



ICELAND
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by
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General Debate

**17th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court**

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Mr. President, your excellencies.

The year 2018 has been a year of important milestones for the International Criminal Court. This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute. But another important milestone took place on the 18th of July of this year, when the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression was activated, following the resolution adopted by the 16th session of this Assembly. These two milestones are a reminder of the indispensable part of the ICC within the rules-based international order, as a permanent, independent and impartial criminal court.

Let me therefore take this opportunity to reiterate Iceland's strong support for the ICC and our appreciation for the contribution that the court has made towards establishing accountability for the most serious crimes under international law and providing justice to victims of international crimes. Its work promotes respect for fundamental human rights and the principles of international humanitarian law and also plays an important role in post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Mr. President,

The ability of the ICC to serve its mandate relies on the reach of its jurisdiction. It has been stated many times by us and others that the ICC needs more States Parties, not fewer. Iceland continues to be an active supporter of universal membership of the ICC and we encourage all States who have not yet become party to the ICC to do so. To those that may have concerns about the Court, we encourage you to engage in a constructive dialogue with the view of finding solutions within the framework of the Rome Statute. We would in particular urge those State Parties that have decided to withdraw from the ICC, most recently the Philippines, to reconsider their decision.

We would also like to take this opportunity to join those calling for enhanced cooperation between the Court and the Security Council. We particularly note with concern that the situation in Syria has not yet been referred to the ICC by the Security Council.

Mr. President,

Another situation that raises grave concerns is the persecution against the Rohingya people. The findings of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, which was established by the UN Human Rights Council, are particularly alarming. These findings indicate that serious violations of international humanitarian law, including genocide and crimes against humanity, may have been committed against the Rohingya people. Iceland calls for greater accountability for these acts. As a Member State of the Human Rights Council, we were proponents of the Human Rights Council's decision of September of this year to establish an independent mechanism to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyze evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011. We welcome the recent ruling of the ICC on its jurisdiction over Myanmar's deportation of the Rohingya population to Bangladesh and it is our sincere hope that this investigation and the mechanism established by the Human Rights Council will complement each other and we are hopeful that they will lead to accountability for these atrocities. But we would nevertheless note that the most robust means of achieving accountability for the crimes alleged to have taken place against the Rohingya people would be for the Security Council to refer the case to the ICC.

Mr. President.

As we have previously stated, Iceland strongly supports the efforts made by the Court to focus on sexual and gender based violence. It is a well known fact that women and children are often disproportionately affected by crimes committed during armed conflict. We therefore encourage the court to continue to develop its institutional capacity to investigate and prosecute sexual and gender-based crimes. In this context, we would also like to highlight the important work of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims and we encourage states and others to contribute to it.

Thank you for your attention.