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**Press statement by Ms Fatou Bensouda, Deputy Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court**

Conakry, April 5<sup>th</sup> 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank the Guinean authorities, especially the President and Head of State Alpha Condé and the Minister for Justice Christian Sow, for their hospitality and cooperation during this sixth visit to Conakry – my third visit personally – by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The reason for my visit is simple: I have come to discuss the progress of domestic judicial proceedings concerning the crimes of 28 September 2009 with the authorities, judges, prosecutors, civil society and victims.

As on my previous visits, I have been touched and inspired by my discussions with victims' associations. I would like to pay tribute to the courage and dignity of the victims I have met – including women who were raped, ill-treated and terrorised. These are unbelievable acts of sexual violence that are devastating for the victims, their families and their communities.

Seeing justice is done for the victims of Guinea is my Office's mandate and a major personal priority for me.

The Prosecutor initiates investigations and prosecutions only where the competent national authorities fail to do so. If those most responsible are not prosecuted by the Guinean authorities, the ICC will prosecute them. As I have said previously, it is either one or the other; there is no third option.

The investigation by the pool of investigating judges in Conakry has recently made significant progress with the indictment of a high-ranking individual. I would like to pay tribute here to the perseverance and courage of the judges in charge of the case. They are carrying out complex work in difficult conditions. They deserve our support, the support of the authorities and that of the United Nations which is also preparing to offer assistance.

They also deserve the trust of the victims who are expecting justice to be done.

This work must be continued without respite. The authorities have assured me that the judges will have all the resources they need and that they will continue to work in complete independence. As the next ICC Prosecutor, I shall personally ensure that this is the case. I will also ensure that the investigation is completed within a reasonable time-frame for a criminal trial.

This investigation is of major importance, not only for the victims, but also for the Guinean people as a whole. Guinea has the opportunity to restore the rule of law in place of the law of the powerful. Guinea can close this chapter of impunity and build a new future on new foundations. Guinea can also become a model for others, a model State Party to the ICC, fulfilling its obligations to try those most responsible for the most serious crimes. A model for Africa and a model for the world.

Thank you.

Source: Office of the Prosecutor