

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PRESS RELEASE

AI index: PRE 01/093/2011
27 February 2011

Unanimous Security Council vote a crucial moment for international justice

Saturday's Security Council referral of Libya to the International Criminal Court marks a historic moment in accountability for crimes under international law, Amnesty International said today.

The Security Council's vote came after a plea for action from Libya's own UN delegation, which had announced that it no longer represented Col al-Gaddafi.

"This is a welcome and historic precedent," said Steve Crawshaw, director of international advocacy at Amnesty International. "Libyan leaders and all others who may commit crimes under international law must now take heed that they will be called to account."

"For the people of Libya, this decision is a signal that the international community will not avert its eyes from the human rights abuses that they continue to suffer."

Amnesty International urged the UN Human Rights Council, the Arab League and the African Union, all of which have announced investigative missions to Libya, to urgently proceed with their missions and to hand over their findings to the ICC prosecutor as soon as possible.

The organization also called on the Security Council to consider similar action elsewhere.

"The Security Council must build on the strong action it took yesterday. It must address situations in other parts of the world that at the moment have less public profile but are no less serious," said Steve Crawshaw.

The vote follows a strong condemnation of human rights abuses in Libya by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Friday and the announcement of actions to ensure accountability.