

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

3 July 2017

**SIMONE VEIL AND THE FIGHT FOR VICTIMS' RIGHTS AT THE ICC**

*Simone Veil, French politician and Holocaust survivor, contributed to global justice through her role in the Trust Fund for Victims and passed away just before ICC's 15th anniversary. The Coalition for the International Criminal Court wants to pay tribute to her.*

**New York/The Hague** – Simone Veil was an inspirational figure whose worldwide impact has left a permanent mark on the history of human rights. It is not only her personal story as a Holocaust survivor which has garnered her such admiration, but also and foremost her fight for a fairer world for victims and survivors of grave crimes, and for women as a whole. Veil passed at 89 last week in Paris.

After playing a leading role in French law and politics, including around the legalization of contraception and abortion during her tenure as France's Minister of Health, and then as the President of the European Parliament, Veil served as the first Chair of the **Trust Fund for Victims (TFV)** Board of Directors from 2003 to 2009 to build, in her own words, "an institution that effectively serves victims' interests."

The TFV was born from the establishment of the **International Criminal Court** on 1 July 2002, when the Rome Statute came into effect. Veil recognized the unique importance of the TFV's mandate, which she described as "a quite remarkable step forward in terms of consideration of the needs of victims, which cannot be met alone by the Court's judgments against those responsible for the most serious crimes."

Simone Veil was deeply committed to the TFV mission to support and implement programs and awards that address victims' harms resulting from genocide, crimes of humanity and war crimes. Veil's was a strong voice supporting those of civil society that still today call on all governments to make voluntary contributions to the TFV so that it can meaningfully restore victims of horrific crimes.

On behalf of the current **TFV Board of Directors, Chair Motoo Noguchi** stated, "Madame Veil has been an inspiration for many generations of advocates for the oppressed and the disenfranchised. Her personal experience as a survivor of the Holocaust, her moral fortitude and her pioneering professional accomplishments made her election to the first TFV Board of Directors, as well as her appointment as its first Chair, a most compelling expression of the Rome Statute's unprecedented ambition to recognise the suffering of victims and in particular, of the right of victims to overcome their harm and to regain their dignity and hope. In further building and promoting the Trust Fund for Victims as a global beacon of reparative justice for victims, we, the current members of the Board, are ever more strongly mindful of her legacy."

"Today we lost a leading figure in the pursuit of justice, women's rights and equality," said **Jelena Pia-Comella, Deputy Executive Director of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court**. "Simone Veil played a persistent and coherent role not only in giving a voice to victims of genocide, in particular through her contribution to the International Criminal Court and the Trust Fund for Victims, but also in promoting women's rights, gender justice and peace-building in Europe."

**CONTACTS****In New York:**

Ms. Jelena Pia-Comella  
Deputy Executive Director  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: + 1 646 465 8525  
pia@coalitionfortheicc.org

**In The Hague:**

Ms. Kirsten Meersschaert  
Director of Programs  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: +31 (0) 70 3111087  
meersschaert@coalitionfortheicc.org

Ms. Alix Vuillemin  
Senior Legal Officer  
Coalition for the ICC  
Tel: +31 (0) 70 3111088  
vuillemin@coalitionfortheicc.org



As French newspaper *Le Monde* put it, Simone Veil “embodies - in her own way - the three great moments of the history of the 20th century: the Shoah, the emancipation of women and European hope”.

With Veil's passing occurring on the eve of the 15th anniversary of the ICC, her story will once again be in the spotlight as human rights and gender justice advocates the world over commemorate 15 years in the permanent fight against impunity. Her legacy, however, has never left it.

---

**BACKGROUND: BACKGROUND:** 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 ten active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic I & II; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, Sudan; Kenya; Libya; Uganda; Côte d'Ivoire; Mali; and Georgia. The ICC has publicly issued 33 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing and three cases are at the reparations stage. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining ten situations on four continents, including Afghanistan; Colombia; the registered vessels of the Comoros, Greece and Cambodia; Guinea; Iraq; Nigeria; Ukraine; Palestine; Burundi; and Gabon. The Office of the Prosecutor has concluded preliminary examinations relating to situations in Honduras, Venezuela, and the Republic of Korea, declining in each case to open an investigation.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in over 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. **[www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)**

Experts from human rights organizations members of the Coalition are available for background information and comment. **Contact: [communications@coalitionfortheicc.org](mailto:communications@coalitionfortheicc.org)**