



Coalition for the International Criminal Court
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***Global Coalition Urges Turkey to Join International Criminal Court –
Says Government’s 2004 Pledge to Join ICC Still Outstanding***

New York, USA – Today, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations in over 150 countries— called on Turkey to demonstrate its commitment to international justice and the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Turkey is the February 2009 country target for the Coalition’s Universal Ratification Campaign (URC).

In a 2 February 2009 letter to the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the CICC urged the Republic of Turkey to prioritize its accession to the Rome Statute—the treaty that created the first permanent global court capable of trying individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

“We welcome the government’s recent approval of the Third National Programme for the adoption of the EU Acquis, which states that necessary preparations and arrangements should be made so that Turkey can join the ICC” said Luisa Mascia, Europe Coordinator at the CICC.

In May 2004, Prime Minister Erdogan pledged before the Assembly of the Council of Europe that “Turkey will soon approve the Rome Agreement after completing its internal preparations and will become part of the International Court Convention.”

“We are calling again on Prime Minister Erdogan to fulfill his commitment and, after a long delay, accede to the Rome Statute without delay,” said Mascia.

This year, the Turkish Coalition for the ICC has undertaken a national campaign to raise awareness on the ICC and to strengthen support for international justice among students, civil society, the media and the general public.

“We are very pleased to see a strong mobilization at the level of national civil society to promote this new system of international criminal justice,” said William Pace, CICC Convener. “Turkey is an important political and geo-strategic world power. Its accession to the Rome Statute not only serves to promote the international rule of law—it is sure to trigger further ratifications and offer additional support for the ICC in both Europe and the Arab world,” he added.

More than half of the world—108 countries—have joined the ICC, which is the first permanent international court capable of trying individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The year 2008 marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. 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 do so. There are currently four active investigations before the Court: Uganda; the Democratic Republic of Congo; Darfur, Sudan and the Central African Republic.

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