

Madam President of the ASP

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, dear colleagues,

We meet at the 24th session of the Assembly of States Parties at a critical juncture for the International Criminal Court. As international crimes intensify, the Court faces unprecedented political, operational, and institutional threats that jeopardize its ability to deliver justice when it is most needed.

I begin by expressing profound respect for the judges, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the ICC staff who continue to uphold justice with courage despite immense challenges. My respect and recognition extend further to the Palestinian civil society organizations, who continue to report nothing but crimes that are enshrined in the Rome Statute. Their dedication assures victims that accountability and dignity can prevail even in the darkest circumstances.

The sanctions imposed on the ICC Prosecutor, Deputy Prosecutors, the judges, and human rights organizations represent an attack on justice. Broader measures have been proposed, raising concerns regarding the politicization of international justice. The Court's independence is not merely institutional; it is foundational to global accountability. Preserving it,,, requires cooperation, respect, and a shared commitment to all victims. The withdrawals by the three Sahel States and Hungary weaken the universality of the Rome Statute at a time when civilians in the Sahel face grave insecurity. Armed groups linked to Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State continue to commit atrocities against communities, schools, women, and humanitarian convoys. Findings of non-compliance by other states further erode collective strength.

In Darfur, ineffective enforcement of arrest warrants and prolonged delays have enabled genocide and starvation campaigns to continue. Two decades of waiting have aggravated victims' suffering, while the absence of charges for gender-based crimes and crimes against children has left justice incomplete.

Madam President,

The delay in prosecuting crimes committed since 2003 has worsened the ongoing conflict in Darfur, allowing perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity to spread their atrocities to other parts of Sudan. Victims have called for the court's jurisdiction to be extended to include all states within Sudan. The spillover into neighboring countries has caused mayhem and violence across the region. The postponement has resulted in more lives lost than the referral itself, deepening the suffering of victims who have waited 20 years for justice. Over the years, I have been a dedicated advocate for international justice, and it is disheartening to think I might have to tell the victims that my efforts have been in vain.

Survivors of rape, sexual slavery, and children subjected to hunger and forced recruitment have not seen their experiences fully reflected in the proceedings. Meanwhile, slavery and slave markets have flourished. Women have been sold, traded, and subjected to ransom demands, while sexual violence has been systematically deployed as a weapon of war. These crimes are central to victims' lived experiences and must be treated as such during prosecution.

Today, Sudan is engulfed in a proxy war fueled by several external actors supplying militias with weapons in breach of the UN arms embargo. This enabled a genocidal campaign against the Masalit community in Al-Geneina. The tragedy was compounded by the siege of Al-Fashir, which lasted 18 months, during which more than 460 civilians were reportedly executed in the hospital. These atrocities occurred because international justice was not supported, leaving victims exposed and perpetrators supported.

Yet, despite two decades of waiting, the victims of Darfur continue to support international justice because, in their understanding, it is the only path to lasting peace, as we continue to advocate for that cause despite the delays. The resilience of the victims must inspire the Assembly to act urgently and resolutely.

Despite these challenges, the ICC has advanced its mandate. The conviction of Ali Muhammad Ali Abd Al Rahman in Darfur marked the Court's first conviction of war crimes. In the Central African Republic, the convictions of Alfred Yekatom and Patrice Édouard recognized the responsibility of Anti-Balaka commanders, with nearly 2,000

victims participating. The confirmation of charges against Joseph Kony, even in absentia, was a long-awaited step for thousands of Ugandan victims.

The arrest of former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Germany's surrender of a Libyan suspect show that cooperation can deliver accountability even in the most difficult contexts.

As I conclude, I bring forward the voice of Fatima, a six-year-old girl, who pleaded to be reunited with her mother and family after the genocidal campaign in Al-Fashir on October 26. Her call is not only for her family but also for all survivors whose lives have been torn apart.

I ask all of you here to recognize her appeal and work tirelessly to bring everlasting justice to Darfur. Let Fatima's voice remind us that justice is not abstract — it is about protecting families, restoring dignity, and ensuring that no child grows up abandoned by the **promise** of accountability.

Excellencies, I urge this Assembly to:

- Stand for the ICC in the face of sanctions — defend its independence, neutrality, and impartiality.
- Deliver on commitments to victims' rights — reflect their experiences in proceedings and reparations.
- Strengthen cooperation — enforce arrest warrants and uphold the obligations of State parties enshrined in the Rome Statute.
- Advance accountability within the ICC — embody integrity, transparency, and solidarity from within.
- Ensure comprehensive justice in Darfur and beyond — prosecute gender crimes, crimes against children, slavery, and sexual slavery fully.

The ICC remains the last resort for many survivors of sexual violence. Silence and delay are **complicity**, and neutrality is **betrayal**. Let us leave The Hague, the city of peace, with a renewed commitment to defend the Court, protect victims' rights, and restore hope to those who have endured the gravest crimes and have waited far too long for justice.

Thank you!