

Statement of Ms Kerli Veski
Vice Minister, Undersecretary for Legal and Consular Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Estonia
at the 24th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute
1-6 December 2025 in The Hague

Madame President,
Distinguished delegates,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) remains a cornerstone of the rules-based international order, playing a vital role in the global fight against impunity over the most serious international crimes that threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world. Estonia reaffirms its unwavering support to the ICC and the principles of the Rome Statute.

We commend the ICC for its continued work to uphold justice under current challenging circumstances — from increasing caseloads to unprecedented threats and sanctions targeting its judges and officials. Despite these difficulties, the ICC remains steadfast, impartial, and independent in carrying out its judicial mandate.

We express our concern at the imposition of sanctions and coercive measures against the ICC. The ICC must remain shielded from political pressure. We call upon all States — whether Parties or not — to respect and protect the Court's independence against any coercive actions and sanctions, and to ensure that the ICC can fulfil its mandate without fear or interference, this is our collective duty.

Estonia is concerned about continued cyber-attacks against the ICC. We commend the ICC for having conducted a comprehensive threat assessment of its information and communications technology security infrastructure, and for developing a new security blueprint for its cybersecurity architecture.

We warmly welcome recent adoption of the Policy Paper on Cyber-Enabled Crimes under the Rome Statute, the result of a good international cooperation, which Estonia has supported throughout the project. It provides clear guidance to the Office of the Prosecutor for investigating and prosecuting cyber-enabled

crimes under jurisdiction of the ICC; and enables support to national efforts to address misuse of cyberspace under applicable national law while ensuring adherence to international law.

Madam President,

The integrity of the Rome Statute system depends on cooperation with States Parties, in particular in implementing arrests and surrenders as non-compliance prevents the ICC from exercising its functions. More than thirty arrest warrants remain unimplemented. We regret, that this year again we have seen incidents of non-compliance. We call on all States to fulfil their obligations to execute arrest warrants, surrender suspects, and refrain from any contacts with persons subject to ICC arrest warrants.

We cannot ignore the grave situation unfolding in Ukraine. We invite the ICC to pay continued attention to the investigation of the situation in Ukraine. The arrest warrants, including in respect of Russian leadership, send a clear message that no one — regardless of rank or position — is above the law.

Estonia welcomes steps taken in the Council of Europe to establish the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression; now further steps should follow to make the special tribunal operational as soon as possible. The international community should continue our steadfast support to Ukraine in the fight against impunity.

The special tribunal complements the work of the ICC, which currently has limited jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. As during the Special Session this July, States Parties were unable to fully address this legal gap, it is important to continue efforts to build consensus towards harmonising the Court's jurisdiction.

Estonia commends the Trust Fund for Victims for its invaluable work in rehabilitation, recovery, and empowerment of victims and their communities. For many years, Estonia has been a regular donor of the Trust Fund and we repeat our call for all States and other stakeholders to support the Trust Fund as it embodies the humanitarian and moral heart of the Rome Statute system.

Estonia calls upon all States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

Estonia congratulate Ukraine for becoming the 125th State Party this year and we call upon all States, that have not yet done so, to ratify the Rome Statute and its amendments.

At the same time, we regret that some states have made public statements about their withdrawal from the Rome Statute. We encourage these states to review their position and remain States Parties to the Rome Statute.

The ICC embodies the collective conscience of humanity. It stands for the idea that even in the darkest moments, justice must prevail. It stands for the rights of victims, the dignity of human beings, and the belief that peace is built on accountability, not impunity.

Thank you.