

**Your Honourable President of the Supreme Court,  
Honourable Minister for Justice, your honorable judge  
Pikis, Your excellencies, honourable judges,  
distinguished guests, good afternoon and thank you  
for joining us for this opening of the exhibition on the  
International Criminal Court.**

I am honoured and pleased to open this exhibition together with the honourable President of the Supreme Court of Cyprus, Mr Nicolatos. I am also very happy that the honorable judge Pikis who was one of the first judges at the International Criminal Court is honouring us with his presence this afternoon.

I would like to thank the Supreme Court for hosting this exhibition, and in particular Andreas Tserkezos, for his kind assistance. This is also the moment to put someone from my own team in the spotlight. Someone who has been working very hard for the last year to get this exhibition to Cyprus. Dear Ingrid, thank you so much. Goed gedaan!

'Trauma, healing and hope', is the title given to the exhibition. These three themes are all connected to the work of the International Criminal Court. 'Trauma' reminds us of the crimes the ICC deals with. Crimes that often go beyond our imagination. 'Healing' is a process, in which justice is an essential part. And thirdly, 'Hope' is about the believe in international justice and about the ambition to create a more just world. This is what the work of the ICC is about, and this photo exhibition aims to raise awareness on the importance of the ICC.

The history of the ICC is not a history of unequivocal success. Ever since the signing of the Rome Statute in 1998, the ICC has received both praise and criticism. And discussions on the ICC's mandate and effectiveness are ongoing. But let us first look at the purpose and the foundations of the ICC.

At the basis of the statute, lies the realisation that some crimes affect and endanger the well-being of the international community as a whole. In this sense, the ICC was founded to deal with “the most serious crimes of international concern”, namely: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. However, the ICC is not meant to undermine or replace national courts, but to complement them. Therefore, the ICC only deals with cases where states are not willing or not able to prosecute. Because unwillingness or inability may never be a reason for impunity.

The signatories of the Rome Statute recognised that ending impunity is a crucial contribution to the prevention of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. But ending impunity aims not only for prevention. Justice is first of all crucial for the victims of the above mentioned crimes. And the photos in this exhibition remind us once more that the victims of those crimes are real. They deserve to see justice, as it is an integral part in the process of healing.

As the Netherlands, we are proud and honoured to host the ICC in The Hague, because we are a firm supporter of international law. As some of you may know our commitment to strengthen the international legal order is explicitly included in our Constitution.

The ICC is a court established by states. Unfortunately, not all states are willing to join the fight against impunity yet. On this occasion, I would like to express my appreciation to Cyprus, and all other nations that stand behind the Rome Statute and the work of the ICC, because they believe in its worthy cause.

We continue to strive for universality. All UN member states should become state participants. Universality is needed to strengthen the mandate and impact of the ICC in a time when justice is constantly under pressure. And to reach this ambition, our continued outreach towards non-signatories is needed. In every conflict, there is the risk of impunity. And the fight against impunity cannot be won alone. Let us continue to cooperate and support each other in our efforts towards creating a more just world.

And this brings me to the actual opening of this exhibition. Before you can all have a look at the panels and reflect on them over drinks, may I now invite the honourable President of the Supreme Court Mr Nicolatos to open the exhibition by cutting the ribbon.