

**ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**Solemn undertaking of Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan as Prosecutor**

**16 June 2021**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Kateřina Sequensová,  
Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties**

Mr. President,  
Madame Vice-President,  
Mr. Vice-President,  
Madame Prosecutor,  
Mr. Registrar,  
Mr. Prosecutor-Elect,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the President of the Assembly, Ms. Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, could not be with us today, she has asked me to represent the Assembly of States Parties at the solemn undertaking of the new Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan.

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The election of a new Prosecutor is one of the most challenging but equally important and sensitive decisions to be made by the Assembly every nine years. The responsibilities of the individual elected for the post are immense, as it is quite likely one of the most difficult positions in the sphere of international criminal justice.

The Assembly took this decision on 12 February 2021 electing Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan for a period of nine years.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Khan, on behalf of all States Parties, on his election and assumption of office.

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As the new Prosecutor steps into office, I would like to praise Ms. Fatou Bensouda for her courage and unrelenting determination to pursue justice, as well as for the passion with which she has carried out her mandate, both as Prosecutor and before as Deputy-Prosecutor. Over the almost 17 years she has been with the Court, she has left her imprint on international criminal justice. I thank you.

Mr. Khan assumes office at a truly new phase for the Court and the Rome Statute system. Not only do the Court and the Assembly have a new leadership, but the entire system has embarked on a broad review that seeks to strengthen what the international community established in Rome in 1998. Some of the most crucial aspects of the review fall upon the shoulders of Mr. Khan.

Fortunately, Mr. Khan brings with him an impressive amount of experience in international criminal justice; his knowledge and familiarity with the work of the courtrooms in The Hague is vast and will surely be pivotal in helping all the stakeholders in

the Rome Statute system to strive toward our common goal of putting an end to impunity for the most serious crimes. I am confident that his tenure will constitute a fundamental pillar in the process of delivering international justice which we all are deeply committed to.

Mr. Khan takes office 23 years after the international community assembled in Rome to create not just a new international criminal court but a veritable system that would give hope and support to the victims of egregious crimes.

The Court established by the Rome Statute is now more than a landmark creation in the international landscape, it is an active, respected and indispensable part of the international community. We can no longer envision our international system without it.

In the third decade of the Court's existence we will face some familiar and some new challenges, but also unique opportunities to advance with the pursuit of justice. On the part of the Assembly, we will continue to seek the universal ratification of the Rome Statute. That process may have slowed down somewhat, but surely we must all keep working towards the universality of the Statute. All non-States Parties are welcome to participate in our Assembly and thus to become more familiar with the Rome Statute system, and hopefully to join us in the not so distant future, as we all share the firm belief that Rome Statute crimes should never go unpunished.

The other recurring challenge is cooperation. The Court depends on the active support and cooperation of its States Parties. All 123 States Parties will continue to stand firmly for the integrity of the Rome Statute and respond promptly to cooperation requests received from the Court. It is essential that all of us, including States Parties, non-States Parties, international and regional organizations and civil society, continue to live up to our commitment to work together to fight impunity for the gravest international crimes.

The Assembly of States Parties will continue to ensure that the political, diplomatic and other requisite support of States Parties is made available to the Court, so that it can carry out its mandate as efficiently as possible.

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On behalf of the Assembly, I wish Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan courage, fortitude and steadfastness in the next nine years as the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Thank you Mr. President.

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