



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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Global Coalition Calls on Turkey to Join the ICC

Civil Society Urges Turkey to Reaffirm its Commitment to Justice and the Rule of Law by Acceding to the Rome Statute

Brussels—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court (ICC)—called on Turkey to reaffirm its commitment to eradicating the culture of impunity and strengthening the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

The Coalition has chosen Turkey as the focus for its June 2012 Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), a monthly campaign launched to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute—the founding treaty

of the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In a letter sent on 5 June 2012 to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Coalition urged Turkey to fulfill its pledge to accede to the Rome Statute. With Guatemala's recent ratification in April 2012, 121 states are parties to the Rome Statute and 139 are signatories.

"Turkey has long stated its intention to accede; it is time for Turkey to turn its words into concrete actions and join in the growing movement to end impunity by acceding to the Rome Statute now," said Brigitte Suhr, the Coalition's director of regional programs. "Turkey's strategic geographic position bridging Europe and the Middle East makes it a key international player that could significantly contribute to strengthening the Court," Suhr added.

In May 2004, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan pledged before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that "Turkey will soon approve the Rome Statute after completing its internal preparations and will become part of the [International Criminal Court]." Furthermore, in December 2008, the government adopted the third National Program for the Adoption of the European Union (EU) "Acquis," which lays out the steps Turkey should take to become a party to the ICC.

During the general debate of the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in June 2010, the head of the Turkish Delegation, Mr. Ismail Aramaz, reiterated this commitment, stating that "[w]hile additional progress is required in further aligning our legislation more closely before we can finally accede to the Statute, especially with respect to war crimes and the crime of aggression, Turkey remains committed to the goal of accession as declared by Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2004."

"With the support of the international Coalition, the Turkish Coalition for the ICC is reaching out to national authorities, members of parliament, the media, students, civil society, and the general public to ensure ICC membership does not drop off the national agenda," said Gnal Kurun, spokesman of the Turkish Coalition for the ICC, a network that includes many prominent Turkish human rights NGOs.¹ "In the current revision of the constitution and in advance of its adoption, we hope our authorities will realize the potential the ICC has as an instrument for the protection of victims of serious human rights abuses and fulfil its promises to be part of this new system of justice," he added.

"Now is the time to review and address any constitutional and legislative issues that have prevented accession by Turkey," Kurun added. "It is critical that Article 38 of the current Constitution providing that '[n]o citizen shall be extradited to a foreign country on account of an offence except under obligations resulting from being a party to the International Criminal Court' be maintained."

The Coalition strongly encourages the Turkish government to submit a bill to Parliament as soon as possible in order to accede to the Rome Statute, and to fully align Turkey's legislation with all Statute obligations, including accession to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the ICC.

Background: *The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes,*

¹ Ankara Bar Association; Capital City Women's Platform; Association of Civil Society in Criminal Execution System; Diyarbakir Bar Association; Helsinki Citizen's Assembly; Human Rights Research Association; Human Rights Association; Human Rights Agenda Association; Izmir Women Solidarity Association; The Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People; Ivy Struggling with Poverty and Sustainable Development Association; Foundation for Society and Legal Studies; Social Events Research and Confrontation Association; Human Rights Foundation of Turkey; Amnesty International Turkey; Van Women Association.

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 advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org

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