

## **Ending Impunity for Atrocity Crimes Requires Action: Words are not enough**

### **All States Parties to the Rome Statute must cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court**

#### **Oral Statement by Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) to the 24th Assembly of States Parties of the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 1-6 December 2025**

#### **Seventh Plenary Meeting on Cooperation 4 December 2025**

#### **Check Against Delivery**

Madam President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to address you on behalf of Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Ending impunity for atrocity crimes requires action. Words are not enough.

The *Rome Statute* requires all States Parties to fully cooperate with the ICC in the fulfilment of its provisions. Cooperation entails effective political, diplomatic, and legal measures to safeguard the Court from coercion.

This year has seen unprecedented attacks against the Court, including unlawful sanctions by the United States against ICC judges and officials, a UN Special Procedures mandate holder, and three Palestinian human rights NGOs.

Victims of atrocity crimes rely on civil society, including lawyers and human rights defenders, to transform their stories into evidence for transmission to the Court. Silencing civil society organizations that cooperate with the Court effectively silences the voices of victims calling out for justice and remedies. Cooperation with the court requires States to create secure and enabling environments for civil society.

The US sanctions violate Article 70 of the Rome Statute. Sanctions against UN Human Rights Council's mandate holders violate the *Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations*. The sanctions violate the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* by denying rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, and due process. The threats and attacks also violate international human rights standards, including the UN *Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary*, the UN *Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors*, the UN *Basic Principles on*

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<sup>1</sup> The full written statement on which this oral statement is based is available on the LRWC website at <https://www.lrwc.org/ending-impunity-for-atrocity-crimes-requires-action-words-are-not-enough-written-statement-by-lrwc-to-the-24th-assembly-of-states-parties-of-the-rome-statute-of-the-icc/>. It is also planned to be available on the website of the Coalition of the International Criminal Court (CICC).

*the Role of Lawyers*, and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and human rights defenders must be able to perform their legitimate functions without interference, intimidation, hindrance, or harassment.<sup>2</sup>

The current pattern of threats and attacks against the ICC comprises an unparalleled threat to the rule of law. To end impunity for the atrocity crimes set out in the Rome Statute, States Parties must go beyond supportive words and take firm action.

We call on all States Parties to cooperate collectively to:

- Denounce and urge rescission the US unlawful sanctions, and any other threats or attacks against the ICC, its personnel, or those cooperating with the Court;
- Adopt laws to block the effects of unlawful sanctions;
- Ratify the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the ICC; and
- Adopt laws to protect human rights defenders.

Thank you, Madam President.

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<sup>2</sup> This paragraph was not read aloud due to time constraints.