



Day of International Criminal Justice 2021
Statement by Melinda Reed,
Acting Convenor of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court

On 17 July 1998, following six weeks of intense negotiations and years of preparatory discussions, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was adopted. Establishing for the first time a permanent international criminal court to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of the most serious international crimes, the Statute also advanced an entire system of international justice.

Today, 23 years later, we honor this groundbreaking achievement by reaffirming the Coalition for the ICC's unwavering support for the ICC and Rome Statute system towards the creation of a #MoreJustWorld, and the importance of civil society engagement in ICC and Assembly of States Parties processes.

This anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute comes at a critical juncture.

The independence of the Court and its ability to discharge its mandate are threatened by the uncertain and, at times, hostile political environment in which the ICC operates and by the lack of adequate resources to match its increasing workload. At the same time, civil society organizations and human rights defenders around the world who are engaged in the effort to bring perpetrators of international crimes to fair justice face threats to their lives and families as a consequence of their work. There is more to be done to strengthen the court's ability to meet the expectations and challenges inherent to its ambitious mandate, particularly at a time when crimes defined in the Rome Statute continue to be committed in too many places around the globe.

Despite the challenges, there are unique opportunities to improve the Rome Statute system.

The Review of the ICC is ongoing and an Action Plan for the assessment of the recommendations of the independent experts has just been proposed by the Review Mechanism. The ASP Bureau has commenced efforts to draw lessons from the election process of the ICC Prosecutor concluded earlier this year and to introduce measures for the vetting of candidates according to the criterion of high moral character for the positions of Deputy Prosecutor, who will be elected by the upcoming Assembly.

In parallel, the ICC workload is expanding to new situations and in the delivery of reparations.

Civil society is deeply invested in the success of the Rome Statute system to advance the fight against impunity "for the sake of future generations." We are committed to walking together toward a strengthened Court better able to meet the ambitions of its founders and to adapt to the opportunities, demands, and circumstances of today.

The member organizations of the Coalition appreciate the unique consultative status we have with the Court and the Assembly of States Parties since the very beginning, a status that builds on the recognition of the importance of civil society in the Final Act of the Rome Conference in 1998.

This allows us to discharge our responsibilities to amplify the voices of victims, survivors, and communities, and to hold the Court and its States Parties to the norms of fair, effective, and independent justice to which they aspire.

As we commemorate the adoption of the Rome Statute and the establishment of the ICC, the Coalition for the ICC begins a new chapter of its history. Following the past 25 years of meaningful engagement with the Court and States Parties, we are embarking on efforts to revitalize and strengthen the Coalition and its work.

We look to the future with renewed enthusiasm and motivation to pursue the fight against impunity, and we stand ready to facilitate the engagement of CICC members around the world with ICC and ASP Processes, including through the CICC Teams on ICC Review and Elections, in a joint effort to bolster the work of the Court and its ability to serve the communities affected by its work. We call on all ICC states parties to renew their commitments to the ICC and the Rome Statute system through increased political and public support in the face of pressures on the court's independence; seeing through the review process in an inclusive and transparent manner that takes into account measures necessary to truly engage diverse, civil society perspectives; refreshed dialogue regarding the resource needs of the Rome Statute system; and heightened commitment to ensuring the ICC is able to act where it is needed to do so as a court of last resort.



We look forward to tackling our common challenges and working together towards the progress of the International Criminal Court and Rome Statute system.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Reed', written in a cursive style.

Melinda Reed
Acting Convenor
Coalition for the International Criminal Court