



*Statement of the Republic of Tunisia
to the 18th session of the Assembly of States parties
to the Rome Statute*

Delivered by

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*Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,*

It is a great honor for me to address the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute at its 18th session with some remarks on behalf of the Government of Tunisia.

I would like, first, to join other delegations' representatives in thanking you, Mr. President, all the Bureau Members, the Secretariat and all the facilitators for their commendable work in preparing for this Assembly.

I would also like to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of Tunisia to the Rome Statute and to the Court's endeavor to fulfill its noble mission "to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of atrocity crimes".

In fact, the Court could always count on the support and cooperation of The Tunisian Government in the efforts aiming at fighting against impunity and preventing egregious crimes

Mr. President,

Reaffirming its commitment to the noble values advocated by the Rome Statute and in the spirit to promote the cooperation with the Court, Tunisia maintained regular diplomatic and operational exchange with ICC, the last of which occurred during the visit to The Hague, on the second of September 2019, of the Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Moreover, and while welcoming the continuous efforts undertaken by the Court in enhancing the cooperation with states parties, we would like to stress out the need to strengthen the activities of communication and outreach in order to increase the understanding of the academic circles and civil society about the core values and the main mission and attributions of the Court.

In this respect, we are delighted to have had a successful and productive awareness-raising seminar conducted by representatives of the Court in benefit of Tunisian junior diplomats in April 2019 at the Tunisian Diplomatic Institute.

Mr. President,

Over the last decades, the nature of conflicts has changed, resulting in a tragic increase of violence targeting mainly the civilian population.

In this context, the International Criminal Court provides a fundamental contribution to the maintenance of peace and security, as well as to the protection and promotion of human rights.

It is undeniable that there is a strict connection between peace and justice. This interdependency requires harmony and joint action by the international community in order to hold accountable perpetrators of crimes against humanity, thereby ensure justice for victims while defending the norms and principles of International Law.

Fighting impunity and ensuring accountability do not only allow preserving the international order, but also helps promoting sustainable peace and preventing a relapse into conflict.

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to extend its sincere esteem to the Office of the prosecutor for the tremendous work it is undertaking under the wise and capable leadership of Ms. Fatou Bensouda in pursuing, in the most efficient manner, the mandate of its Bureau in conducting investigations and prosecutions, thus to achieve a sense of justice and accountability, a prerequisite for stability and prosperity in the world.

Allow me first to welcome the recent authorization by the Pre-Trial Chamber III to commence an investigation into the Situation in the People's Republic of Bangladesh/Republic of the Union of Myanmar ("Situation in Bangladesh/Myanmar"), of the alleged deportation of Rohingya people from Myanmar.

Nevertheless and while renewing our appreciation of the regular reporting by ICC Prosecutor on the activities of her office, in particular, the intention expressed by her Office to complete the preliminary examination with respect to the situation in Palestine, we note with concern that this procedure has now taken almost five years. As Israel, the occupying power, is continuing its abuses and that his violations still undeterred, we believe, with all consideration of the independence of the Prosecutor, that it is high time for the investigation to be launched so that perpetrators of atrocity crimes be held accountable.

Tunisia reiterates its unwavering support for the Palestinian People in their fight to restore their legitimate rights, mainly the establishment of an independent State with Al-Quds as capital.

Tunisia has also repeatedly warned of the serious threats posed by settlement expansion and the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

In this respect, Tunisia is willing as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council to work in concert with the International Community to advance initiatives aiming at ending impunity and multiplying efforts intended to establish and consolidate peace and justice in the world.

Mr. President,

Tunisia welcomes the efforts made by the Court in the proposed budget for this year in order to identify efficiencies and optimal ways of spending. While Tunisia's allocations across international organizations and Courts are generally guided by the principle of zero nominal growth, we believe a realistic approach ought to be considered in the current circumstances that take into account both the capacities of states parties and the growing needs of the Court, in particular with respect to implementing victim reparations.

As we look forward to the achievement of universality in the number of adherences to the Rome Statute, the ICC is called upon to represent all regions of the world, not only through its mandate, but also through its staff. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the Court give the necessary attention in order to have an equitable geographical and gender representation of its staff in all its organs.

Mr. President,

The ultimate challenge of our common struggle remains the establishment of a true culture of justice and fairness denouncing violation and abuses, compensating victims and holding accountable the perpetrators of heinous crimes in full compliance with the law, all of this in the purpose of restoring confidence in the justice system and preventing the return to systematic Human Rights violations around the world.

Tunisia will continue to ensure a strong support to the International Criminal Court, and to promote its universality, defend its independence and cooperate with other countries and international organizations.

I thank you Mr. President.