

Coalition for the International Criminal Court

Remarks at a UN Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting
on the 20th Anniversary of the Rome Statute

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I am honored to be here today on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court.

We are a worldwide NGO partnership. We are joined in a commitment to champion justice through the ICC and the broader Rome Statute system.

The extraordinary achievements in Rome and the treaty's entry into force need to be matched, if not exceeded, by the political commitment of the international community to ensure the Rome Statute system delivers justice.

This system, while anchored in law, depends on principled diplomacy.

The Security Council, of course, has multiple formal roles—from Court referrals to securing cooperation.

Regrettably, the Council has been unwilling to take the measures needed to induce cooperation in situations it refers to the Court. Going forward, the Council should ensure that existing and future referrals are accompanied by meaningful follow up action. The Coalition also calls for support to state-led initiatives to restrain the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Council when Rome Statute crimes are concerned.

This meeting shows that beyond formal roles, creative, more flexible efforts are needed.

In the face of threats by the US government, joint statements by ICC state party members of the Council—led by the ICC focal point—following the prosecutor’s briefings to the Council sent a powerful signal. Such efforts will, unfortunately, likely remain relevant in the future as supporters of justice confront its opponents.

The Arria-formula provides a unique opportunity to hear from civil society.

The Coalition’s membership is diverse. Our members report on human rights violations, support victims, monitor fair trial rights, and carry out persistent advocacy to see justice done.

Our strength as a Coalition comes from joining together where we have common aims. Chief among these is the delivery of impartial justice and ensuring equality before the law through the Rome Statute system.

As we approach this anniversary, how can we come closer to this goal?

First, we need to continue to work together towards a universal court. The treaty’s entry into force came about far more quickly than envisioned. But our colleagues in many countries continue these efforts to this day—for accession to the treaty and its implementation into national law. We ask you to make this a priority in your bilateral and multilateral dialogues. We ask countries with influence to be clear that they will not stand in the way of the sovereign choice of those which do join.

Second, we need to create the conditions that will allow the court to exercise its jurisdiction where it does exist. In addition to cooperation, this requires resources. The ICC does not have the funding to match the legitimate expectations of justice placed upon it. The Coalition calls on the court’s states parties to ensure the sustainable funding needed across the Court’s work—from outreach to fair trial in all situations—and for exploration of financial support from the UN as provided in the Rome Statute.

Finally, we ask you to include civil society and victims and survivor communities directly in initiatives on accountability. Victims and survivors are the central rightsholders of the Rome Statute system. In the face of shifting national and international political priorities, civil

society determination provides the staying power necessary to realize credible, impartial justice. To play that role, we need you to guard civic space and to protect human rights defenders at risk.

In conclusion, the Security Council is the mainstay of international peace and security; and the International Criminal Court is the mainstay of international justice. Together, they are two of the pillars supporting our common vision for a more just, more secure and more peaceful world. Whatever the challenges, there must be no effort spared to ensure these two pillars are in harmony to meet their common goals.