



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 December 2008

Global Coalition Urges Yemen to Join International Criminal Court Says Time to Reconsider 2007 Ratification Vote

New York, USA – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—an international network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations—today called on Yemen to demonstrate its commitment to international justice and the rule of law by ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Yemen is the December 2008/January 2009 country target for the Coalition's Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), which calls upon a different country each month to join the Court. To compliment its ongoing campaign to make justice universal, the Coalition organizes advocacy initiatives around the world, including this monthly push to secure a new ICC member state.

In a 19 December 2008 letter to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh—some eight years after the country signed the Rome Statute—the CICC urged Yemen to prioritize its ratification of the Rome Statute, which is the Court's founding treaty. The ICC is the first permanent, global court capable of trying individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Yemen signed the Rome Statute on 28 December 2000.

On 24 March 2007, the Yemeni House of Representatives voted to ratify the Rome Statute. However, on 7 April 2007, the vote was revoked. Speculation regarding the reversal has been widespread; one possible reason has been the ongoing conflict in Sa'adah, Northern Yemen. It has been reported that many of the members of parliament who voted against the Statute said it contradicted the constitution and Islamic Sharia law;

those voting in favor believed that it was in accordance with both. A few key parliamentarians who had voted against the ratification, have now reconsidered their positions and appear to be in favor of the Statute.

“We urge the president and parliament to intensify its efforts to carefully reconsider the ratification vote, and approve it without delay,” CICC Convener William Pace said.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Rome Statute, which was adopted on 17 July 1998. We strongly encourage Yemen to formally join the ICC during this momentous anniversary year, which heralds the promise of justice for all.

As of September 2008, 108 countries have joined the ICC, which is the first permanent international court capable of trying individuals accused of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to do so. There are currently four active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; and Uganda.