



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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Global Coalition Urges Grenada and the Bahamas to Join the ICC before Upcoming ICC Elections

Four Countries Left to Solidify Caribbean Community Commitment to Justice and Human Rights

New York, USA – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on the Bahamas and Grenada to ratify and accede, respectively, to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as soon as possible. By joining the ICC, Grenada and the Bahamas will help consolidate the Caribbean's representation within the Court and reaffirm their commitment to international justice and human rights, the Coalition said today.

In letters sent to these two Caribbean nations, the Coalition – a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity -- requested the governments of the Bahamas and Grenada to take immediate action to join the ICC, particularly as the Court's relevance as a key institution in the promotion of the rule of law and the defense of human rights continues to grow.

“The governments of the Caribbean region should make clear their agreement that joining the Rome Statute system is an important step as it will protect their populations from impunity, massive human rights abuses such as crimes against humanity, and aggression,” said William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition.

In addition, the Coalition also insisted on the importance of the upcoming ICC Judicial Elections scheduled for December 2011, during which the state parties will elect 6 new judges, as well as, for only the second time in history, a new ICC Prosecutor. “By joining the ICC, the Bahamas and Grenada would not only continue to demonstrate the region’s support to this landmark institution, but would also be able to nominate and elect highly qualified candidates for ICC elections, thus reinforcing geographical diversity on the Court’s bench,” Pace stated.

With the recent ratification of Saint Lucia in August 2010, only 4 states in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have yet to ratify the Statute: the Bahamas, Grenada, Jamaica and Haiti. As stated by Judge Patrick Robinson, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Ex-Yugoslavia, in *The Gleaner*, a leading Jamaican newspaper, “a unified Caribbean membership in the International Criminal Court would be a powerful demonstration on a regional level that we take, with the utmost seriousness, our commitment to human rights, the global fight to end impunity and the search for justice.”

Caribbean states played a key role in the creation and establishment of the ICC. In 1989, during the United Nations’ 44th General Assembly, Trinidad and Tobago submitted an agenda item on the establishment of an international criminal court for the Assembly’s consideration. This motion – which gained the support of a number of states, including all CARICOM member states – ultimately resulted in a consensus resolution that called for the creation of an international criminal court.

Background: *The ICC is the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. With the ratification of Moldova, Bangladesh, Seychelles and Sta. Lucia in 2010, the number of ICC states parties has reached 114, more than half of the world’s nations. 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 investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. There are currently six active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, Sudan; Uganda; Kenya and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 15 arrest warrants and 9 summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least nine situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, the Republic of Korea, Nigeria and Palestine.*

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court includes 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 different countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the ICC 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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