

Coalition for the International Criminal Court

22nd session of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC Rome Statute- 8 December 2023
Plenary on Cooperation

Excellencies,

Over the past 25 years, civil society organizations and human rights defenders have been on the front lines of efforts to ensure justice for victims of serious international crimes. They do so at great risk. Many human rights defenders and their families in ICC country situations face harassment, pressure, intimidation, and even criminalization in efforts to silence them and stop their work on behalf of victims, and in turn, undermine the ICC's implementation of its mandate.

The Assembly presidency has been vocal in condemning attacks on the court and its officials aimed at undermining the ICC's mandate, making use of the Assembly's strategy—adopted last year—to respond to threats and attacks against the court, its officials, and those cooperating with it. This strong show of support for the court from its states parties is crucial. This vocal support should also be extended to “those in civil society “cooperating with the court”.

We urge states parties make full use of the Assembly strategy to defend and condemn threats and attacks against civil society organizations and human rights defenders who are targeted for their work to advance justice in the Rome Statute system and take steps to strengthen national frameworks for the protection of human rights defenders.

This year, the Assembly Presidency took another step forward by producing a set of guidelines which have been adopted by the Bureau, to ensure that human rights defenders can engage with the Assembly safely. We thank President Fernandez de Gurmendi for her leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with the incoming Assembly President and Bureau to continue these essential discussions, including on implementation of the guidelines, with genuine and accessible consultations with those most concerned. The Coalition stands ready to engage.

Thank you.