

## **Cape Verde: urge the government to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**

On 28 December 2000, Cape Verde signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute). However, it has yet to complete the process of ratification.

By ratifying the Rome Statute, Cape Verde would accept the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) over genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, if its national courts were unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute the crimes. 94 states worldwide have so far ratified the Rome Statute.

Amnesty International is urging Cape Verde to take the lead among African Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) countries by ratifying the Rome Statute as soon as possible, thereby promoting the new system of international justice in the region.

### Take action

Support Amnesty International's appeal by sending letters by mail or fax urging the government of Cape Verde to complete its ratification process and implement the Rome Statute into national law.

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

Your Excellency,

At a time when the International Criminal Court 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 Cape Verde ratifies 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 (ICC) 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.

Cape Verde demonstrated its commitment to the ICC by signing the Rome Statute on 28 December 2000. Amnesty International welcomes the fact that Cape Verde has reportedly incorporated some of the crimes under the Rome Statute, such as genocide, into its new penal code. Cape Verde now has the opportunity to strengthen its commitment to the new system of international justice by ratifying the Rome Statute, and ensuring that all crimes covered by the ICC are fully criminalized under national law.

As of 1 July 2004 (the second anniversary of the Rome Statute's entry into force), 94 states had ratified or acceded to the Statute, and a further 45 states have signed it. The ICC became operational in May 2003, and has just announced that it is considering opening investigations into crimes committed in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, at the request of those countries.

I urge you to ensure that the government takes all necessary steps to ensure that Cape Verde ratifies the Rome Statute as soon as possible. The process of constitutional revision, which I understand Cape Verde will embark on in September, will be an important opportunity to amend those provisions of the constitution that are impeding the ratification of the Rome

Statute. Cape Verde should also use this opportunity to enact legislation providing for full cooperation with the ICC.

By ratifying the Rome Statute, Cape Verde will join the international community in demonstrating its support in the fight against impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity.

Yours sincerely,

Please send appeals to:

**President**

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