



Parliamentarians for Global Action's Roundtable Discussion as Side Event to the
23rd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), on:
"Ending Impunity for International Crimes through Multilateral Interstate Cooperation"

Hosted by the Parliament of Austria, Vienna, on Wednesday, 14 May, 2014, 9:30am-12:00pm, Palais
Epstein, Room E1-E3

Commentaries by Mark Pritchard MP, Co-Convenor, International Law and Human Rights
Programme (ILHRP), PGA

Your Excellencies,

Fellow Members of Parliament,

Colleagues of the Academia and Civil Society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to address this high-level audience today and I want to thank the Parliament of Austria and in specific my colleague Ms. Petra Bayr on behalf of PGA for so kindly hosting us.

Vienna has always held a very special place in the sector of human rights. We all remember the remarkable World Conference on Human rights in 1993, where it was Vienna that presented the international community with a common plan for the strengthening of human rights work around the world. Let's take steps today,

to present to the world our common plan in fighting international crimes, known as the most heinous violations of human rights.

- I personally believe that today's timely roundtable discussion is highly important in ensuring that there is zero tolerance for perpetrators of international crimes, which is not only important for the physical and psychological well-being of the victims, but has also a strong deterrence effect for preventing the commission of future crimes.
- Given that there are tons of problems due to the lack of cooperation amongst states regarding the extradition of perpetrators of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, my over 1000 legislative colleagues and myself as members of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), believe that this treaty fills an existing gap in the existing legislative framework.
- Such a treaty on multilateral state cooperation would also help states to fully implement cooperation obligations under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (the ICC) into their domestic systems, hereby fulfilling the principle of complementarity.
- PGA has expertise in this sector and is giving technical assistance to states, among the request of legislators to the PGA Secretariat, in drafting bills to implement the Rome Statute into sovereign states National Criminal Codes.
- As you know, once a country has ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC, it needs to implement it into its national legal system to be fully applicable.

- Let me also emphasize the important effect this treaty, once established, would have among the most vulnerable parts of society, namely women and children. We all have mothers, sisters, daughters, sons, and it is our obligation to establish a national and international legal framework that is protecting them!
- Impunity for international crimes, including systematic rape and sexual enslavement, acts to reinforce, rather than challenge pre-existing norms and patterns of discrimination against women, both inside and outside of conflicts.
- The importance of the rule of law in democratic societies is not asking for but **requires** prosecution of especially international crimes. Principles of both customary and conventional international law already impose significant obligations in this regard.
- Therefore my statement today on behalf of the over 1000 legislative members of PGA from 139 countries, of which I am a proud Board member is: YES. YES to the resolution leading to this treaty because the gap in the existing legal framework needs to be filled and it is our time to react and take a decision. We cannot look away when innocent civilians are dying and the perpetrators are not being prosecuted!

- I promise you today, that PGA Members will be glad to start a global campaign to create political will for this treaty and provide technical assistance in implementing it.
- Our support in this cause is guaranteed.

Thank you for your time and I am looking forward to a fruitful discussion.