

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Suriname should support the International Criminal Court by acceding to it as soon as possible and refusing to enter into unlawful US impunity agreement.**

Today, Amnesty International wrote to President Ronald Venetiaan welcoming his statements in February supporting Suriname's accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. However at the same time the organization raised serious concern that the government is considering entering into an unlawful impunity agreement with the USA.

Amnesty International's letter, which was copied to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Marie Levens, urges Suriname to join the international community in establishing the new system of international justice to end impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity by acceding to the Rome Statute as soon as possible.

The International Criminal Court has been established to investigate and prosecute crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes when national courts are unable or unwilling to do so. An initiative of the government of Trinidad and Tobago, the ICC is strongly supported by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Currently the ICC Prosecutor, in his first year of office is conducting a preliminary examination of crimes committed in the Ituri province of the Democratic Republic of Congo and is taking steps towards investigating war crimes committed in the Northern Ugandan conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and government forces, including the murder of over 190 people at the Barlonya Camp on Saturday 21 February 2004.

Regrettably, at the same time as the ICC begins its important work with the support of the vast majority of states, the USA is conducting a worldwide campaign to undermine the Court. Amnesty International and many states believe that US fears that the ICC could be used to bring politically motivated prosecutions against US nationals are unfounded given the comprehensive fair trial guarantees and safeguards included in the Rome Statute.

Suriname should refuse to enter into the agreement proposed by the USA committing Suriname not surrender US nationals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes to the ICC, if requested. According to Amnesty International's analysis, the agreement violates both the Rome Statute and other conventions under international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment. The European Union has analysed the agreement and reached the same conclusion.

While it conducts the process of acceding to the Rome Statute, Suriname should uphold the rule of law and the principle that no one, regardless of their nationality should be granted impunity for the worst

crimes known to humanity by joining Trinidad and Tobago and other states in refusing to enter into such an agreement.