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Mauritania: Continue Commitment to Justice by Joining ICC

Global Coalition says accession to Rome Statute should be a priority to end impunity

New York—Mauritania can strengthen its demonstrated commitment to international justice and the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Mauritania is the focus of the Coalition’s June 2013 Universal Ratification Campaign, which encourages states to join the Rome Statute system each month.

In a letter to President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, the Coalition urged the Mauritanian government to prioritize its accession to the Statute—the founding treaty of the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Côte d’Ivoire’s ratification of the Statute in February 2013 reaffirms Africa’s impetus to end impunity through the Rome Statute system.

“Mauritania has not yet signed nor ratified the Rome Statute, which is out of step with its ratification of other instruments that uphold the protection and defense of human rights nationally and internationally,” said Francis Dako, Regional Coordinator for Africa for the Coalition for the ICC. “It’s time for Mauritania to continue its commitment to justice by joining the ICC.”

The Coalition further encouraged President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz to seize Mauritania’s democratic momentum to increase efforts to accede to the Rome Statute.

“Mauritania’s neighbours to the south are long time ICC states parties, as are most West African countries,” said Brigitte Suhr, director of regional programs for the Coalition for the ICC. “Mauritania should throw its support behind the Court as it goes about its critical work on behalf of victims of graves crimes in Africa and around the world.”

As an ICC state party, Mauritania would be able to actively participate in the decision-making processes of the Court’s governing body, the Assembly of States Parties.

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 eight investigations before the Court in the following states: the Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; Libya; and Mali. 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 trials are currently ongoing. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting eight preliminary examinations: Afghanistan, Colombia, the Comoros referral, 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

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