



Coalition for the
International
Criminal Court

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High-Profile Board of Directors Elected to Victims Trust Fund of the International Criminal Court

Well-Recognized Names to Bring Prominence to the Role of Victims in the ICC

(New York, September 12, 2003) – The Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) this morning elected a high-profile Board of Directors to the Victims Trust Fund of the court, who are charged with the disbursement of funds to victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The members of the Board, who represent the five UN regional groups, are: from Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa; from Asia, Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan; from Eastern Europe, His Excellency Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, former Prime Minister of Poland; from Latin America, His Excellency Mr. President Oscar Arias Sánchez, former President of Costa Rica; and, from the Western European and Others Group, Madame Simone Veil, former Minister of Health of France and former President of the European Parliament.

“The world renowned stature and integrity of these individuals will do much to bring public attention to the need for support of the role of victims in the international justice process,” said Dr. Yael Danieli, Senior Representative to the UN of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. “These individuals will lend prominence to the court as a whole, like a jewel in the crown of justice,” she added. The Board of Directors will serve a three-year term, during which they will be responsible for setting up the structure and management criteria for the effective operation of the Trust Fund.

The ICC recognizes the role of victims by enabling victims and their families to apply for compensation for the crimes defined in the Rome Statute. Victims’ participation in the ICC is amplified by the historically unprecedented ability of victims groups and civil society actors to submit communications directly to the Office of the Prosecutor for review. The ICC prosecutor may initiate a *proprio motu* investigation based on these communications.

At the opening plenary of the Assembly of States Parties meeting this week, Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo indicated that he was ready to use this *proprio motu* power to seek authorization from a Pre-Trial chamber of judges to commence an investigation of alleged crimes committed in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Reports by UN agencies and communications received by the Office of the Prosecutor from civil society groups indicate that at least 5,000 people have been killed there since the Rome Statute’s July 1, 2002 entry into force.

The Assembly of States Parties also elected a Deputy Prosecutor for Investigations, Mr. Serge Brammertz of Belgium. He will undertake a solemn oath on November 3, 2003 and begin a six-year term of office at the court's headquarters in The Hague.

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Note to the Editor: A brief and unofficial biography of each of the members of the Board is provided below.

Former Costa Rican President, Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez, won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end the cycle of violence in Central America. Dr. Arias Sánchez earned a doctorate in political science at the University of Essex and, following the adoption of what is widely regarded as the "Arias Peace Plan," earned some fifty honorary doctorate degrees. He is the author of several books about peace and politics, and founded the Foundation for Peace and Human Progress with the monetary award from the Nobel Prize.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa gained international prominence in 1984 when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work toward "a democratic and just society without racial divisions." He continued his work to facilitate South Africa's transition from Apartheid as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He holds numerous honorary doctorates at leading universities in the United States, Britain and Germany.

Former Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki was the first post-Communist leader in Eastern Europe. He subsequently served as a UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia. Following the massacres of Srebrenica and Zepa, territories designated as "safe havens," Mr. Mazowiecki resigned from that post. He has held numerous positions within the government of Poland, co-founding the Social Democratic Party of the Republic of Poland, and serving in the Polish parliament, Ministry for Labor and Social Policy and Ministry for Internal Affairs and Administration.

Her Majesty Queen Rania is a human rights campaigner and the wife of His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein of Jordan. Following the births of their three children, Her Majesty Queen Rania launched numerous initiatives to further access to education, technology and micro-credit financing in Jordan. Among other projects, she has also launched the Child Abuse Prevention Project to protect children at risk of abuse and modify public attitudes towards violence against children.

Madame Simone Veil, a survivor of Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, rose to prominence through positions with the French Ministry of Justice and as Minister of Health. She is widely recognized as a campaigner for women's and children's rights. She was elected the first president of the European Parliament in 1984, and also served as the President of the Judicial Group for the European Parliament. She holds numerous honorary degrees and decorations for her work.

For more information about the Trust Fund for Victims, please visit:

The web site of the Coalition for the ICC:

<http://www.iccnw.org/buildingthecourtnew/victims&witnesses.html>

The web site of the ICC:

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

The web site of the Campaign for the Victims Trust Fund:

<http://www.victimstrustfund.org/>

About the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court

The NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (Coalition) is a global network of over 2,000 members working together in support of an permanent, fair and effective International Criminal Court. Established in 1995, the Coalition is the leading online provider of information on the ICC. For more information, please visit

<http://www.iccnw.org>.