



Government Offices of Sweden

STATEMENT

by

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At the General Debate

22nd Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute

New York

7 December 2023

AS DELIVERED

PERMANENT MISSION OF SWEDEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Madam President,

I am honoured to address the Assembly of States Parties. Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to you, Madam President, for your very capable leadership of the Assembly of States Parties over the past few years and not least your hard work in mobilizing support for the independence and integrity of the Court. I wish you every success in your future endeavors. We congratulate the newly elected President, Ms Päivi Kaukoranta and the other newly appointed bureau members.

Sweden also wishes to congratulate the six candidates who have been elected to serve as judges. The election of judges with high moral character, impartiality and integrity is vital to ensuring a well-functioning and independent Court.

Madam President,

International law is central to Swedish foreign policy. Maintaining a rules-based environment is a national interest, including accountability for serious international crimes, regardless of the geographical context. That is also why Sweden has seconded several highly experienced investigators and prosecutors to the Office of the Prosecutor. These secondments are un-earmarked and are benefitting the Court across all situations, across several continents.

In the current political climate, in which the ICC – and the rules-based international order as such – are being subjected to threats and attacks, it is imperative that States Parties continue to manifest their support for the integrity and independence of the Court. Sweden remains firm in its defense of the Court.

We condemn in the strongest terms the criminal proceedings initiated by the authorities of the Russian Federation against the Prosecutor, the President and other judges of the Court. Sweden also strongly condemns the cyber-attack on the Court.

Civil society organisations were instrumental in the creation of the Court, and they continue to play a crucial role. Threats and intimidation directed at them are also unacceptable.

Madam President,

The primary duty to prevent and respond to international crimes lies with States. The complementary nature of the ICC is the very core of the Rome Statute system. Swedish courts have convicted perpetrators of serious international crimes committed in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Syria and Iraq. Additional investigations are ongoing. The key to successful prosecution of such crimes has been the establishment of specialized war crimes units. The secondment program is an important tool in strengthening the cooperation and complementarity between the ICC and national investigations.

The Court is faced with an ever-increasing workload – ongoing investigations cover almost all regions of the world. The expectations on the Court are high. To deliver on its mandate the Court needs resources that match its workload. All States Parties have a legal obligation to pay their contributions in full and on time.

Sweden considers the Trust Fund for Victims essential to making the Court's justice a reality for victims, their families and affected communities.

I am proud to say that Sweden has been the largest contributor to the Fund.

The Fund relies on voluntary contributions to fulfill its mandate. The heavier workload of the Court signifies more work for the Fund. We call on all States to consider contributing to the Fund to enable it to deliver reparation and assistance to victims of the most serious crimes.

States' full cooperation with the Court is essential for its ability to carry out its mandate. The outstanding arrest warrants for fugitives from international justice must be promptly executed.

Madam President,

We commend the progress made in the Review Process of the Rome Statute system. We encourage the ICC and States Parties to continue engaging in the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Experts. We place particular importance on promoting a healthy and inclusive working culture and we urge the leadership of the Court to do its utmost to combat existing problems.

Madam President,

A lot has been done – by civil society, the Presidency of the Court and States Parties – to honour the Court's achievements and advocate for global support and the universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

We welcome Armenia as the 124th State Party to the ICC and urge all states that have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute.

This year's 25th anniversary of the Rome Statute has provided an occasion for the international community to highlight the work and the role of the ICC.

The creation of the ICC was a historic achievement for the advancement of international criminal justice. The accomplishments are significant and include landmark judgments, not least on gender-based crimes.

Sweden is committed to continue working together with all partners to further the work of the ICC and strengthen the system of international criminal justice.

I thank you.