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Morocco: urge the government to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Morocco signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute) on 8 September 2000. Shortly afterwards the government made the following statement to the United Nations Sixth Committee:

“We are convinced that the Court will look after the primacy of the rule of law in order to ban heinous crimes against civilian populations, during conflict, as well as the application of international humanitarian law. Morocco reaffirms its will to cooperate constructively to ensure the entry into force of the Court as soon as possible.”

Amnesty International and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) are calling on Morocco to complete its ratification process as soon as possible. By so doing, Morocco would accept the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, if its national courts were unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute the crimes. 96 states worldwide have so far ratified the Rome Statute.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), in collaboration with local Moroccan NGOs, is holding a meeting from 1-3 October in Rabat to discuss the role of the International Criminal Court and to promote ratification in Morocco. This meeting provides an excellent opportunity to encourage Morocco to fulfil its commitment to international justice by ratifying the Rome Statute and encouraging other North African and Middle Eastern states to do the same.

Take action

Support Amnesty International's appeal by sending letters by mail or fax urging the government of Morocco to ratify the Rome Statute and implement it into national law.

You might like to use the following letter as a guide.

Dear Minister of Justice,

At a time when the International Criminal Court (ICC) is beginning its important work to end impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, I am writing to urge you to ensure that Morocco supports the new system of international justice by ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute) as soon as possible.

The Rome Statute provides for the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court to bring to justice people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as the most serious crimes under international law. The ICC will only act when national courts are unable or unwilling genuinely to do so.

As of 1 October 2004, 96 states had ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute and a further 43 states, including Morocco, have signed it. The ICC has recently announced its first two investigations into crimes under international law committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda since 1 July 2002.

I welcome reports that Morocco has been examining the Rome Statute in detail in preparation for ratification. I now urge you to move forward with prompt ratification of the Statute. I understand that the crime of aggression is of particular interest to Morocco. In this case, it is even more important that Morocco ratifies as soon as possible, as only states parties to the Rome Statute will be able to vote on whether to adopt a definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions under which the Court would be able to exercise jurisdiction.

Morocco should also review its national laws and make any necessary changes to ensure that it can perform its primary role of investigating and prosecuting genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and cooperate fully with the ICC. I urge you to ensure that such legislation is drafted in a transparent manner with broad consultation with civil society.

I hope that Morocco will be able to take these steps as soon as possible so that it can join the international community in building an effective system of international justice to end impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity.

Yours sincerely,

Please send appeals to:

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