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Motion

Defending International Justice and the International Criminal Court

Signed by: Young European Federalists (JEF Europe)

european youth forum

The international rules-based order rests on a fundamental principle: no person should be above the law, regardless of their office, nationality, political power or military strength.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) through the Rome Statute represented a historic step towards turning this principle into reality. By establishing a permanent international court with jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression, the international community created a mechanism to fight impunity when national jurisdictions are unable or unwilling to do so.

Today, this system of international criminal justice is under increasing pressure. Political leaders and governments are challenging international courts, refusing cooperation with their decisions and seeking to undermine their ability to operate. Of particular concern are the sanctions imposed by the United States against the ICC as an institution. This threatens the judicial independence and the ordinary functioning of the Court.

At a time when international humanitarian law and human rights are being violated in conflicts across the world, weakening the institutions responsible for accountability risks accelerating a return to an international order in which power determines whether or not the law applies. The credibility of international justice also depends on its consistent and universal application. Governments must respect and cooperate with international judicial institutions regardless of whether their decisions concern allies, adversaries or their own representatives.

Young people have a particular stake in defending international law. Our generation is increasingly confronted with wars, forced displacement, attacks against civilians and challenges to the international institutions created to prevent atrocities and ensure accountability. A world in which international law applies only when politically convenient is neither peaceful nor sustainable. There can be no lasting peace without justice, and no credible international justice without independent institutions capable of holding perpetrators accountable.

The European Youth Forum therefore:

1. **Affirms its strong support for the International Criminal Court**, and the broader international criminal justice system, and recognises the ICC as an indispensable institution in the global fight against impunity for the gravest international crimes;

2. **Condemns sanctions, threats, intimidation or other coercive measures directed against ICC judges, prosecutors, staff, civil society organisations or other persons solely for their legitimate cooperation with or support for the Court**, and stresses that disagreements with judicial decisions must be pursued through legal procedures rather than political or economic coercion;

3. **Calls on the European Union to take concrete measures to protect the independence and effective functioning of the ICC**, including by activating and, where necessary, strengthening the EU Blocking Statute to shield the Court, its personnel and organisations cooperating with it from the extraterritorial effects of sanctions;

4. **Calls on the EU and its Member States to guarantee that European financial, technological, insurance, communication and other essential services remain available to the ICC and its personnel**, so that third-country sanctions cannot effectively prevent an international court based in Europe from fulfilling its mandate;

5. **Calls on all States Parties to the Rome Statute to fulfil their obligations towards the ICC fully and consistently**, including cooperation with investigations and the execution of arrest warrants, irrespective of the nationality, political office or alliances of the persons concerned;

6. **Stresses that international criminal law must be applied consistently and without double standards**, and rejects attempts to selectively defend international justice in relation to adversaries while disregarding or

undermining it when investigations concern allies;

7. **Calls on states that have not yet ratified the Rome Statute to do so**, with the objective of achieving its universality and ensuring equal accountability for the gravest international crimes;

8. **Calls on the EU and its Member States to provide sufficient and predictable political, financial and practical support to the ICC**, including measures protecting its institutional and technological resilience against external coercion;

9. **Calls for strengthened protection and support for human rights defenders, particularly young human rights defenders, young victims and young witnesses, as well as journalists, civil society organisations, and others documenting international crimes or cooperating with international accountability mechanisms**, recognising their indispensable contribution to international justice;

10. **Supports efforts to strengthen international accountability for the crime of aggression**, including closing jurisdictional gaps that currently limit the ICC's capacity to prosecute this crime, while supporting complementary international accountability mechanisms established in accordance with international law;

11. **Calls on the European Union and like-minded partners to make the defence and reform of multilateral institutions a strategic priority**, working towards a global governance system in which international law is enforceable consistently and access to justice does not depend on geopolitical power;

12. **Affirms the importance of raising awareness among young people about international criminal justice, the Rome Statute and the importance of defending independent international institutions**, and to standing in solidarity with young human rights defenders working for accountability and justice, in line with the UN Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

Conclusion

International justice must not depend on who the alleged perpetrator is, which passport they hold, or which government considers them an ally. The choice facing our generation is between an international order in which the most powerful can place themselves beyond the reach of the law, and one in which common rules protect every person and bind every state.







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