

22 May 2014

Dear Excellency,

I write to you today on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of over 2500 civil society organizations in 150 countries, regarding the failure of the Security Council to pass draft resolution S/2014/348 for peace enforcement and accountability for grave crimes committed in Syria.

With the veto of this resolution by Russia and China, the Council has yet to adopt any accountability measures to bring justice to the horrendous ICC crimes under international law being committed in and against the people of Syria. While the CICC as a whole does not take positions on the referral of specific situations to the Court, we have as a Coalition taken a strong stance against the inappropriate use of veto in the Council to block action on addressing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. In 2012, the CICC endorsed General Assembly draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 on enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the Security Council. Although this resolution was withdrawn, we would take this opportunity to reiterate the call for much-needed reform in the way the veto power is used in the Council.

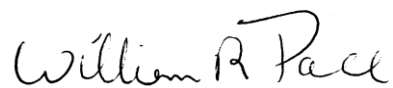
For the past three years, the world has watched as the situation in Syria and neighboring countries has descended into chaos and humanitarian catastrophe. The international community is faced with a massive humanitarian disaster, with over 150,000 casualties and millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. There is well-documented evidence that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed, and continue to be committed with impunity. Yet time and again, the Security Council has failed to act to address this dire situation, with four separate resolutions blocked by one or more Council member's veto.

In this regard, the CICC endorses in principle the French government's proposal for a code of conduct to be adopted, by which the permanent members of the Council would refrain from the use of veto to prevent or block action by the Council aimed at preventing or ending genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Coalition's global membership joins with NGOs all over the world to specifically call upon the permanent members of the Council to adopt such a code.

We also take this opportunity to call upon all member states of the General Assembly to address this issue of the inappropriate use of the veto, which has prevented the Council from carrying out its Charter responsibilities to maintain international peace and security.

Excellency, under separate cover, the Coalition will express its concerns about specific provisions which were included in draft resolution S/2014/348, and we hope that you will take those under consideration when addressing international accountability and justice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William R. Pace". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William R. Pace

Convenor

Coalition for the International Criminal Court