



## INFORMATIONAL RELEASE

### **Côte d'Ivoire ratifies the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court:**

*Parliamentarians around the world welcome the 122nd State Party to the ICC*

**15 February 2012, New York/The Hague:** By depositing its Instrument of Ratification at the United Nations earlier today, **Côte d'Ivoire** became the 122<sup>nd</sup> State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. In so doing, Côte d'Ivoire has become the 34<sup>th</sup> African State to join the ICC system. This historic step follows the almost unanimous decisions taken by the Parliament of **Côte d'Ivoire** to include an ICC clause in the Constitution and to approve ratification of the Rome Statute on 12 and 20 December 2012 respectively.

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is particularly pleased with this ratification by Côte d'Ivoire, the culmination of a long journey which PGA Members, among others, began promoting just over ten years ago, before and immediately after the outbreak of an internal armed conflict for which they requested that the ratification would be accompanied by a declaration of acceptance of retrospective jurisdiction on all crimes committed since the start of the civil war, on 19 September 2002.

While the previous Administration of Côte d'Ivoire lodged a Declaration to accept the *ad hoc* jurisdiction of the Court in respect of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire in April 2003 –which the ICC made public only in February 2005<sup>[1]</sup>–, the Government did not submit to Parliament the legislative package to authorise ratification.

During the Linas-Marcoussis (France) and Accra (Ghana) peace negotiations, which followed various phases of the civil war and led to a grand-coalition government, PGA Members consistently opposed the inclusion of provisions concerning blanket amnesties and supported a clause safeguarding the exercise of jurisdiction over international crimes and other gross violations of human rights.

While a Commission of Enquiry established that commission of human rights abuses and serious violations of international humanitarian law had occurred, the ICC did not take action regarding the alleged crimes committed in Cote d'Ivoire between 2002 and 2005<sup>[2]</sup>.

After the Presidential elections of 2010, the prevailing climate of impunity that characterised the recent history of Côte d'Ivoire might have been taken into account by President Gbagbo when he took decisions regarding which the ICC will soon commence proceedings, on Tuesday 19 February 2013, concerning the confirmation of charges for crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the post electoral violence. For the first time, a former Head of State or Government is being brought to justice before the ICC, following the path of special jurisdictions for Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

With today's ratification, Côte d'Ivoire is a full member of the Rome Statute system, and ceases to be a State Non Party that benefits from the Court's intervention to end impunity without contributing to its functioning and financing.

PGA Members in Côte d'Ivoire, led by Dep. Mariame Traoré, will now redouble their efforts to make sure that this step taken by Côte d'Ivoire will pave the way for the full implementation of the Rome Statute in its national legal system and for an effective application of the principle of complementarity, which re-affirms the obligation of States to exercise their jurisdiction over all the most serious crimes of international concern.

### **About PGA**

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is the largest transnational network of Members of Parliaments from all regions of the world who, in their individual capacity, support the effective operation of the ICC and domestic jurisdictions to end impunity.

Members of PGA have contributed to 76 of the 122 ratifications of, or accessions to the Rome Statute up to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC.

The *PGA Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute system* receives, or has received, support from the European Union, the Governments of The Netherlands, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and Humanity United.

**Contact:** International Law and Human Rights Programme, Parliamentarians for Global Action

#### **In Kampala**

Dr. David Donat Cattin

+256-777-165-698

[donat@pgaction.org](mailto:donat@pgaction.org)

#### **In The Hague**

Ms. Maia Trujillo

+31-70-360-4433

[maia.trujillo@pgaction.org](mailto:maia.trujillo@pgaction.org)

#### **In New York**

Mr. Peter Barcroft

+1-212-687-7755 (ext. 0)

[Peter.Barcroft@pgaction.org](mailto:Peter.Barcroft@pgaction.org)

Press Release soon available at: <http://www.pgaction.org/news/latest/cotedivoire-deposits-ratification-to-rome-statute.html>