

**Cour  
Pénale  
Internationale**



**International  
Criminal  
Court**

**Judge Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi  
President of the International Criminal Court**

**Thank you remarks for 2017 Stockholm Human Rights Award**

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Stockholm, Sweden

20 November 2017

Your Majesties,

Ms Ramberg,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express the profound gratitude of the International Criminal Court to the Swedish Bar Association, the International Bar Association and the International Legal Assistance Consortium for awarding the Court with the 2017 Stockholm Human Rights Award.

I am here today with the Prosecutor and the Registrar of the Court to receive together this important recognition for the work that is being done by judges, prosecutors, investigators and many other colleagues at the seat of the Court in The Hague, and its offices in the field.

I am honoured – and humbled – to speak on behalf of all those who contribute every day to the enormous task of investigating and prosecuting atrocities that shock the conscience of humanity, and threaten the peace and well-being of the world. This task is indeed a collective endeavour that needs the daily efforts of many, and the cooperation and support of many more.

This award is highly significant.

It reflects the notion that international criminal justice contributes to fostering human rights and the rule of law in the world.

And it comes at a time when the Court is hard at work, delivering on its mandate to address the most serious international crimes when national systems fail to do so.

We have come incredibly far in fifteen years of operations.

Investigations have been opened in ten countries and twenty-five cases have been brought before the judges.

Convictions have been issued for crimes such as the use of child soldiers, sexual violence in conflict, attacks on civilian population, and the destruction of cultural heritage

More than 14,000 victims have participated in our proceedings; first reparations orders have been issued, and the Trust Fund for Victims has provided assistance to hundreds of thousands of victims.

As part of the Rome Statute system, many states have adopted legislation and built capacity to be able to address international crimes at the national level and thus contribute to a global system of justice.

Impunity is no longer an option for the perpetrators of atrocious acts. Accountability for the gravest crimes has become a real possibility and, most importantly, a global expectation.

All of this may seem normal now – a given – but not long ago, international criminal justice was considered by many to be a distant illusion. Many doubted – even hours before the founding treaty was adopted in Rome – whether we could succeed in creating a permanent international criminal court.

But we succeeded. Today we have a permanent institution that is fast maturing and providing justice, often in the face of formidable challenges.

It was always said that the more the Court would deliver, the more resistance it would face, and this has proven true. There is at times serious pushback, which reminds us that we cannot take for granted what we have achieved until now.

The ideals of international law alone will not bring justice and respect for human rights. Hard work at the Court and constant and strong support by the international community are required.

And that is why this award is so meaningful to our institution. It is especially significant that it is given by highly respected organisations of the legal profession. I would like to take the occasion to recognise their own contributions to a rules-based international system where the rights of all individuals are respected.

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The Prosecutor, Registrar and I are particularly pleased to receive this award here in Stockholm.

Sweden provided enormous support to the creation and set up of the International Criminal Court and has helped the Court ever since in many ways. As the largest donor to the Trust Fund for Victims, Sweden has also sustained the Court's efforts to provide some remedy for the harm suffered by countless victims of crimes.

I thank Sweden for this great assistance and I also pay tribute to the individual Swedish women and men who worked so hard to make the Court a reality. I would like, in particular, to express the Court's appreciation for the contributions of late Judge Håkan Friman, whose untimely passing last year was a great loss to us all.

Majesties, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The International Criminal Court is extremely grateful for this wonderful award.

It gives us strength to continue our work, and we hope that it will also be an inspiration to all those who will be consolidating the system of international criminal justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thank you very much, *tack så mycket*.