir administration's ratification of the Rome Statute now would make real Sudan's recent assertions about its willingness to work with the ICC. In addition, the CICC noted that with a new total of 100 countries to date that have ratified or acceded to the ICC's treaty, Sudan would be joining with the majority of the nations of the world that have joined the ever-growing movement behind the Court. Following Kenya's March 2005 ratification, 27 African countries – more than half of the 53 member countries of the African Union – have now become party to this crucial global treaty.

Each month, CICC members select a country on which to focus ICC ratification efforts. Kenya ratified the ICC treaty just three months after the CICC January 2005 ratification campaign which had Kenya as its target.

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Notes for Editors:

1. Additional contacts for background information and comment:

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2. The ICC is the world's first permanent global criminal court. The ICC is not an organ of the United Nations but is an independent body and was established in The Hague, the Netherlands on 1 July 2002 when its treaty entered into force. The ICC does not have jurisdiction over any crimes prior to that date.

3. The ICC's geographic jurisdiction extends over the territories and nationals of the 100 countries that have ratified or acceded to its treaty. The Court may also have jurisdiction in situations referred by the UN Security Council. In accordance with the court's "complementarity" principle, however, the ICC will only act when national courts have been unable or unwilling to do so.

4. The Court is currently investigating cases in Darfur, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The ICC unsealed its first arrest warrants for five top leaders of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on 13 October 2005. The Court is also analyzing eight situations on four continents including the Central African Republic and Cote d'Ivoire.

5. The CICC is not an organ of the Court but rather an independent NGO network of more than 2,000 civil society organizations working to promote a fair, effective and independent ICC. The CICC was established in February 1995 and has offices in New York City and The Hague as well as seven regional offices around the world. For more information: www.iccnw.org