The International Criminal Court - a historic development in the fight for justice

On the historic occasion of the 60th ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Amnesty International welcomes the commitment shown by those states that have ratified it to bring those responsible for the worst crimes and human rights violations to justice.

"This is a very important moment in the struggle for international justice, because it means that people suspected of committing crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide - no matter what their rank - may be tried by the Court," said Amnesty International.

“A message is being sent around the world that people planning the worst crimes and human rights violations can no longer do so in the knowledge that they won't be held accountable. Countries that have ratified have accepted the primary obligation to investigate and prosecute people accused of the crimes and when they are unable or unwilling to do so the International Criminal Court may bring them to justice."


The 60th ratification triggers the entry into force of the Rome Statute on 1 July and the Court's jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It is expected that the inauguration ceremony of the Court could take place as early as February 2003 at its seat in the Hague.
“At this important stage in the establishment of the Court states that have ratified must ensure that there is sufficient support, including funding, to set up the Court as soon as possible and to ensure its effectiveness from its beginning.”

“Amnesty International calls on all states that have not done so to ratify the Rome Statute and to enact effective implementing legislation as soon as possible.”

Background
The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was adopted at a diplomatic conference on 17 July 1998. The Statute provides for the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court to investigate and prosecute people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. A provision was included in the Statute that 60 states must ratify the Statute before the Court can be established.

Amnesty International has been working, together with the more than 1000 members of the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, for the establishment of the Court since 1993. Immediately following the adoption of the Rome Statute, Amnesty International launched a worldwide campaign for all governments to ratify the Rome Statute and to enact effective implementing legislation, including providing for full cooperation with the Court.

Even now that the 60th ratification has been made and the Court will be established, Amnesty International will continue to lobby all governments to ratify the Statute. This will be essential because in many cases, the Court will only have jurisdiction if the crime was committed on the territory of a country that has ratified or by the national of a state that has ratified.
Amnesty International has issued a paper with questions and answers about the 60th ratification which contains information including the next steps for the establishment of the Court. This document and other information about the Court is available on Amnesty International’s website: www.amnesty.org

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