



**Coalition
for the
International
Criminal Court**

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Civil Society Groups Call on Turkey to Accede to the ICC Treaty Now *International Coalition Urges Turkey to Demonstrate Real Commitment to International Justice*

(New York, 6 October 2006) – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) – an international coalition of more than 2,000 non-governmental and civil society organizations – in a campaign initiated by Amnesty International has today called on the Turkish government to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to demonstrate its commitment to international justice and the rule of law. In a letter sent to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan today, the CICC urges Turkey to prioritize its accession to the Rome Statute – the treaty that created the first permanent global court capable of trying individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

A series of positive developments in Turkey provides hope that ICC accession may be taken seriously in the near future. These advances include Turkey's recent constitutional amendments, in particular the amendment to Article 38 that allows for the surrender of Turkish citizens to the ICC. In early 2004, Turkey also joined the "Friends of the ICC", a group of like-minded States that work to support and further the goals of the ICC. Most promisingly, on 8 October 2004 in a statement before the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe, Prime Minister Erdogan declared that "Turkey will soon approve the Rome Statute after completing its internal preparation and will become part of the International Court Convention". The CICC hope that these vital steps towards strengthening the rule of law in Turkey, together with Prime Minister Erdogan's statements, will help galvanizing Turkey to respond to on-going calls from the European Union and other ICC States Parties by promptly acceding to the ICC treaty.

Commenting on Turkey's possible accession, Feray Salman, General Coordinator of Human Rights Joint Platform, said: "Turkey's joining the ICC is part of the larger movement for human rights and democratization in the country." Maria Cavaretta, CICC European Campaign Coordinator added: "In addition to promoting the international rule of law, Turkey's accession could also promote additional support for the ICC in the region – most notably amongst Turkey's neighbours, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Lebanon."

With the support of the CICC, the National Coalition for the ICC in Turkey – a national group of more than seven NGOs actively working for the promotion of the ratification and the implementation of the Rome Statute held a press briefing on 6 October aimed at raising awareness among civil society groups and the media on issues related to the ICC. This briefing followed a two-day strategy meeting from 4-5 October organized by the CICC in Istanbul that brought together 30 of the main organizations working on international justice issues in Europe, including member organizations from the western Balkans and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to discuss and redefine an ICC strategy for Europe.

Just last month, St. Kitts and Nevis and Comoros both ratified the ICC treaty, bringing the number of Member States to 102. Prior to that, in October 2005, Mexico became the historic 100th State Party with its ratification.

The ICC is currently investigating cases in Darfur, Sudan; the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and Uganda. The Court unsealed its first arrest warrants for five top leaders of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on 13 October 2005. On 17 March 2006, the ICC unsealed its arrest warrant for Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, leader of the political and military movement, the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) and also announced that Mr. Lubanga had been arrested and transferred to The Hague. Mr. Lubanga is alleged to have been involved in forcefully enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate actively in hostilities in the DRC.

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About the CICC Universal Ratification Campaign

Each month, CICC members select a country on which to focus efforts to promote ratification. Some recent examples of ICC ratification and accession successes include Kenya's ratification of the ICC treaty just three months after the CICC's January 2005 ratification campaign on Kenya, as well as the Dominican Republic's May 2005 ratification following the CICC's December 2004 campaign on the Dominican Republic. For additional information, please visit the CICC online at www.iccnnow.org