

**Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran
At the Twenty-first session of the Assembly of States Parties
To the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
General Debate
World Forum, The Hague, the Kingdom of the Netherlands,
5-10 December 2022**

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to your Excellency, as well as the Bureau and the Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) to the Rome Statute for preparation of the twenty-first session and the related documents.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Judges, the Prosecutor, the Registrar and the staff members of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their continued and dedicated efforts by taking an active approach toward the recent developments in international criminal sphere.

Madam President,

Since the establishment of the International Criminal Court, two decades ago, there are great hopes for upholding international judicial justice. However, the emergence of new challenges and threats to international human rights and humanitarian law demonstrates that the Rome Statute and the structure of the Court shall adapt to the developments occurring in the international community. While the

need for amendments seems necessary more than ever, any change makes sense only if it will be in line with the fundamental principles such as complementarity, independence, objectivity, and non-politicization and also general principles of international law embedded in the United Nations Charter including the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in internal and external affairs. The respect to these basic principles will promote the confidence of States to the Court and its universality.

My delegation, as an observer and a signatory of the Rome Statute, express its deep concern over endangering the independence of the Court by certain States. Imposing sanction against the ICC and senior officials of the Court might serve as an instrument to deter the court from furthering its investigation regarding to the crimes committed by its nationals and allies. Unilateral sanctions have been imposed to put pressure on the independent actors in the international arena which is absolutely a flagrant violation of international law.

My delegation would like to recall that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been facing for years with bullying polices of certain State who imposed heinous unilateral coercive measures even in the period of the Covid-19 Pandemic aim at its hegemonic policies. While it is demonstrated that unilateral sanctions are not in accordance with the international law and undermine multilateralism, it also violates the basic human rights of all people.

In this connection, the Islamic Republic of Iran urges all the Members of the ASP to strongly integrate their support to condemn any destructive actions against the Court as the core permanent institution in the fight against impunity.

Madam President,

Recalling the political developments in Afghanistan in last two years, the Islamic republic of Iran remains vigilant to the activities of the Court in relation to this situation. Our delegation is of the view that the Pre-Trial Chamber II decision on 31 October 2022 regarding the resumption of the investigation into the Afghanistan Situation was inevitable. However, I would like to once again emphasize the necessity to have a comprehensive view of the crimes committed in Afghanistan and not merely limit the investigations to one party to the conflict or specified period of time which exclude some essential events in this situation. It is highly expected that those military forces who committed war crimes in Afghanistan, should be responsible and go to justice.

Regarding the situation in Palestine, the slow pace of work and political pressures to cease the investigation by certain States temper expectations that it may soon deliver justice. Under these circumstances, our delegation hope the Prosecutor commences the investigation in the situation of Palestine as well. While we appreciate the Court's move stepping toward accountability for people involved in the century-long deprivation from their right to self-determination, we also expect the Court to prioritize investigation in this situation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran commends the Court's decisions in starting to deal with these two situations despite political pressure and illegal and illegitimate sanctions on senior staffs of the ICC. We believe that the court should have the same courage in proceeding with the cases that it had in the beginning of the investigation. According to the developments of these two situations, the process and manner of the court's proceedings will be the criterion for evaluating its performance.

Madam President,

In conclusion, the Islamic Republic of Iran is mindful of the international criminal justice. In this relation, the Judiciary of Iran has had considerable activities in monitoring the developments and measures in international criminal law, particularly the issues related to ICC. These measures have been taken in context of empowering of ICC by its integrity and transparency in order to administration of international justice; no doubt that avoiding double standards is vital to the ICC to achieve global public opinions.

Furthering the objective of promoting the judicial justice, we are engaged with the topics of the international criminal law, including the ICC related issues, civil society, judicial practitioners as well as the relevant scientific and academic centers have considerable participation which include but not limited to participating in educational programs, research activities, and increasing publications in this field.

I thank you, Madam President.