



Parliamentarians for Global Action  
Acción Mundial de Parlamentarios  
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires

## PRESS RELEASE

### **The Legislative Assembly of El Salvador and PGA organize Experts Sessions on the Rome Statute to clarify issues regarding the Rome Statute ratification and national implementation**

*The Hague/New York/San Salvador, 24 June 2014*

The Legislative Assembly of El Salvador, thanks to the leadership role of PGA Member **Dip. Sigfrido Reyes**, Speaker of El Salvador's Parliament, with the assistance of the PGA and the essential cooperation of the ICC, organized on 23 June the first hearing of experts on the Rome Statute in the Foreign Affairs Committee. This session, together with a second one to be held on Monday 30 June 2014, is organized with the aim of analyzing essential topics relating to the Rome Statute such as the jurisdiction of the ICC, the crimes and the general principles of law contained in the Rome Statute, as well as the necessary implementing legislation to give full effect to the complementarity principle and the cooperation mechanism to fulfill the obligations under part IX of the Statute.

ICC Judge Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi and former President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, provided the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador with their unique legal and diplomatic expertise on the Rome Statute system. Bringing strong support of the global PGA membership to these legislative deliberations, Senator Julio Cesar Valentin of the Dominican Republic was also among the participating experts presenting particularly the benefits of ratifying the Rome Statute as well as his experience regarding the ratification process in Dominican Republic as a colleague parliamentarian from a neighboring country.

One month ago, the Parliament of El Salvador received the ICC Ratification and Implementation Bills from the former president the Republic, H.E. Mauricio Funes. On 22 May 2014 both bills were formally introduced and presented to the Plenary of the Legislative Assembly and subsequently transmitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee to be considered. This Committee is integrated by Parliamentarians from almost all the political parties of El Salvador, namely, FMLN (government party); ARENA, GANA and the PCN. Some of these parliamentarians are members of PGA and a majority of them participated in PGA's previous actions carried out since 2007 to sensitize parliamentarians on the importance of Rome Statute ratification.

After the Experts Sessions, which aim to clarify issues surrounding the Rome Statute and generate the necessary political will to ratify it, the Foreign Affairs Committee will continue the deliberations on the Bill, which, if approved by the Committee, will be analyzed in Plenary, where it will need 43 votes out of 84 to be adopted.

These recent developments are, in no small measure, the result of PGA's strategic work, who after monitoring no action from the Government of El Salvador and on the basis of relevant information received at the end of 2013 and in April 2014 concerning the unwillingness of the Office of the President of El Salvador to transmit the ICC Ratification Bill to Parliament, on 2 May sent an open letter (<http://www.pgaction.org/pdf/2014-05-02-Letter-form-Latinamerican-MPs-to-President-Funes-El-Salvador-ENG.pdf>) to President Funes. The Open Letter was signed by some of the most prominent Latin American PGA Members as a way to encourage the President to transmit the Ratification Bill of the Rome Statute to the Legislative Assembly during his last month in office, namely May 2014.

The letter made the specific point that El Salvador is one of the few Latin American countries that has yet to become a party to the International Criminal Court. The ratification of the Rome Statute in El Salvador is not only politically possible, it is also strongly supported by vast sectors of society as a moral mean of reparation for victims and a legal guarantee of non-repetition of the crimes that they have suffered during the civil war. Moreover, through the letter PGA stressed that the acceptance by El Salvador of the new system of international justice established by the Rome Statute of the ICC could be seen as an important political and symbolic move, even if such a ratification is completely independent from the issue of accountability for past crimes given the non-retroactive nature of the ICC, which was one of the main issues that Parliamentarians had raised when discussing the ICC in different PGA actions in The Hague and in El Salvador in 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2012.

PGA continues to work with the different political parties in El Salvador (FMLN, GANA, ARENA; Unidos por El Salvador and PCN) generating the political will to support the approval of the Ratification Bill as well as providing technical assistance to MPs that requested comments on both initiatives presented by President Funes just one week before the end of his term. PGA leading members from FMLN and GANA have already publicly expressed their parties support for the ratification of the Rome Statute (you can hear the audio-interviews of Dip. Tenorio, (GANA) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYKleSya4Hc> and of Dip. Reyes, (FMLN) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SP1EJWbnIF8> carried out by PGA Programme Officer Romina Morello).

The global network of PGA, consisting of 1100 individual Legislators from 140 democratic Parliaments in all regions of the world, warmly welcomes all the recent developments that took place in El Salvador, which may pave the way for El Salvador to become the 123 State Party to the Rome Statute.

## **About PGA**

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is the largest transnational network of Members of Parliaments from all regions of the world who, in their individual capacity, support the effective operation of the ICC and domestic jurisdictions to end impunity. The PGA network is supported by a small secretariat that facilitates the cooperation and exchange by member MPs to achieve these goals and provides technical assistance regarding legal advice and project management.

Members of PGA have contributed to 76 of the 122 ratifications of, or accession to the Rome Statute to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. The *PGA Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute system* receives support from the European Commission, European Union and the Governments of The Netherlands, Switzerland and Estonia, as well as from Humanity United. In addition PGA benefits from the core support from SIDA, DANIDA and Liechtenstein.

## **Contact:**

### **International Law and Human Rights Programme Parliamentarians for Global Action**

#### **In The Hague**

Romina S. Morello  
Programme Officer  
[+31.6233.18581](tel:+31623318581)

#### **In New York**

Dr. David Donat Cattin  
Secretary General  
+212-687-7755