

Speech for the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC

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Mr. President, Members of the Assembly,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings,

Despite the events in the Arab World in the past year, the engagement of the Arab Region with the ICC still remains modest. This is primarily due to the nature of current regimes in the region and to the widespread culture of impunity which encourages the commission of human rights violations, some of which amount to the level of crimes that fall under international criminal jurisdiction.

Civil society organizations in the region have worked continuously to support the International Criminal Court in the face of this culture and in spite of the difficulties and harassment that they have faced. In the case of Sudan, it has reached an extent where these activists face repression and persecution for their support of the Court.

The recent events in the Arab Region have helped create a new climate, appropriate for international criminal justice. This, in particular, was demonstrated by Tunisia's accession to the Rome Statute immediately after the January 14th Revolution which toppled the dictatorial regime and paved the way for the outbreak of revolutions against other dictatorships in the Arab world. However, the progress of other Arab States towards engaging the Court requires

further efforts and pressure from civil society and from all stakeholders who believe in the principles of human rights and justice.

The International Criminal Court has taken on a positive role with respect to the events in Libya and especially the issuance of the arrest warrants against officials of the former Libyan regime involved in the commission of the most heinous crimes against civilians. This has brought hope to the peoples of the region that they too can hold accountable individuals in other Arab countries responsible for committing such heinous crimes everyday.

However, the Court must provide further clarification with respect to the case of Saif Al Islam Al Gaddafi. The Court should make a serious attempt to have him transferred to The Hague in accordance with the obligations of Libya to the Court and in order to ensure due process and to preserve its credibility with the public. States Parties must support and assist the Court in this regard.

On another note, it must be said that the hopes of the people in the region are still impeded despite the efforts taken by the Court in Sudan and Libya, and due to the inability of the international community to take a bold position on crimes committed against unarmed civilians in Syria in their insistence on the right to demonstrate and protest peacefully. The Yemeni people are also exposed to daily attacks by security forces which has not resulted in the necessary steps for the protection of civilians that have been subject to attacks. The Court's position towards Israeli crimes committed in Gaza is still ambiguous, which causes great concern among large segments of the Arab people who aspire to justice as a standard applied to everyone equally and that there will not be immunity for any side.

Mr. President, Members of the Assembly,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We hope that States Parties can use their good offices to help maximize the impact of the Arab Spring in terms of promoting justice and accountability throughout the region during these crucial times; in particular, by providing technical assistance and political support to help states ratify and implement the Rome Statute.

Thank you.