

EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES LEAD ON CRIME OF AGGRESSION

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States of the Eastern European region are at the forefront of a global push to ensure accountability for State leaders who are responsible for the most serious forms of the illegal use of force against other States.

Four members of the International Criminal Court from Eastern Europe have ratified the Kampala Amendments which empower the Court to prosecute crimes of aggression (Croatia, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia), five more are expected to ratify before the end of the year (Albania, Czech Republic, Georgia, Macedonia, Poland), and the remaining nine¹ are working on the ratification process. The region holds the highest percentage of states that have ratified the Crime of Aggression.

Speaking at a seminar in Brdo, Slovenia, the country's Foreign Affairs Minister Karl Erjavec called on States to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

"This is a way to protect the small countries, because aggression always comes from strong countries," he said.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon echoed this call in a video message to Eastern European States and praised the amendments adopted 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, as a historic breakthrough.

"With one voice we have said no to impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern. We have demanded accountability for aggression, the most serious form of the illegal use of force," he said.

The seminar also aimed at convincing States who remain outside the Rome Statute to join the ICC, which has become an important player in the international system since its establishment in 2002.

"The biggest achievement of the ICC is to set up a new paradigm of international criminal justice," said ICC President Judge Sang-Hyun Song. "Today the ICC cannot be ignored any more."

At the seminar, Armenia informed that it was inching closer to become party to the Rome Statute.

¹ Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania, Serbia.

The seminar was organized jointly by Slovenia, Liechtenstein and the Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression. Liechtenstein was the chair of the negotiation process that led to the adoption of the Kampala amendments, and it was the first State to ratify the amendments on 8 May 2012.

Thirty ratifications by States Parties are needed for the ICC to be able to exercise its jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, no earlier than 2017. To date, 14 States² have ratified the amendments. Once the amendments are activated, the ICC will become the first international court to prosecute the crime of aggression since the trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo following World War II.

“It is at the very core of the United Nations Charter that one state should not illegally use force against another state,” said Stefan Barriga, a legal expert from Liechtenstein who was one of the drafters of the amendments. “The Kampala Amendments hold the potential to help us enforce this rule that has been violated so many times in the past.”

CONTACT

For any technical follow-up questions, including additional information on each States’s ratification processes, please contact: Joern.Eiermann@nyc.ilv.li

MULTIMEDIA LINKS

Video message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

<http://youtu.be/teuR1cWY3nw>

Video message from Former Prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial Ben

Ferencz: <http://youtu.be/rmK9pZRpsCk>

Photos of the quoted speakers:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/113002743259308249915/albums/6013966155235702721>

² Andorra, Belgium, Botswana, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay.