



**Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
The Hague**

**Statement by the Islamic Republic of Iran
At 18th Session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
The Hague, 2 -7 December 2019**

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**Mr. Vice President
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen**

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to your Excellency, the Bureau and the Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute for the preparations of this session.

I also take this opportunity to commend the joint efforts by the Judges, the Prosecutor, the Registrar and the staff members of the Criminal Court to assist to put an end to impunity of the most serious crimes of international concern.

Mr. Vice President

The establishment of international peace and justice has been one of the most significant concerns of human history. This cause has been pursued at all times and has always been emphasized by the

international community. Peace and justice are indispensable. Achieving a durable peace requires the establishment and administration of justice. Justice cannot be ignored under the pretext of managing crises and armed conflicts in line with maintaining peace.

The impunity for perpetrators of the most serious international crimes, *inter alia*, non-prosecution, non-punishment, and ultimately non-realization of the rights of victims, endangers peace and raises deeper challenges and concerns.

Mr. Vice President

Since its establishment, the International Criminal Court has strived to preserve its professional status and credibility in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Statute of 1998, based on the principles of independence, impartiality and fair trial. However, the Court has been encountered by some challenges such as selective behavior and application of double standards. Failure to observe such principles will cause the Court to be abused by State's political goals and undermine the Court's credibility.

We have not yet forgotten the destructive and squandering positions and threats of some governmental officials of a certain state against the International Criminal Court last year. The remarks by some of the officials the United States of America raised deep concerns about the Court's efficiency in the implementation of justice. This approach will make the perpetrators of international crimes immune and in safe haven, as we are still witnessing the recurrence of international crimes around the world.

Accordingly, the independence of the Court from external influence is essential to its identity, credibility, and legitimacy. The Court shall be able to prosecute, independently free from manipulation and external pressure, the perpetrators of the crimes under its jurisdiction and particularly the crime of aggression, which are always committed by specific countries.

Mr. Vice President

In the past year, the court has had an extraordinary level of activities. The decisions and activities of the Court give the message to the international community about the role and independent character of its. We commend the prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, for the stride made in discharging her mandate, among others, her request for authorization from Pre-Trial Chamber II to initiate an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity concerning the armed conflict in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan since 1st May 2003.

Although the request of prosecutor has opened new windows of opportunity for justice, in countering illegal use of force all over the world, however, the recent development over Afghanistan situation is indicating that how the rule of law is being defied and weakened by the rule of power and associating the matter with other considerations rather than justice. Likewise, we see the Palestine situation as a test before the court that will demonstrate whether the Court would be in a position to respond to the call of justice or will prioritize the non-legal arrangements.

We are following up the developments of legal proceedings in Bangladesh/Myanmar situation and the decision of the Pre-Trial Chamber III of the ICC to authorize the Prosecutor to proceed with an investigation for the alleged crimes within the ICC's jurisdiction in the Situation of Rohingya Group and hope to see appropriate action for realizing the rights of the victims and their families.

We are delighted to see that the court could exercise its jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. This would give the court the power to safeguard international peace and justice through ending impunity for the crime of aggression. The involvement of the ICC in prosecuting aggression cases would certainly have a deterrent effect on the illegal use of force. This could increase the legitimacy of the court and will certainly assist the effectiveness of the Rome Statute; hence more countries especially small countries will rely on the court as they will

find it as an important institution for the maintenance of their political independence and territorial integrity.

Mr. Vice President

The Islamic Republic of Iran, taking into account the concerns and considerations of the establishment of international justice, has always taken steps, in inspiring its Islamic teachings and relying on its rich culture in combating impunity and bring the criminals into justice.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the victims of war crimes, in particular weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical weapons, has emphasized the need to take various actions at national, regional and international levels to counter the crimes under jurisdiction of the Court. Regrettably, our region is witnessing a repeat of international crimes every day and there has been no serious international response to stop and cease them.

Along with our educational and research activities in the field of promoting the International Criminal law including various programs and workshops we have initiated important actions in national criminalization of international crimes of genocide, war crime, crimes against humanity and aggression. We hope that we would achieve suitable results by conducting expertise and legal reviews in the near future.

Mr. Vice President

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the *raison d'être* of the ICC is to guarantee lasting respect for and enforcement of international justice without which peace and development cannot be achieved for the global community.

Thanks for your attention