

**Statement by the Republic of Costa Rica
at the
Twenty-fourth session
of the
Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute**

Thematic General debate:

Concrete Measures to Strengthen the International Criminal Court

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Courtesy translation

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

We are direct witnesses to a world that is transforming at great speed—a world that, to our regret, shows signs of moving in a direction very different from the one we envisioned when we signed the Rome Statute more than a quarter of a century ago.

Today, we watch with concern the sustained attacks against international criminal justice—attacks that are, quite simply, unacceptable.

In this context, we must be clear about this: it is the capacity of all of us, as States Parties to the Rome Statute, to respond and anticipate, that will largely determine whether everything built over these years endures or is lost amid these turbulent waters.

The current situation tests, in rarely seen ways, our commitment to international law and the rule of law.

These are the moments when we need the Court the most—and when the Court needs us the most. For while it is true that the Presidency, the Office of the Prosecutor, the Registry, and the staff of the Court have faced with remarkable courage, creativity, and vision the enormous challenges of these times—which include arrest warrants and

sanctions against some elected officials, as well as sophisticated cyberattacks—the States Parties must step forward with even greater determination. This is our shared mission: to continue ensuring that humanity has effective mechanisms to prevent and avoid impunity for the gravest crimes, and to provide reparations to victims, who must be at the center of our actions.

Even as we celebrate that the membership of the International Criminal Court has reached its highest number - 125 States Parties committed to international criminal justice - we cannot ignore the concern raised by announcements of withdrawal from the Rome Statute. This contrast reveals a complex reality: on one hand, the shared aspiration to strengthen the universality of the system; on the other, decisions that may weaken its ability to deliver justice to victims of the most serious crimes. For this reason, Costa Rica issues a very respectful, but also firm, call to reconsider such decisions.

Weakening the International Criminal Court is a luxury we cannot afford. Any action intended to undermine the fulfillment of its mandate—through attacks, threats, or sanctions against judges, prosecutors, staff, and the countries, individuals, and entities that cooperate with it—must be met with our unequivocal rejection. This further entails the necessity for all Court officials to consistently act with integrity and honesty.

This Assembly must deliver a clear political message in defense of the Court and of international criminal justice. And beyond the political message, we States Parties must take concrete measures in support of the Court through our daily work—for example, making our political support even more visible, facilitating channels of dialogue with the Registry, honoring our financial obligations in a timely manner, or providing support to the Office of the Prosecutor when assistance is requested.

Furthermore, the security of elected officials—especially those against whom arrest warrants have been issued—must be strengthened. It is therefore essential that all States Parties adopt the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court and take measures to protect sanctioned elected officials.

Additionally, we must recall that it is the responsibility of States Parties to execute existing arrest warrants. Failure to comply with judicial orders allows some to criticize the Court, but in reality, compliance constitutes an international obligation of States that made the sovereign decision to ratify the Rome Statute. Without their commitment and decisive action, the Court cannot be effective in fulfilling its mandate.

Madam President:

I conclude by emphasizing the exceptional work carried out by the Court this year, particularly in the preparation of the budget for 2026 and the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan. Both have been developed carefully and in a coordinated manner under the “One Court principle”. For Costa Rica, this sends a powerful message and reflects the quality of leadership within the Court.

The 2026 budget process has allowed for a smooth and calm negotiation before this Assembly. The proposal is coherent and has considered the concerns and financial realities expressed by States Parties, and—despite current circumstances—it will provide stable and predictable resources. This, together with the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, will allow the institution to hold the helm firmly as we face these turbulent waters together and with determination.

Thank you very much.