



Coalition for the International Criminal Court
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GLOBAL COALITION URGES PHILIPPINES TO JOIN ICC WITHOUT DELAY
Philippine Coalition says time has come to incorporate highest standards of international law

Manila – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society organizations—this week called on the Republic of the Philippines to ratify the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, without further delay. The Philippines signed the treaty on 28 December 2000 and is the September 2009 target for the Coalition’s Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), which each month calls upon a different country to join the Court.

In a letter dated 15 September 2009 to Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the CICC urged the Philippines to prioritize its ratification of the Rome Statute.

The call follows a 12 August 2009 National Summit on International Humanitarian Law that urged the Philippines to immediately join the world's first permanent, independent

war crimes court. The meeting was spearheaded by the country's Commission on Human Rights to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The Philippine Coalition for the ICC (PCICC), one of the civil society sponsors of the Summit, referred to the impact of internal armed conflicts in the country. "The ongoing war against the armed insurgent groups such as the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have resulted in thousands of internally displaced persons caught in the crossfire, many of them having been deprived of their basic rights to security and food, education and health," stated PCICC co-chairperson Loretta Ann Pargas-Rosales.

Dr Raul Pangalangan, PCICC co-chairperson, said "it is time to update Philippine laws to keep abreast of the highest standards in humanitarian protection... The Philippines has fallen short of global standards. We call on the Arroyo government to adopt laws and treaties that will reaffirm the commitment to humanitarian protection that previous governments have sustained over the years."

Both houses of the Philippine Congress have over the years come out with three resolutions calling on the executive to transmit the instrument of ratification to the Senate for concurrence. This is the final step needed for ratification.

The Philippines would be joining Afghanistan, Cambodia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Timor Leste as states parties to the treaty once it ratifies and could help strengthen the voice of Asia in making the ICC - the first permanent, independent court capable of investigating and bringing to justice individuals who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide- a truly effective mechanism for the rule of law and international justice.

There are currently four active investigations before the Court: Uganda; the Democratic Republic of Congo; Darfur, Sudan; and the Central African Republic. The Court also has several situations under analysis, including in Colombia, Afghanistan, Georgia, Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire. It has issued arrest warrants in each of the four situations under investigation.

The August 2009 target for the Coalition's Universal Ratification Campaign was Bangladesh.

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