

**Coalition for the International Criminal Court**  
**Statement**

**23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC Rome Statute**  
**Plenary on Cooperation “How can States Parties strengthen their support for the Court”**  
**5 December 2024**

Excellencies,

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court.

The Court’s ability to fulfill its critical mandate depends on the multifaceted cooperation by its states parties.

This is particularly true when it comes to the execution of arrest warrants, which affects the access to justice before the ICC of victims like the ones my organisation (Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group) represents.

Public arrest warrants remain outstanding against 30 individuals, including two sitting heads of state, with others issued under seal. The Rome Statute and the court’s jurisprudence are clear; States parties have a legal obligation to arrest and surrender individuals wanted by the ICC, and head of state immunity is not opposable in proceedings before the court – regardless of the nationality of the individuals.

Public statements from states parties casting doubt on this in relation to certain arrest warrants, are not only in contrast with the Rome Statute and the court’s jurisprudence, but they threaten the equal execution of the Court’s global mandate, victims’ equal access to justice and the fundamental principle that no one is above the law.

**All states parties should instead clearly and publicly commit to abide by their legal obligations to execute ICC arrest warrants, regardless of whom they target.** This would send a strong message to those individuals who see themselves as untouchable, and to victims across the court’s docket that their right to justice and affirming their trust in the rule of law matters more than political calculations.

States Parties should also be prepared to respond strongly to instances of non-cooperation. Failure to do so severely affects cooperation with the court, particularly on arrests.

Finally, civil society organizations, particularly those representing victims, are concerned by continued meetings between senior state party and UN officials and Russian President Putin, an ICC fugitive, on the territories of non-states parties. The Assembly’s resolution on cooperation urges states parties to avoid non-essential contact with persons wanted by the court and we urge the same. Avoiding such contacts contributes to the political isolation of ICC suspects, it signals that “business as usual” is over for fugitives, and shows commitment and respect to victims.

In conclusion, your excellencies, civil society organizations, and the victims we represent look up to States Parties, to act consistently in respect of your Rome Statute obligations to ensure that justice is accessible for all.

Thank you.