



Coalition for
the International
Criminal Court

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Burkina Faso Ratifies the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Becoming 93rd ICC State Party

(New York, April 21, 2004) – The NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (Coalition) today welcomed Burkina Faso's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a demonstration of that country's commitment to ending impunity and providing justice for victims. Burkina Faso deposited its instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute at the United Nations on Friday, April 16, becoming the 93rd State Party to the ICC and the 23rd country in Africa to accept the Court's jurisdiction.

"West Africa is home to many violent conflicts and a high level of impunity," said Mr. Francis Dako, the Coalition's coordinator for Francophone Africa. "The government of Burkina Faso has taken a courageous step towards ending impunity and bringing peace to West Africa by ratifying the Rome Statute. We encourage other countries in the region who have yet to ratify to follow Burkina Faso's lead," he said. By ratifying the Rome Statute, Burkina Faso recognizes the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) over any acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

"As a human rights activist, I am extremely proud of my country's ratification of the Rome Statute, which we wish to be universal," said Mrs. Salamata Sawadogo, president of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and ambassador of Burkina Faso to Senegal. "I congratulate the authorities in Burkina Faso for this important step. Working towards the effectiveness of the International Criminal Court in Africa has been a priority for the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, over which I have the honor to preside. This is a real challenge for our continent," she added.

The Rome Statute recognizes that national justice systems bear primary responsibility for prosecuting these grave crimes. "Burkina Faso should now review its internal law to ensure that all Rome Statute crimes are codified and so that national authorities can effectively cooperate with the Court," said Dako. "If not the promise made by the government will be hollow."

The International Criminal Court has announced that two states – Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – have requested the Court to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in their respective territories. The Court has not yet launched formal investigations.

Today at the ICC's headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands, the five-member Board of Directors of the Victims Trust Fund, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, is meeting to discuss the important role the Fund can play in providing reparations to victims of crimes under the Rome Statute.

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About the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)

The CICC is a global network of over 2,000 civil society organizations supporting a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court. For more information, visit us online at <<http://www.iccnw.org>>.

Note to the Editor: The following resources are available online:

Democratic Republic of Congo Requests ICC Investigations (CICC Media Advisory)

<http://www.iccnw.org/pressroom/ciccmediastatements/2004/04292004DRCReferralWEB.pdf>

Burkina Faso (CICC Country Information Section)

<http://www.iccnw.org/countryinfo/africa/burkinafaso.html>

Web site of the International Criminal Court

<http://www.icc-cpi.int>