

Commemoration of the International Day of International Criminal Justice

July 17, 2021

Statement of the African Francophone Coalitions for the International Criminal Court

Abidjan, Bangui, Bamako, Bujumbura, Conakry, N'Djamena, Ouagadougou, Rabat,

On 17 July 1998, the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was adopted in Rome. To mark this founding anniversary, the 17th of July was declared "Day of International Justice" and is commemorated by the States Parties to the Rome Statute.

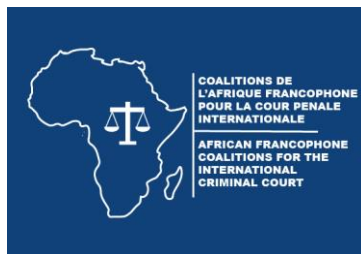
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The 20th century particularly, has been marked by many atrocities that have plunged the entire human community into mourning. The establishment of an international criminal court was a reaction to these massacres. In doing so, the international community became aware of the need to establish a judicial body to defend and implement the underlying demands of humanity. Such justice has a threefold advantage: **exemplary punishment** of heinous crimes; designed as a **deterrent effect** to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies; and finally, the **guarantee of lasting social cohesion and peace by integrating a restorative justice dimension into the trials.**

Hence the creation of the ICC, following the adoption by 120 states on 17 July 1998.

The emergence of this criminal justice body was welcomed by all national and international human rights organizations.

CURRENT BACKGROUND: From its creation to the present day, the ICC has been involved in several investigations, preliminary examinations; has issued arrest warrants, summons to appear; persons have been detained and cases have been opened, etc...

These actions are welcomed by various organizations who believe that today the ICC is making an enormous contribution to the fight against impunity and to the maintenance of world order through its deterrent effect. However, despite this progress, the Court continues to face criticism.



REMARKS: First of all, the African Francophone Coalitions for the ICC welcome the various trials taking place at the ICC which represent the latest achievements of international justice. The African Francophone Coalitions reiterate their support to the ICC and its actions undertaken worldwide and particularly in Africa. Indeed, the African Francophone Coalitions for the ICC believe that the impunity of the past has led to the violence of the present in our countries. Therefore, all actions that can shed light on the circumstances in which abuses were committed as well as to bring those responsible to justice, should be promoted and encouraged. *To this regard, the African Francophone Coalitions for the ICC encourage the ICC to continue its actions, especially in an independent and impartial manner.*

Furthermore, to dispel the apprehensions of the most skeptical, *the ICC will have to increase its outreach campaigns and create a permanent framework for more effective communications with states. Similarly, the Court will have to review its investigative strategy in certain cases on the African continent, where its credibility is at stake.*

The African Francophone Coalitions for the ICC continue on calling African states not to withdraw from the ICC. Certainly, the ICC's functioning needs to be improved but with all states working together. *Clearly, African states will be able to provide constructive criticism only by remaining as States Parties.* The panel of experts that has been set up for the reforms of the Rome Statute establishing the ICC is an important step to improve the ICC.

It should be noted that when prosecutions fail, the harm suffered by victims remains. The Fund's assistance activities can offer rehabilitation and this makes its assistance mandate essentially restorative. This important instrument must therefore be strengthened.

In any case, the ICC must be seen as everyone's daughter, and therefore deserves everyone's support and care.

This must be the case insofar as the rejection of impunity appears to be a requirement of good governance.

For the African Francophone Coalitions for the ICC,
Mr. ALI Ouattara
The coordinator

Signatory Organizations:

1. The Burundian Coalition for the ICC
2. The Central African Coalition for the ICC
3. The Chadian Coalition for the ICC
4. The Guinean Coalition for the ICC
5. The Ivorian Coalition for the ICC
6. The Malian Coalition for the ICC
7. The Moroccan Coalition for the ICC