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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## International Justice Day-2010

# **FOHRID Urges Government of Nepal to ratify the Rome Statute of ICC**

On 17 July the world celebrates International Justice Day (IJD) to commemorate the adoption of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC). International Justice Day is a reminder of the urgency for all States committed to ensure continued support for the Rome Statute's international justice system. On IJD, FOHRID Human Rights and Democratic Forum urges Nepal to reaffirm its commitment to end the culture of impunity and take necessary steps to ratify / accede to the ICC Rome Statute.

Today is the completion of four years of unanimous direction adopted by the then House of Representatives (HoR) to the Government of Nepal to accede to Rome Statute of ICC. On this occasion, we recall the eagerness and positive commitments demonstrated by the government, political parties and the then HoR and present Legislature-Parliament towards the ICC.

Twelve years ago on this date, the Rome Statute was adopted by an overwhelming vote of 120 states. Today, 111 states have joined the Court and the number keeps growing. FOHRID is celebrating this day in solidarity with victims of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. In the months of August to November – FOHRID shall organize few events of interactions with the involvement of some national level coalitions. Some events determined from July to December 2010 include submitting memoranda to the CA Members, discussion with CA Members on Shrawan 9, interaction between human rights community and CA Members, lobbying for ratification through coordination with the CA Committee for Human Rights and Foreign Relations.

IJD is an opportunity for the world community to celebrate the historic advances in ending impunity for the worst crimes in international law. Since 1993, 181 trials, dealing

with terrible crimes committed in 12 countries, have been held by six international and special tribunals. Similar trials for the gravest crimes are ongoing at national level. To date, 3 trials are being conducted at the ICC, investigations in 5 countries were opened, and twelve arrest warrants and three summonses to appear were issued. Allegations of crimes committed in many other countries are being considered by the ICC Prosecutor.

This year, International Justice Day takes place only a few weeks following the conclusion of the first Review Conference of the ICC Rome Statute, which was held in Kampala, Uganda from 31 May to 11 June. At the Conference, ICC Member States agreed upon amendments to the Rome Statute. In particular, the Review Conference adopted a definition of the Crime of Aggression as well as provisions governing the terms of the Court's ability to investigate and prosecute individuals for the crime of aggression. In Kampala, States also made important commitments on the issues of cooperation, complementarity, victims and affected communities, and peace and justice. FOHRID Human Rights and Democratic Forum calls on States to turn words into concrete actions.

We would like to recall commitments by the eight political parties, Legislature-Parliament and the Government for providing guarantee to good governance, ending impunity, establishing democratic norms and values, and governance based on principles of the rule of law expressed through formal documents like the Comprehensive Peace Accord-2006, Interim Constitution-2007 and the Common Minimum Programme of the Interim Government-2007. For effective implementation of such commitments, Nepal's involvement in the ICC is a must and for which the HoR restored with the mandate of Popular Uprising had unanimously endorsed the resolution last year. Immediate implementation of that resolution is the way to establish political stance to those commitments.

Therefore, we urge the Prime Minister and Ministers to coordinate among ministries, to hold discussion in the meeting of the Council of Ministers and to forward the process for accession to the Rome Statute. Along with this, we call on the political parties to prioritise the issue at political level to speed up the accession process. Considering that the parliamentary direction to this effect still remains unrealised, we - FOHRID Human Rights and Democratic Forum request Speaker and Members of the Legislature-Parliament to stir and exert more intensive pressure on the executive to accede to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

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