

*16 July, 2012, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Every year on 17 July the world celebrates International Justice Day (IJD) to commemorate the adoption of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC). IJD is a reminder of the urgency for all States committed to ensure continued support for the Rome Statute's international justice system. On this occasion, FOHRID urges Nepal to reaffirm its commitment to end impunity and take necessary steps to ratify / accede to the Rome Statute of ICC.

In July 2006, the House of Representatives (HoR) of Nepal issued a directive for accession to the Court's founding treaty, the Rome Statute. Since then, there was little progress toward Nepali accession to the Statute until 11 February 2009 when the then Minister of Foreign Affairs tabled to the Cabinet an agenda item for ratification of the Rome Statute. Cabinet, however, decided that they would discuss it at a later stage. In April 2010 the Office of the Prime Minister held a discussion on accession to the Rome Statute. However, Nepal has not acceded to the ICC till now. On this occasion, we recall the eagerness and positive commitments demonstrated by the government, political parties and the then HoR towards the ICC.

IJD is an opportunity for the world community to celebrate the historic advances in ending impunity for the worst crimes in international law as 14 years ago on this date, the Rome Statute was adopted by an overwhelming vote of 120 states. Today, 121 states have joined the Court and the number keeps growing. FOHRID is celebrating this day in solidarity with victims of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes.

This year, on occasion of the IJD, FOHRID is release the Bill Relating to the Prohibition of Impunity, 2012 as a model for domestication of the Rome Statute once Nepal becomes party to it. The directives of the then HoR in 2006 had created a favourable environment for ratification of the Rome Statute. This made the general Nepali people hopeful that Nepal's commitment towards international criminal justice system would be fulfilled. Due to this encouraging environment, FOHRID forwarded initiative to conduct research and drafting this model bill for domestication of the Rome Statute. It is unfortunate that Nepal has not ratified the Rome Statute till now. Therefore, FOHRID calls on the government of Nepal to recall the directive resolution passed by the then HoR and ratify to the Rome Statute.

We would like to recall commitments by the eight political parties, and the Government for providing guarantee to good governance, ending impunity, establishing democratic norms and values, and governance based on principles of the rule of law expressed through formal documents like the Comprehensive Peace Accord-2006, Interim Constitution-2007 and the Common Minimum Programme of the Interim Government-2007. For effective implementation of such commitments, Nepal's involvement in the ICC is a must and for which the HoR restored with the mandate of Popular Uprising had unanimously endorsed the resolution. Immediate implementation of that resolution is the way to establish political stance to those commitments.

Therefore, we urge the Prime Minister and Ministers to coordinate among ministries, to hold discussion in the meeting of the Council of Ministers and to forward the process for accession to

the Rome Statute. Considering that the parliamentary direction to this effect still remains unrealized, we request all the stakeholders to stir and exert more intensive pressure on the executive to accede to the Rome Statute of the ICC. We call on the political parties to prioritize the issue at political level to speed up the accession process.

Further information, please contact:

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