



**Parliamentarians for Global Action**  
**Parlamentarios para la Acción Global**  
**Action Mondiale des Parlementaires**  
**برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي**

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## **El Salvador ratifies the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: Parliamentarians for Global Action welcomes the 124<sup>th</sup> State Party to the ICC**

*New York, July 3, 2016:* By depositing the instruments of ratification earlier today, El Salvador became the 124<sup>th</sup> State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the 28<sup>th</sup> State party to the Kampala Amendments as well as the 29<sup>th</sup> State Party in the Americas. This decision follows the majority vote held in Parliament on 26 November 2015, where Salvadoran Members of Parliamentarians for Global Action played a pivotal role in creating sustained cross-party support for accession, which represents a step forward towards the universality of the ICC.

The accession to the Rome Statute by El Salvador is a clear demonstration of its commitment to strengthen the Rule of Law domestically and internationally, and to guarantee the non-repetition of serious crimes that, in the past, have devastated the peace, security and well-being of its people.

PGA is confident that the historic decision of El Salvador to adhere to the most important mechanism for combatting impunity for international crimes will bolster ratification processes elsewhere in the world, especially in countries that have struggled or are struggling with violence and seek to strengthen the Rule of Law and the rights of victims to truth, justice and reparation.

### **Dip. Minou Tavárez Mirabal (Dominican Republic), PGA President**

*The ratification of the Rome Statute by El Salvador is an important milestone toward the universal jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. With this ratification El Salvador, thanks to the leadership-contribution of PGA members and former members that have tireless worked for this outcome since 2002, is sending a strong message to the international community that it will not tolerate nor leave unpunished the most serious crimes of international concern. In my capacity as President of PGA and member of the Dominican Chamber of Deputies, it is with great pride that I witness the decision of yet another Latin American country to accede to the Rome Statute and support the fight to end impunity.*

### **Ronny Monge (Costa Rica), PGA Board Member**

*I am very pleased with the recent ratification of El Salvador of the Rome Statute, as is a further step to achieving a region free from impunity in Centro America where no person sought by the ICC will have a safe haven. We hope that this important development will encourage other countries in the region such as Nicaragua, Jamaica and Haiti to be part of the Rome Statute family as well. As a citizen of a country without army, the adherence of neighboring countries to a treaty that creates a permanent court to fight impunity is a reason for celebration.*

**Barbara Lochbihler (European Parliament), Co-Convenor PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme, PGA Board member.**

*At a time where serious human rights violations are taking place in different parts of the world, many of which unfortunately have been kept outside the reach of the ICC's jurisdiction (e.g. Syria and Iraq), the recent ratification of the Rome Statute by El Salvador is a beacon of hope for the victims of those crimes and those that unceasingly advocate for justice. In line with the European Parliament's strong position against impunity, I congratulate El Salvador and its Legislature on its recent ratification of the Rome Statute and the Kampala Amendments and encourage it to positively support the one-time decision by the Assembly of States Parties to activate the jurisdiction of the Court on the crime of aggression during 2017.*

**Sen. Alain Destexhe (Belgium), Co-Convenor, PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme; PGA Board Member**

*When I conducted a PGA Mission to San Salvador several years ago to promote understanding, awareness and support for the ICC, I realized that the process of ratification would have been long and difficult, due to the wounds that remained opened from the 1980-1992 bloody civil war, regarding which accountability processes did not take place. I am therefore extremely delighted by today's development, which brings to 77 the number of countries in which the PGA ICC Campaign made a difference towards joining the first permanent system of International Criminal Justice. This development could have not taken place without the leadership displayed by PGA Member Karina Sosa (FMLN), Mario Alberto Tenorio (GANA) and Reynaldo Cardoza (PCN), and by the former Chair of the PGA El Salvador National Group and former Speaker Sigfrido Reyes.*

**Dip. Jorge Calix (Honduras), PGA member**

*I strongly believe that the adherence to the Rome Statute system is an important deterrent for the commission of the most serious crimes. The addition of El Salvador to the considerably large number of State Parties to the ICC in the Americas shows that the region whose history, and in some cases present, is replete with instances of violent conflict has no intention of reverting back to its past of impunity. I congratulate my Salvadorian colleagues for their commitment with the human rights and justice.*

**ICC Process in El Salvador**

PGA first started working toward the El Salvador accession to the Rome Statute in 2002. Despite the efforts of various parliamentarians and pressure from the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN Resolution AP/3-CLXXI-2005) the ratification process unfortunately lost its momentum.

