H.E. Mr. Perry Gladstone Christie  
Prime Minister  
Commonwealth of The Bahamas  

New York / Lima, 13 March 2014

Your Excellency,

We have the honor of writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of over 2500 member NGOs in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective, and independent Court as well as increased access to justice for victims of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes.

On this occasion, as part of its 2014 Universal Ratification Campaign for the month of March, we would like to draw your attention to Bahamas’ status as a signatory state of the Rome Statute of the ICC, and respectfully encourage you to take the necessary steps to ensure Bahamas’ ratification of this international instrument as soon as all the domestic requirements are met.

Your Excellency, the Coalition acknowledges the measures taken by your government in the path towards ratification. During a mission to your country carried out in November 2012, we were encouraged to witness the steps taken in this direction prior to ratification. In this regard, we understand that the government is still undertaking such measures, namely, assessing the compatibility of domestic legislation with the Rome Statute, as well as working on the adoption of legislation that seeks to incorporate Rome Statute provisions into national law. At the time, we were informed that the Attorney General’s office was reviewing the ratification dossier, and actions were also being taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We are grateful for the information provided to us at the time, and respectfully urge your Excellency to continue to promote transparent lines of communication with civil society throughout this process.

In the context of the Coalition’s actions regarding the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council, the Coalition followed closely Bahamas’ review at the 15th session, carried out in Geneva in January 2013, and took note of the seven recommendations done to Bahamas concerning ratification of the Rome Statute, as well as the rejection of said recommendations. To this purpose, we respectfully call on your government to reaffirm its commitment to this issue.

As the International Criminal Court begins its second decade of work, it is forced to face new challenges ahead, which require enhanced cooperation from states so as to ensure that the Court is able to meet the demands of justice from millions of victims across the globe.
promise of redress for victims saw another landmark a few days ago with the Court’s decision in which it found Germain Katanga responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This promise can only become more tangible through the support of states, a support which has been strongly felt across the Caribbean. Said support is as crucial today as it was in 1998.

Your Excellency, we commend the actions taken by your government in advancing the ratification of the Rome Statute, and hope to see Bahamas as a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in the near future.

Respectfully,

Jelena Pia-Comella
Program Director
Coalition for the ICC

Michelle Reyes Milk
Regional Coordinator for the Americas
Coalition for the ICC

CC:

H.E. Mr. Philip Davis
Deputy Prime Minister

H.E. Mr. Frederick A. Mitchell
Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Ms. Allyson Maynard Gibson
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

H.E. Mr. Elliston Rahming
Permanent Representative to the United Nations