

Statement by Georgia
Presented by H.E. Mr. Alexander Lomaia
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Georgia to the UN
At the International Criminal Court review Conference

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Mr. President,
Honorable delegates to the Review Conference,

I am honored and pleased to be here to convey to all of you the support from Georgia to this Conference. But first, I would like to convey our most sincere gratitude to the President of the Assembly of States Parties, to the Secretariat, to the facilitators of the Conference, and especially to the Government of Uganda for providing us with kind hospitality.

I am proud to stress that twelve years ago, Georgia was among the first group of countries, which signed the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court. In this context it is of particular pleasure to welcome Bangladesh as the latest State Party.

Back then all states had to work hard in order to establish a unique institution, a permanent international court, the ICC. Now the time has come for our next joint endeavor to take the ICC to a higher level of development, to make it a stronger institution for a safer world. This will take to make bold but at the same time balanced amendments to the Rome Statute.

Of the changes proposed a particular importance has understandably been attached to the Crime of Aggression.

Yesterday and today it was emphasized here that the crime of aggression is a key international crime over which the ICC should have its jurisdiction. In order for the ICC to adequately address this need, the Crime of Aggression has to be determined as precisely as possible.

The analysis of the tragic events my countrymen suffered from less than two years ago, can lead to a better understanding of the ways the Crime of Aggression can be defined in the contemporary international context thus paving a way to the appropriate conditions, under which the Court can exercise its jurisdiction

In 2008 40 000 foreign troops, supported by hundreds of tanks and heavily armored vehicles, up to 20 military vessels, and scores of fighter jets and bombardiers invaded to

Georgia from two different directions and engaged in full scale military operation on the ground, in the air, and on the sea. The foreign invasion resulted in the killings of over 400 people, while up to 2000 were wounded. These facts have been documented extensively, *inter alia* by the EU sponsored independent fact-finding mission. As we sit here, over 10 000 foreign troops continue to occupy two regions of my country, one of which has been completely ethnically cleansed, while in another a part of the population is denied its fundamental rights, such as the right of free movement, and the right to receive education in the mother tongue, to name a few.

We believe that we should spare no efforts to take effective steps towards establishing a comprehensive and operational system that would either prevent this type of events from happening or would enable the international community to react in prompt and adequate manner.

We believe that the amendments prepared by the Special Working Group in their entirety can serve as a good starting point to this end. The proposed amendments related to the Crime of Aggression, as it was emphasized in the EU Declaration are “both remarkable in size and outstanding in technical quality”.

Now it is up to us to turn the work of the Working Group into a tangible gain to the Rome Statute. It will take political courage and a sense of balance to arrive to a decision that on one hand would enable the ICC with more power and authorities in pursuing justice, and at the same time would even stronger integrate it into the existing system of international law.

While fully associating itself with the Declaration made by the Spanish Presidency of the EU yesterday, Georgia would like to announce that two sets of activities are under planning by the Ministry of Justice of Georgia that are aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge about the ICC activities:

1. Summer School will be established for law and international law students regarding the Rome Statute, International Criminal Court and other treaties related to international humanitarian law.
2. Professional training programs will be delivered for prosecutors on the issues related to the ICC activities.

In closing, allow me to express our confidence that this Review Conference will produce tangible results fitting to address the concerns of the victims of the crimes of aggression, specifically, and international criminal justice in general.

Thank you.