The campaign for accession to the ICC-system was given new impetus in 2009 with the election of FMLN candidate Mauricio Funes as President, who adopted a favorable stance toward the ICC. In order to take advantage of the renewed efforts of parliamentarians to promote the ratification of the Rome Statute, [a delegation of PGA conducted a visit to El Salvador](#) later that same year.

Nevertheless, despite the new momentum, much work was needed to be done in terms of dissipating misconceptions and fostering consensus among different political groups. In order to follow up on the commitments that were made by Salvadorian politicians during the PGA field mission to El Salvador in 2009, [a multi-party delegation visited the ICC in September 2010](#), where they voiced their commitment to promote the transmittal of the ICC bill to Parliament.

Ratification efforts were strengthened in 2012 when neighboring country [Guatemala became the 121<sup>st</sup> State Party to the ICC](#). Shortly after the Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, Hon. Hugo Martínez released a statement in which he said the ratification would be forthcoming shortly. In May 2014, after perceiving a lack of progress on the matter, PGA send an [open letter to the President of El Salvador, H.E. Mauricio Funes](#), signed by various prominent Latin American PGA members as a way to convince the President to transmit the ratification bill to the parliament during what would be the last month of his presidency. Two weeks after the

open letter was sent and distributed by the local press the ratification bill was submitted to Parliament for discussion. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of June, the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador and PGA jointly organized two [Expert Seminars](#) on the Rome Statute and its implementation.

Right after the parliamentary elections of 2015, PGA organized another field mission in July 2015 with the aim of sensitizing the newly elected members of parliament to the importance and relevance of the Rome Statute system. Following this event, the 4 main political groups in El Salvador participated in a [Special Session on the Ratification and Implementation of the Rome Statute](#) co-organized with the Parliament of Costa Rica. In September 2015, PGA organized a [multiparty visit of Salvadorian MPs to the ICC](#) to address any remaining concerns or misunderstandings. The delegation included three prominent PGA Members: **Mario Tenorio**, Tercer Secretario de la Junta Directiva y Presidente de la Comisión de Legislación y Puntos Constitucionales (GANA), **Reynaldo Cardoza**, Cuarto Secretario de la Junta Directiva (PCN), **Karina Sosa**, Presidenta de la Comisión de Relaciones Exteriores, Integración Centroamericana y Salvadoreños en el Exterior (FMLN).

On 24 November 2015, the Foreign Relations Commission approved the ratification bill with a positive vote of 6 against 3. On 26 November the Legislative Assembly followed suit with 44 votes in favor of accession to the Rome Statute, paving the way for [El Salvador to become the 124<sup>th</sup> State Party to the ICC](#). ARENA, the most numerous political group in the Legislative Assembly, abstained from voting based upon constitutional principles, even though its members expressed their support for the mandate of the Court. A PGA Delegation led by the Secretary-General and integrated by the PGA Legal Advisor, witnessed this historic vote and met with all political groups. On 30 November and 1 December 2015, the Parliament of El Salvador hosted the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of PGA on the role of Parliamentarians in promoting international peace and security.

## 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 of domestic jurisdictions to end impunity. The PGA network is assisted by a small secretariat that facilitates the cooperation and exchange by member-MPs to achieve these goals and provides technical cooperation on legal matters.

Members of PGA have contributed to 77 of the 124 ratifications of, or accession to the Rome Statute to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC and has partnered with the DRC National Coalition.

The PGA Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute system receives support from:

*GOVERNMENTS OF THE NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND, BELGIUM, ESTONIA, LIECHTENSTEIN AND*



*PGA RECEIVES CORE SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF SWEDEN AND DENMARK.*

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On-line access to PGA ICC Campaign: <http://www.pgaction.org/programmes/ilhr/overview.html>