

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Philippines: Senate approves Rome Statute

A vote in the Philippine Senate today opened the way for the country to become a party to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

After more than 10 years of campaigning by Amnesty International and others, the vote to approve the Rome Statute brings the Philippines closer to joining the global effort to end impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Earlier this month, Amnesty International Philippines submitted a petition of more than 8,000 signatures by Philippine citizens urging the Senate to approve ratification.

States that ratify the Rome Statute commit to investigate and prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes before their national courts and agree that, if they are unable or unwilling to do so, the International Criminal Court may step in. They also agree to cooperate fully with the work of the ICC in investigating and prosecuting crimes committed around the world.

The Philippines will become a party to ICC once the government files the instruments of ratification with the United Nations. Congress will also need to pass legislation to ensure that domestic laws are in accordance with the Rome Statute.

Amnesty International called on the government to complete the ICC ratification process as soon as possible.

The Philippines played an active role in the drafting of the Rome Statute in 1998. Two years later, the government signed the Rome Statute indicating that it would ratify. However, it was only in March 2011 that President Benigno S. Aquino III announced he would submit the treaty to the Senate.

Prompt ratification of the Rome Statute will mean that the Philippines becomes the first founding member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to join the ICC.