



SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY
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OF

**THE PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS**

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES

07 DECEMBER, 2017

(Check Against Delivery)

Mr. President,

I am honored to address the Assembly of States Parties on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

As you know, the Order has long been recognized as international sovereign and engages in full diplomatic relations, including exchange of Ambassadors, with more than half the Member States of the United Nations and the State Parties to the Rome Statute. In recent years, our activities have focused exclusively on addressing international humanitarian crises and challenges.

It is this lengthy, world-wide experience that underlies our strong support for the vital work of the International Criminal Court.

The Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court represents a monumental and unique achievement for upholding International Law and ensuring that impunity is never accepted for grave crimes.

Mr. President,

The Order of Malta is deeply concerned at the widespread and increasing violations of International Humanitarian Law that we are witnessing first hand during its humanitarian activities across the globe.

For more than 900 years, the Order of Malta has provided help to the sick, the needy, and the most disadvantaged in society in more than 120 countries. By virtue of its sovereignty, neutrality, and non-political nature, the Order can intervene in difficult humanitarian situations to provide emergency aid for refugees and a wide range of medical and social programs in response to the armed conflicts.

As a senior representative of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Mr. Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager observed when invited to address the Security Council in the Open Debate on Protection of Civilians, humanitarian aid workers and civilians are increasingly deliberate targets of military operations.

The need for a Court that acts as a deterrent and seeks to reverse this development thus remains as important and relevant as ever. We need a strong guarantor for ensuring respect for International Humanitarian Law, and for protecting the rights of individuals.

Mr. President,

We must still do more to ensure that all parties to conflicts are upholding their obligations under International Law. There must be a unified and comprehensive response that includes ensuring that grave violations do not go unpunished, because, despite all our efforts, civilians continue to bear the brunt of suffering in conflicts around the world.

We furthermore strongly encourage all States to cooperate with the Court in fulfilling its mandate, including surrendering indicted individuals to the Court for prosecution.

Mr. President,

A growing concern to the Order is the tremendous suffering caused by Trafficking in Persons. The International Community must do more to fight this crime against humanity and prevent criminals from taking advantage of desperate human beings, not least the most vulnerable, including women and children. In order to contribute to the effort, the Order has recently appointed two Ambassadors at Large, one in Geneva and one in Lagos, to monitor and combat the traffic in persons through examining the most appropriate forms of action by which the Order of Malta can protect victims of trafficking.

The Order calls upon the Assembly of State Parties to consider further ways in which the Court can prevent and punish such crimes, including by enlarging the scope of the Court's jurisdiction over this form of crime.

Mr. President,

All persons responsible for grave international crimes must be brought to justice. Impunity can never be an option. We welcome the important judicial developments this year, and the Order remains committed to continue supporting the Court in achieving universality and in its crucial role in promoting global justice.

Thank you.