

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Ukraine must join the ICC

The Coalition for the ICC and its members sent a letter to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, calling for prompt ratification of the ICC Rome Statute and commitment to fight impunity domestically.

Brussels/Kyiv — Ukraine must join the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and commit to ending impunity for perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, said the Coalition of the International Criminal Court today.

On 23 September 2019, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), its member organisations in Ukraine and international members, sent a [letter](#) to H.E. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, asking his government to immediately ratify to and ensure the domestication of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute).

“President Zelenskyy has an opportunity to lead Ukraine into finally becoming a member of the ICC and send a strong message to the people of Ukraine and international community at large that Ukraine is committed to bringing perpetrators of international crimes to justice,” said **Virginie Amato, CICC Regional Coordinator for Europe**.

Ukraine amended its Constitution in 2016 paving the way for the country to join the Rome Statute, which provision entered into force on 30 June 2019. It made the same commitment in the [European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement](#).

“The key legal obstacles to the country’s ability to join the Rome Statute have been removed and there is no better time than now for the authorities in Ukraine to do the right thing and join the family of nations that are working to end impunity for perpetrators of grave crimes,” said **Ms. Amato**.

“There are significant legislative steps in the development of every state. In Ukraine it was the adoption of the Constitution in 1996, the abolition of the death penalty in 2000. Ratification of the ICC Rome Statute would certainly be the next significant step for Ukraine,” said **Oleksandr Pavlichenko, Director of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU)**.

The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has been conducting a Preliminary Examination on the situation in Ukraine since April 2014, focusing on alleged crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine from 21 November 2013 onwards. This follows Ukraine’s lodging of two formal declarations with the ICC under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute in 2014 and 2015.

“Ukraine’s newly elected leadership has a real chance to prove that achieving peace and justice is their ultimate goal, not just an empty declaration, by ratifying the ICC Rome Statute and setting up an effective domestic accountability mechanism for the prosecution of those suspected of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity,” said **Nadia Volkova, Director, Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group (ULAG)**.

For several years, the CICC and its members have urged Ukraine to fully align its domestic laws and policies with the ICC Rome Statute, including passing laws that will enable it to investigate and prosecute those suspected of committing grave crimes.

“Ukraine’s criminal laws are in dire need of reform,” said **Oleksandra Matviychuk, Chair of the Board, Center for Civil Liberties (CCL)**.

“Ukraine should adopt its draft law (0892), which passed its first reading in June 2019 as this will enable it to align its legal framework with the principles outlined in the Rome Statute and International Humanitarian Law,” continued **Ms Matviychuk**.

Civil society continues to demand justice and accountability and believe that ratifying the Rome Statute will be a crucial step towards international peace, security and justice.

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Background

Ukraine signed the ICC Rome Statute in 2000, but has yet to ratify it.

On 17 April 2014, the Government of Ukraine lodged a declaration under article 12(3) of the Rome Statute accepting the ICC's jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed on its territory from 21 November 2013 to 22 February 2014. On 25 April 2014, the ICC Office of the Prosecutor [announced](#) the preliminary examination of the situation in Ukraine.

On 8 September 2015, the Government of Ukraine lodged a second declaration under article 12(3) of the Statute accepting the ICC's jurisdiction in relation to alleged crimes committed on its territory from 20 February 2014 onwards, with no end date. On 29 September 2015, the Prosecutor [announced](#) the extension of the temporal scope of the existing preliminary examination to include alleged crimes committed after 20 February 2014.

On 2 June 2016, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted an amendment to article 124 of the Constitution of Ukraine which stated that the ICC jurisdiction may be recognised by Ukraine and introduced a transitional clause which delayed the entry into force of such amendment and thus possibility of ratification for 3 years.

On 30 June 2019, the amendment to Article 124 entered into force, therefore no legal obstacle to Ukraine's ratification of the Rome Statute.

In August 2019, then Deputy Head of President Zelenskyy's Office, and current Prosecutor General, Ruslan Ryaboshapka, announced that one of the President's priorities would be to ratify the ICC Rome Statute signed by Ukraine 20 years ago.

Ukraine is also notably the only State not party to the ICC Rome Statute that has acceded to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC) on 29 January 2007.

About the ICC

The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to have jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

There are currently eleven active investigations before the ICC: Burundi; the Central African Republic I & II; Democratic Republic of Congo; Darfur, Sudan; Kenya; Libya; Uganda; Côte d'Ivoire; Mali and Georgia. The ICC has publicly issued 34 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. There have been three convictions and three acquittals. Ten preliminary examinations currently ongoing, including into situations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh/Myanmar, Colombia, Guinea, Iraq/UK, Palestine, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Venezuela. The OTP has concluded preliminary examinations relating to Honduras, the Republic of Korea and the Comoros referral, declining in each case to open an investigation.

About us

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of over 2500 civil society organizations in 150 countries campaigning for an effective, independent, resilient and standard-setting ICC and fighting for justice for victims of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression through national courts and the ICC. It is housed in and is a program of the World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy and is headquartered in The Hague, The Netherlands.