

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE FOR EVENT MARKING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
15 February 2018**

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which established the first permanent treaty-based international tribunal to deal with individual criminal responsibility for the most serious crimes of international law. Today, the International Criminal Court is the central institution of the international criminal justice system.

With 11 investigations, 25 cases, 9 convictions, 1 acquittal, reparation orders, 4 ongoing trials and some 14,000 victims having participated in the proceedings, we can see clearly the importance of the Court's mandate and achievements. It is without doubt that the Court has had a profound impact on the lives of victims and witnesses and will help in their healing process. The Court has also taken important strides in establishing sexual violence in conflict and the destruction of cultural heritage and property as international crimes.

Hopefully, in the future, the Court will have fewer cases -- as more Member States are able and willing to investigate and prosecute international crimes in their own domestic jurisdictions -- and the ICC will exercise mainly a deterrent and preventive role. In the meantime, I wish to reaffirm that, with the ICC-UN Relationship Agreement as a foundation, the Court can count on the support of the United Nations.

Indeed, from the convening of the conference in July 1998 at which the Court was created, through the lending of logistical and administrative assistance to its operations in the field, the United Nations has given the Court full and unstinting backing. The United Nations is also supporting the work of the Court by helping to build national judicial capacities.

This anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on the importance of justice in maintaining international peace and security and defending international human rights. Only when perpetrators of grave crimes are prosecuted and held to account can there be any hope that future atrocities will be prevented and peace preserved. People across the world have placed their hopes in the Court and we must all do our utmost to enable the Court to do perform its vital work.