

**Written Statement by H.E. Elina Valtonen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Finland**

**Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court**

The Assembly of States Parties

July 2023

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Finland has been a staunch supporter of the ICC from the very beginning. Finland took active part in the negotiations of the Statute, which culminated in Rome in 1998. Today, 25 years later, we reaffirm our unwavering support for the Court.

We created the ICC to serve many purposes, from combatting impunity to contributing to sustainable peace. For two decades, the ICC has been a beacon of accountability, leading our efforts to curb impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. The ICC remains as important as ever, given the atrocities that unfold in many parts of the world today. These include the crimes committed in Ukraine during the unprovoked war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation.

This anniversary is an opportunity for us to reflect the progress made since the adoption of the Rome Statute in translating the aspiration and principles of the treaty language into a functioning Court delivering justice for victims.

The Rome Statute is a living instrument, which can be revisited after careful consideration. In this regard, we note the valuable work undertaken during the review process of the Rome Statute system, and the upcoming mandated review of the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression. At the same time, we should avoid the fragmentation of law at the ICC.

The ICC is a Court with a global mandate, but also a Court of last resort. The ICC does not replace national judicial systems, but strengthens and complements them.

The universality of the Rome Statute remains a central priority, as it fosters the worldwide ecosystem of accountability. Finland encourages all States who have not yet done so, to consider joining States Parties to the ICC.

To deliver on its promise and mandate the Court needs resources that match its workload and the expectations of States Parties and affected communities. Sustainable resources are necessary for the Court to be able to advance its work effectively and efficiently, without a need to prioritize investigations or proceedings. It is therefore crucial that the States Parties provide adequate financial resources for the Court, and pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

On the 25th anniversary of the Rome Statute, we are reminded that at the heart of the Rome Statute system was always the promise to focus on the victims. To ensure that their voices are heard through meaningful participation, and that they receive the assistance and reparation for the unfathomable suffering they have endured. Finland is a long-standing contributor to the Trust Fund for Victims, and I call on others to join us.

The ICC still faces opposition and attempts to undermine its work and legitimacy. I reinstate Finland's unwavering commitment to the independence and impartiality of the ICC. The Court deserves our political, practical and financial support, as well as cooperation essential for its functioning. This includes cooperation when it comes to ensuring respect for arrest warrants issued by the Court. Finland has concluded a number of cooperation agreements with the ICC, and encourages other States Parties to do likewise.

Any political attacks against the Court or its officials are unacceptable. The States Parties must reinstate their unified and vocal support to the Court.

As we support and protect the ICC itself, we must also do the same for those who collaborate with the Court. Human rights defenders and civil society actors around the world are often on the frontline gathering evidence on violations of international law, and too often harassed and intimidated to prevent them from providing their findings to the attention of the ICC.

On this anniversary, let me take the opportunity to reaffirm Finland's full support to the Court in its work to end impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.