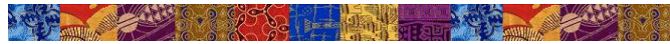


Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice



Press Statement Launch of Advancing Gender Justice- A Call to Action 31 May, 2010

Brigid Inder
Executive Director
Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice

Welcome to members of the media and other participants to this press conference to launch *Advancing Gender Justice - A Call to Action* at the start of this very important 10 year review of the Rome Statute and the work of the ICC as a mechanism for gender justice, a deterrent for crimes and a beacon of hope for women victims/survivors around the world.

I would like to introduce the other presenters this afternoon, Gladys Oyot from the Greater North Women's Voices for Peace Network from Kitgum in Northern Uganda, Jeanine Bandu, Director of the Collective of Indigenous and Vulnerable Households from Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Albertine Tonnet, Coordinator of the women's section of the United Trade Union from Bangui in the Central African Republic and Susannah Sirkin, Deputy Director of Physicians for Human Rights based in the USA.

My name is Brigid Inder, I am the Executive Director of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice. We are an international women's human rights organization advocating for the prosecution of gender-based crimes in each situation under investigation by the ICC.

We work closely with women most affected by the conflicts before the Court. As such we have extensive country-based programmes in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR) and we are attending the conference with a delegation of 30 women's rights and peace activists from three of these countries. We want to let our sisters in Sudan know that we stand with them and oppose the threats against women's and human rights activists by the Sudanese Government which has prevented them from being able to attend this Review Conference.

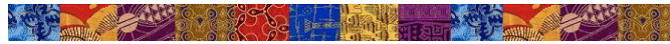
We also want to say at the start of this press conference that until this point women's voices have been excluded from the NGO process and in particular from the communique from civil society to the States Parties. We are working with the organisers to address this form of gender discrimination and to rectify this offence to women's rights activists not only attending this meeting but around the world.

Silencing of women's voices in Kampala is complicit with the silencing of women's voices everywhere.

Press Statement and Launch of Advancing Gender Justice – A Call to Action

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, 31 May 2010

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice



The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice has a long history with the ICC, with the involvement of our predecessor, the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, in the negotiations of the Rome Statute and the integration of gender issues within this seminal global treaty.

Since 2004 the Women's Initiatives has been working closely with the ICC in monitoring its institutional and substantive progress from a gender perspective. Our initiatives have included gender training for the ICC, advocacy for the prosecution of gender-based crimes in each of the situations under investigation, submission of legal filings, documentation of gender-based crimes, monitoring developments at the ICC¹ and advocacy for reparative mechanisms and assistance to women by the Trust Fund for Victims.

In 2006 we were the first NGO to file before the Court and we are to date the only international women's human rights organisation to have been recognised with *amicus curiae* status by the ICC.

So, this is a Court we know well, an institution we care about deeply with a mandate whose integrity and possibilities we value.

Over the last six years the Women's Initiatives has held many workshops and with women's rights activists, victims/survivors and peace advocates in four situations under ICC investigation. From Bangui to Goma, from Pader to Nyala, women most affected by these conflicts speak about the need for justice as a means to improve their lives, restore their communities and transform their countries.

In each of these situations, the work of the ICC is considered vital, because for many women it is their greatest hope, for some their only chance perhaps for justice, for someone to be held accountable for what happened to them, with the hope that this should not happen to others.

We are launching today our paper for the 10 year Review Conference, *Advancing Gender Justice - Call to Action*, which outlines some of the most pressing issues facing women, with forward-looking strategies and specific recommendations to the ICC, to states and to the UN for advancing gender justice.

The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice began our specific preparations for the ICC Review Conference in 2008 and has held two consultative events:

- The International Justice for Women Forum, 6-8 October 2008, Kampala, Uganda brought together 155 women's rights and peace activists, predominantly from the conflict situations under investigation by the ICC. This meeting provided the opportunity for women directly affected by the conflict situations before the ICC to reflect on the work of the Court in

¹ Since 2005 we have produced annual Gender Report Cards on the ICC.

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice



providing accountability, contributing to local expectations of justice and an end to conflict and impunity.

- The International Gender Justice Dialogue,² 19-21 April 2010, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico assembled more than 50 advocates and leaders from countries affected by current or recent armed conflicts³ as well as leaders from the fields of international criminal law, Nobel Peace Laureates, representatives of the ICC, peace mediators, women's rights advocates, United Nations personnel, academics, communications specialists and donors to discuss the future of gender justice and the need for a global agenda to advance this work.

These two events along with our extensive country-based programmes and ICC-related advocacy work over many years provides the basis for this global call to action for the ICC, States Parties and the United Nations to advance gender justice and ensure accountability for gender based crimes.

Women want Prosecutions, Implementation, Prevention and a Voice in shaping all of it.

What do we mean by that?

Women want domestic and international prosecutions for gender based crimes, implementation of the Rome Statute by their own governments as well as the ICC, prevention of conflict and violence against women; and a voice at the table for Peace Talks, as well as acceptance as key stakeholders, key partners and full citizens in the implementation of peace agreements.

Women have had enough of peace-related impunity. We want justice with peace, with reconciliation, with reparations, we want accountability as a mechanism for transforming our legal and human rights in our homes, communities and countries.

² The International Gender Justice Dialogue was organised by the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice in collaboration with the Nobel Women's Initiative.

³ Iraq, Afghanistan and Israel, with electronic contributions to the Dialogue from participants in Ireland, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Uganda. In addition activists from countries with a history of coups and military dictatorships also participated in the Dialogue from Guatemala, Chile, Honduras and Burma.