



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
9 July 2012

GLOBAL COALITION URGES UKRAINE TO JOIN THE ICC

Calls for a concrete affirmation of commitment to international justice on momentous 10th anniversary of the International Criminal Court

Brussels--The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on Ukraine to reaffirm its commitment to eradicating the culture of impunity and strengthening the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The Coalition has chosen Ukraine and Indonesia as the focuses of its July 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.

Ten years ago this month, the ICC came into being thanks to the ratification of the Rome Statute by 60 states. With Guatemala's recent ratification in April 2012, 121 states are now parties to the Rome Statute and 139 are signatories. However, several more remain outside this new system of international justice.

Ukraine signed the Statute in 2000 but has yet to complete the process of ratification. In 2007, Ukraine became the first non-state party to ratify the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court. The government of Ukraine subsequently committed to implementing all measures necessary to secure Rome Statute ratification as part of the 2009 EU-Ukraine Association Agenda. More recently, during a visit to the Court in April 2012, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko reiterated Ukraine's intention to join the Rome Statute.

Today, in a letter sent to President Viktor Yanukovich, the Coalition—a global network of more than 2,500 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—urged Ukraine to stand by these and other pledges and to take the necessary steps to ratify the Rome Statute.

“Various statements by Ukrainian officials indicate that the political will is there,” noted Kirsten Meersschaert Duchens, the Coalition's regional coordinator for Europe. “And we know that progress towards ratification in Ukraine has been hampered by the 2001 Constitutional Court ruling that deemed amendment of the constitution necessary prior to ratification,” Meersschaert Duchens continued. “But the country is preparing for constitutional review, and we are calling on the government to ensure that amendments are included in that process that pave the way for ratification of the Statute.”

“Concrete steps towards ratification would send a strong signal of Ukraine's support for victims' right to justice during the Court's anniversary year,” added Brigitte Suhr, the Coalition's director of regional programs. “Once the constitutional issue is resolved, we expect them to stand by their commitments and ratify promptly.”

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 seven investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Cote d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, 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's Office of the Prosecutor has also made public that it is conducting seven preliminary examinations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea and Nigeria.*

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