



Press Release - For Immediate Release

International Law and Human Rights Programme

Contacts:

New York

Ms. Leyla Nikou

Leyla.nikjou@pgaction.org

Tel. +1.212.687.7755 (ext 104)

The Hague

Ms. Deborah Ruiz Verduzco

deborah.ruiz@pgaction.org

Tel. +31.6.2331.8581

On Victory Day, Liechtenstein ratifies Rome Statute amendment on the Crime of Aggression:

Parliamentarians welcome the First Ratification of the New System to contribute to the Prevention of the Illegal Use of Force through a permanent and independent International Criminal Court

New York/The Hague, 8 May 2012– Today the Principality of Liechtenstein deposited at the United Nations its instrument of ratification of the two Amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) which were adopted by consensus by the Review Conference that met in Kampala in 2010. This constitutes the first ratification of the amendment that included a definition for the Crime of Aggression and a procedure for the International Criminal Court to exercise its jurisdiction over individuals who, as leaders of States Parties, plan, prepare, initiate or execute an attack against another State Party of the ICC. Additional 29 ratifications and a vote by the Assembly of States Parties are required to allow the ICC to exercise its jurisdiction over individuals who commit this crime.

The adoption of the Kampala Amendment on the crime of aggression was a historic event and a diplomatic feat. The formula guarantees the independence of the ICC from the Security Council– which has the prerogative to take action against States that violate the prohibition of the use of force contained in the UN Charter.

The negotiations were successful largely due to the determination and skill of the Liechtenstein Mission to the United Nations, led by Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, who served as President of the Assembly of States Parties until 2011.

PGA also welcomes the ratification of Liechtenstein of the so-called “Belgian amendment,” that gives jurisdiction to the ICC for the war crime of using certain weapons in armed conflicts not of an international character. This is the second ratification to the Belgian amendment, after San Marino in 2011.

In furtherance of the Plan of Action of Parliamentarians for Global Action adopted in Kampala by the 6th *Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC & the Rule of Law*, the organization has been promoting the activation of the jurisdiction of the Court over the crime of aggression. PGA members in Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Germany, New Zealand, Panama and Uruguay have already taken concrete measures to receive the ratification bill of the Kampala amendments from their respective executive branches and to criminalise under domestic legislation the endangering of populations through the illegal use of force in international relations. PGA remains committed to achieving the thirty ratifications required for the entry into force of the amendment as soon as possible.

Selected Statements from PGA members:

GERMANY: Mr. Christoph Straesser, MP (SPD), *Speaker on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid*

The horrors of the Second World War were caused by calculated decisions of individuals to engage nations in war. The Kampala amendment on the crime of aggression is then a tribute to the millions of victims of the horrors of Second World War and of any other international conflict around the world. I celebrate the first step taken by Liechtenstein and pledge my support so that Germany joins soon the nations committed to a world order free of war.

NEW ZEALAND: Mr. Kennedy Graham, MP (Green Party), *Deputy-Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee*

The ICC is the tip of system of shared responsibilities with states. To effectively prevent the illegal use of force, states should not delay further their ratification of the Kampala amendment on aggression and should proceed to incorporate in their domestic legislation measures of control of their own leaders to avoid breaching the UN Charter. For this purpose, I am re-submitting in Parliament a bill to join states such as Slovenia and Luxembourg that, as provided by the Rome Statute, criminalises the illegal use of force. My bill also seeks to create a procedure of control to our own leaders to avoid exposing our population and armed forces to illegal armed conflict.

NICARAGUA: Dip. José Bernard Pallais Arana (PLC), *Chair, Constitutional Affairs Committee*

Nicaragua, as a nation victim of the unlawful use of force in the past, welcomes the first ratification of the amendment that will allow the ICC to contribute to the prevention of this heinous crime. In solidarity with our victims and with the rule of law, Nicaragua should not remain outside the ICC system and should promptly ratify the Rome Statute as amended in 2010, thus contributing to an international order based on the rule of law and founded on justice. The incorporation of the crime of aggression commits us before the ICC as a peace-loving nation.

SIERRA LEONE: Ms. Bernadette Lahai, MP (People's Party), *Legislative Affairs Committee*
The news of the ratification of the Kampala amendments by Liechtenstein reaches Sierra Leone at an important moment. The conviction of Charles Taylor, by an international tribunal, for aiding and abetting crimes in a conflict that has caused so much suffering affirms that no one is above law, and that justice is as important as reconciliation. In launching war against other nations, no matter who you are, if you use your position to commit atrocities you will be punished.

We in Sierra Leone have benefitted immensely from the international justice cascade, and we thank each nation that continues contributing to establishing an effective system of international system. We remain committed to see our government adopt the pending legislation that implements the Rome Statute.

URUGUAY: Dip. Felipe Michelini, *Convenor of PGA's International Law and Human Rights Programme*

The Crime of Aggression is one of the four most serious crimes under international law as recognised since 1998 in article 5 of the Rome Statute. The adoption of the definition of the crime in Kampala constitutes a historic legal development since 1945. Uruguay joins in the efforts of PGA members in Argentina and Chile to be at the forefront in ensuring full support to the respect

of the principles of equality and rule of law enshrined in the Rome Statute and in the UN Charter in Latin America.

UNITED KINGDOM - EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Mr. Richard Howitt, MEP,
Rapporteur on Human Rights

The first ratification of the amendment on the crime of aggression launches a period of intense work ahead of us in the European Union in preparation of the year 2017 to ensure the activation of the jurisdiction of the ICC over the crime of aggression. As the 18 April 2012 Resolution of the European Parliament indicates, we welcomed the decisions of the Kampala Review Conference and called on the Council and the Commission to use their international authority in the interest of securing the strengthening the universality of the Rome Statute for this internationally agreed definition.