

## **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

*Statement in support of the International Criminal Court by Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), November 12, 2007:*

The International Criminal Court Assembly of States Parties will hold its sixth session from November 30 to December 14, 2007, in New York.

The 211th General Assembly (1999) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted a resolution supporting the International Criminal Court (ICC). This vote of support came just a year after the ICC Statute was adopted in Rome in 1998.

In the relatively short time of its existence, the ICC has opened investigations into situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Sudan, Uganda, and Central African Republic.

The Court's first trial will begin in January 2008. It is a case involving Mr. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, an alleged militia leader from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who is accused of enlisting, conscripting, and using children under the age of fifteen to participate actively in hostilities. This is a specific and foundational instance in which the ICC is working with the support of the international community to hold accountable those who are responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to respond not just to specific injustices, but also to offer a positive moral foundation that engages faithfully with judicial systems. As we read in Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The work of the ICC helps support a vision of justice at work in the world that clearly resonates with the life-giving value of the gospel.

The 105 States worldwide that have ratified the Rome Statute have signaled their commitment to a comprehensive system of international law meant to protect the fullness of life in community and promote peace. As they come together in New York later this month, let us hold them in our prayers as we continue to hold in prayer as well the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Sudan, Uganda, and Central African Republic.

At a time when the International Criminal Court continues to be in need of our support, it is worth remembering the words of the prophet Micah: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8).

The prophet's words—coincidentally the theme of the PC(USA) General Assembly in 2008—are both a comfort and a challenge as we search for justice in a world that is still rife with atrocities. With these words in mind, may we continue to walk paths of discipleship that lead us to stand in solidarity with communities that have suffered genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. May the justice we seek be grounded in love and humility.

And may our support for the International Criminal Court be as strong as our support for the people it was created to serve.

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07736.htm>