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Tribunal Pénal  
International pour  
l'ex-Yougoslavie

# STATEMENT

*(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)*

PROSECUTOR

The Hague, 1 July 2013

## Remarks of Prosecutor Serge Brammertz on the occasion of the opening of the MICT Hague Branch

Good morning everybody,

It's nice to welcome back to the Tribunal many of our friends and colleagues who were here a few weeks ago to mark 20 years since the ICTY's creation.

As one chapter of the ICTY's life closes, a new one begins with the commencement of the Hague Branch of the MICT. I wish the MICT principals good luck with their work and extend to them the full support of my Office as they begin their journey. I have no doubt that they will find within the ICTY a wealth of talent to fill the ranks of the MICT Hague Branch.

Other speakers today will focus on the MICT and its work and I don't want to repeat what they say. Instead, I want to briefly share with you some general thoughts about international justice and the challenges ahead. We are all here today because we share a common interest in making international justice a success. I think that, together, we can do a lot to make sure international justice stays on the right track.

Several weeks ago I had my annual meeting with the foreign news correspondents working in the Netherlands. Following the usual briefing on the progress of our cases, the completion strategy, regional cooperation and our other remaining challenges, a journalist took me by surprise when he asked:

"Prosecutor, do you still believe in international justice?" I hesitated for a few seconds and then answered: " yes... but my belief has not grown stronger in the 10 years since I started working in the field of international justice." And, as always with journalists when you say too little or too much, I was asked to explain my answer.

My message was yes of course I still believe in international justice. Why? Because I don't want to live in a world where there is no accountability for atrocities. I don't want to live in a world where political and military leaders can abuse their power at will to murder and traumatize thousands, turn neighbors against each other and destroy communities. And I don't want to live in a world where people whose lives have been torn apart by evil crimes are left to suffer in silence with no redress.

I also explained that I don't believe international justice has grown much stronger over the past 10 years because, today, we still face many challenges that undermine our confidence in the international justice system.

At the top of this list of challenges are the hurdles faced in arresting fugitives. This is currently one of the ICC's biggest problems with some 10 fugitives currently at large. The ICTR, almost 20 years after its creation, still experiences similar difficulties. And then there is the Special Tribunal for Lebanon where a trial in absentia looks certain because

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the accused remain at large. Our inability to bring accused persons into custody not only weakens international justice, but also negatively impacts on the international community's credibility.

And while the ICTY stands out as a positive example on fugitive arrests, we must accept that we are facing other challenges.

In particular, we risk undermining our many important achievements unless justice in The Hague is meaningful and understood by the victims and the community in the region and internationally. This is especially important when the Tribunal's decisions are controversial.

So my wish for today is that we use the opening of the MICT in The Hague to think harder about closing the gap between the Hague and the countries of the former Yugoslavia by bringing justice closer to the survivor communities. We must do this through effective dialogue, active communication and openness to critique of the Tribunal's work. I am confident that, on this issue too, the ICTY and now the MICT can still set a positive precedent for international justice in the future.

Thank you.