

Statements from civil society welcoming Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda



(picture: Keystone, <http://www.suedostschweiz.ch/politik/fatou-bensouda-neue-chefanklagerin>)

Brigid Inder, executive director of the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice said that “Ms Bensouda is taking office at an important time for the ICC and for the development of an international system of justice. We are sure that the Office of the Prosecutor under her leadership will demonstrate to those who think impunity is assured, that justice is inevitable. We are conscious that Ms Bensouda is the first woman to be sworn in as Chief Prosecutor of the ICC and the first African woman to ever be appointed as a Chief Prosecutor to an international tribunal. Our more than 6,000 members – local women’s rights and peace advocates from armed conflict situations – congratulate Prosecutor Bensouda on her appointment and we look forward to working with her and her team to further promote accountability for gender-based crimes.”

“Having spent more than ten years working as a prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the ICC, Fatou Bensouda is extremely qualified to lead the Office of the Prosecutor,” said **William R. Pace, convenor of the Coalition for the ICC**. “With Ms. Bensouda the Court has for the next term an experienced, intelligent and capable prosecutor that will reinforce the ICC’s growing position as a major force in global peace and security affairs,” Pace continued. “This is an important day for global justice. From Goma to Darfur and beyond, the need to end impunity for the world’s gravest crimes is increasing, and as prosecutor Ms. Bensouda will have tremendous responsibility for bringing justice to all parts of the world,” Pace added. He further mentioned that “the Coalition is particularly encouraged

by the new prosecutor's intentions to work for victims, to prioritize the prosecution of grave crimes against women and children, and to build on the unique relationship between the ICC and civil society."

"ICJ-Kenya congratulates Ms. Fatou Bensouda on her swearing-in as the second ICC prosecutor," **said George Kegoro, executive director of International Commission of Jurists-Kenya.** "The ICC has come a long way and the election of its second prosecutor reflects the growing maturity of the Court and the accompanying confidence that member states have in the Rome Statute system," Kegoro said. "ICJ-Kenya urges ICC member states to redouble their efforts regarding cooperation with the Court, and notes with appreciation the recent position taken by Malawi that it would arrest ICC suspect and Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir if he ever was to go to the country."

"Finally, the indomitable Fatou Bensouda is set to take over the reins of prosecutorial powers in the ICC. We look forward to a court that will balance its operations in a way that all state parties will be reassured of a sense of belonging; a court that will make sexual violence a priority," **said Oby Nwankwo, executive director of the Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC) in Nigeria.** "Quoting Henry Ford 'Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal', we wish her a successful, result oriented tenure as Chief Prosecutor of the ICC and urge her to keep her eyes on the goal."

"NPWJ and NRPTT congratulate Ms Fatou Bensouda of the Gambia for her solemn undertaking as the new Chief Prosecutor. We have had the honour to work with Ms Bensouda throughout these years in her position as ICC Deputy Prosecutor and have always appreciated her outstanding qualifications and skills, and great prosecutorial experience. As the new Prosecutor of this second generation court, she will also have new challenges in continuing to strengthen the ICC and its role in fighting impunity, promoting peace and –critically– securing redress for victims...." **Statement by Alison Smith, Legal Counsel of No Peace Without Justice (Read the No Peace Without Justice [press release](#))**

"In Syria and other strife-torn countries over the past 10 years, the ICC has come to symbolize the last, best hope for justice," **said Richard Dicker, international justice director at Human Rights Watch.** "We look to Bensouda's leadership to advance cases, build bridges with victims, and push countries to support its impartial application of the law to get the job done." **(Read the Human Rights Watch [press release](#))**

"Prosecutor Ocampo has achieved a great deal in establishing the Office of the Prosecutor over the last nine years and hands over a large workload of seven investigations and a number on-going cases," **said Marek Marczyński, Amnesty International's Head of International Justice.** Ahead of taking office, Fatou Bensouda set out a number of priorities that she will pursue during her term, including reviewing the quality and efficiency of investigations and prosecutions, developing a strong gender policy and clarifying the process through which the office selects where it will conduct investigations. "These are very welcome commitments," Marczyński said. **(Read the Amnesty International [press release](#))**

Source: [Statements published by the Coalition of NGOs for the International Criminal Court](#), 15 June, 2012.