



Judge Piotr Hofmański

President of the International Criminal Court

**Remarks for the Commemoration of the
Rome Statute's 25th Anniversary
*"Common Bonds" Exhibition***

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The Hague

Your Excellency Mr Mayor,
Your Excellency Ambassador van der Kwast,
Madam President of the Assembly of States Parties,
Mr Kelly,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you all for being here with us to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Rome Statute.

This event is unique in its approach. Tonight's exhibition seeks to tell stories that cannot be told by numbers or by data. Instead, these stories will be told through the medium of art and will, hopefully, leave us with a fresh perspective of the Court's work and renewed commitment to its mandate.

Special thanks goes to the generous support of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Municipality of The Hague, and the European Union in producing this exhibition and indeed, for their support of the International Criminal Court.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

25 years ago, the Rome Statute created the International Criminal Court – a historic moment that came at the end of a century that saw millions of people fall victim to unimaginable atrocities. And most of the time, the perpetrators went unpunished.

Accepting that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, the drafters of the Rome Statute aimed to eliminate impunity by providing for a system whereby eventual accountability would be secured collectively by the international community.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a Court of last resort, the ICC's purpose therefore is to provide justice where it is lacking. But we must ask – justice for whom? The answer of course, is the victims. Indeed, the Rome Statute's victim-centred concept of justice is an acknowledgment that retributive and restorative approaches must always be applied in tandem to provide a more whole sense of catharsis, healing and justice to the victims.

I am immensely proud of how the ICC has transformed the Rome Statute's victim-centred concept of justice into reality by enabling the meaningful participation of victims in the proceedings, and delivering reparations in close partnership with the Trust Fund for Victims.

In the past, I have had the chance to meet victims of Rome Statute crimes who are now benefitting from the assistance projects of the TFV.

The suffering and the adversity they have faced is truly difficult to comprehend, but it was rewarding to hear how the health services, psychological rehabilitation, and income generating activities that make part of ongoing TFV projects have helped them rebuild their lives.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Regrettably, the ICC is often victims' last hope for justice, and as such, those of us at the Court work tirelessly to bring justice to as many as possible.

I do not have sufficient words to describe the hardship too often suffered by victims. Nor can I adequately represent the courage and dignity that these survivors often demonstrate in the face of it. I think therein lies the value of tonight's exhibition, because pictures can speak a thousand words. They can express the inexpressible. Tonight, I encourage you to let the pictures speak to you.

Thank you all for your attention.

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