



MEDIA CONTACTS:

In Bangkok: Boonthan T. Verawongse
Director, Peace and Human Rights Resource Center
Secretary General, Campaign Committee for Human Rights, ICC Task Force –Thailand
Tel: 66 81 866 2136
E-mail: verawongse@gmail.com

In Manila: Evelyn Balais-Serrano
Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +632 456 6196 or +632 926 7882
E-mail: serrano@coalitionfortheicc.org

In New York: Brigitte Suhr
Director of Regional Programs
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: (+1) 646-465-8540
E-mail: suhr@coalitionfortheicc.org

Michelle Reyes Milk
Outreach Liaison for Asia-Pacific
Coalition for the ICC
Tel: (+1) 646 360 5082
E-mail: reyes@coalitionfortheicc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
7 MAY 2012

GLOBAL COALITION CALLS ON THAILAND TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Civil Society Says Government Should Prioritize Ratification of Rome Statute

New York, USA / Bangkok, Thailand—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court called on Thailand to demonstrate its commitment to the global fight against impunity by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—the world’s first permanent international court able to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Thailand is a focus of the Coalition’s Universal Ratification Campaign (URC) for May 2012, a campaign launched to call upon different countries each month to join the Rome Statute—the ICC’s founding treaty.

In a letter dated 2 May 2012 to Thai Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, the Coalition urged the government of Thailand to move forward with the ratification process of the Rome Statute. “While the Asia-Pacific region continues to be under-represented before the ICC, it is encouraging to see that among the latest ratifications to the Statute are the countries of the Philippines, Maldives and Vanuatu,” said Brigitte Suhr, director of Regional Programs for the Coalition. “These recent ratifications are an important signal of Asia’s growing commitment to the system of international justice enshrined in the Rome Statute, and we encourage Thailand to join the trend in the near future.”

“Thailand, as a leading country in the ASEAN, has been trying its best to comply with its human rights obligations,” said Evelyn Balais-Serrano, the Coalition’s coordinator for Asia-Pacific. “By ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, its new government would be showing its commitment to ending impunity and pursuing a direction towards adherence to justice and the rule of law.”

The Coalition acknowledged the recent initiatives to raise awareness about the Rome Statute in the Thai parliament, as well as among government officials and civil society. Seminars, lectures and other ICC activities have been held in the last two years, including civil society’s participation in the Assembly of States Parties in New York in December 2011. Events are being organized this year in commemoration of the 10 year anniversary of the coming into force of the Rome Statute, including visits to the ICC headquarters in The Hague by members of the parliament.

“As members of civil society, it is our strong desire to see Thailand as part of the international community that promotes justice and works for respect for human rights,” expressed Chalida Tajaroensuk, director of People Empowerment Foundation, an NGO advocating for human rights in Thailand and in Asia. “We call on our government to ratify and implement all important international human rights treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. With the ICC, we want an end to impunity and to prevent similar conflicts that took place in our recent history from happening again.”

The Coalition also recalled Thailand’s participation in the Rome Conference and its subsequent steps toward ratification by signing the Rome Statute in 2000. In recognition of some legal challenges that have surfaced with regards to compatibility between the Rome Statute and Thai domestic legislation, the Coalition calls on Thailand to assess these concerns carefully and consider drawing examples from states parties that have successfully addressed similar compatibility issues.

To date, 121 states worldwide have joined the Rome Statute, Guatemala being the most recent. While the past two years have been witness to increased participation from Asian states within the Court—Bangladesh ratified in March 2010, the Philippines in August 2011, Maldives in September 2011 and Vanuatu in December 2011—the Asia-Pacific region still remains underrepresented at the ICC, with only nine states parties to the Rome Statute from the Asia region, and 17 within the larger Asia-Pacific region. Thailand’s ratification of the Rome Statute would therefore provide an important example to other states in the region.

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 20 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 prosecutor has also made public that he is conducting seven preliminary*

examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea 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.

###