

ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda appoints Brigid Inder as Special Gender Advisor

Statement by the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice

27 August 2012

The Hague – The Board of Directors and staff of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice warmly welcome the announcement by the International Criminal Court (ICC) appointing Brigid Inder, Executive Director, as the Special Advisor on Gender for the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC.

In making this announcement on 21 August, Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said that, "further integrating a gender perspective into all areas of our work and strengthening recognition of the gendered nature of sexual violence is a priority for my office. Ms Inder is a renowned expert on gender issues and brings to this post a deep knowledge of the cases, policies and the institutional history of the ICC."

The role of Special Advisor is an external position providing expert advice to the Prosecutor and her office on gender issues on a pro-bono basis. Ms Inder will continue in her substantive role as the Executive Director of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

The Board is delighted with this appointment and views it as a recognition of the impact of the Women's Initiatives' advocacy for gender justice under Ms Inder's leadership. "This appointment also recognises Brigid's expertise and experience working on sexual and gender-based crimes in armed conflict and the impact of such violence on women," said Chat Garcia Ramilo, Chair of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

A practitioner for women's human rights and gender equality for over 25 years, Ms Inder has worked in the international justice, HIV and AIDS and health fields. She has been a political and strategic advisor and an advocate at UN negotiations and in related policy environments, and is globally recognised as an expert on gender issues.

Brigid Inder has been the Executive Director of the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice since 2004 and has led the establishment of the organisation's programmatic and institutional development including the legal monitoring and strategic advocacy programmes, legal filing projects and peace negotiation initiatives. She is also responsible for developing the documentation programme on gender-based crimes in armed conflicts and the crisis-response strategies for women's human rights defenders and victims/survivors of gender-based crimes living in armed conflict environments.

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice

The Women's Initiatives emerged from the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, a network of feminist lawyers and advocates who participated in the negotiations of the Rome Statute and ensured that progressive gender provisions were integrated within the founding treaty of the ICC. The Statute contains extensive provisions addressing sexual and gender-based violence within the elements of the crimes, the rules of procedure and evidence, as well as explicit requirements for gender-expertise within the staff profile of the Court.

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice



Established in 2004, the Women's Initiatives is currently in the first year of implementation of its new four-year action plan and applies a multi-disciplinary approach to its gender justice strategies and programmes with women in seven armed conflict countries. The organisation has offices in four locations and is staffed by programme and legal staff, legal monitors, and focal points strategically located in armed conflicts, overseen by a management team and the Board of Directors.

Many of the Women's Initiatives' more than 6,000 grassroots members and partners living in conflict and post-conflict situations under ICC investigation have welcomed the news of this appointment.

"As members of the Greater North Women's Voices for Peace Network, we believe that this appointment will enhance openness and provide opportunities to expand on gender justice issues at the ICC with knowledge, commitment and passion." *Santa Oketta, Chair, Greater North Women's Voices for Peace Network, Uganda.*

"Ms Brigid Inder is a woman committed to the cause of women's human rights and gender. Her support to Jeunesse Unie pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le Développement Communautaire (JUPEDEC) for our work with women in the South and North-East of the Central Republic whose rights are violated by the rebels of Joseph Kony's LRA since 2008, is a demonstration of her engagement.

We hope that her presence alongside the Prosecutor will keep the ICC's attention on the atrocities suffered by women in CAR and elsewhere in order to promote equitable justice and will also ensure that reparations are provided to victims to support their sustainable socio-economic reintegration." *Alexis Lewis Mbolinani, Coordinator, JUPEDEC, Bangui and Obo, Central African Republic (CAR).*

"The Women's Initiatives' partners in the DRC are convinced that Ms Inder's advice will assist the ICC Prosecutor in advancing gender justice for women victims of serious crimes. We think that this choice is not accidental, but represents an acknowledgement of Ms Inder's fight for women including in eastern DRC where armed conflict and sexual violence are on-going. We believe this appointment will further strengthen collaborations with the ICC and promote accountability for crimes, which have not yet been investigated by the Court. We feel hopeful for the advancement of gender justice." *Claudine Bela Badeaza, Director, Centre d'éducation et de recherche pour les droits des femmes (CERDF), Kisangani, Province Orientale, DRC; Jeanine Bandu Bahati, President, Encadrement Des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages Vulnérables (EFIM), Goma, North Kivu, DRC; Joséphine Malimukono, Coordonnatrice, Ligue Solidarité Congolaise (LSC), Goma, Nord-Kivu, DRC.*

Consultations

Prior to the announcement of this appointment, the Women's Initiatives consulted with a range of stakeholders including other gender justice actors, legal practitioners, women's rights advocates, academics, donors, focal-points and key implementing partners, to canvas their views about the appointment, the role of the Special Advisor as well as the gender priorities for the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP). The consultations confirmed a widespread recognition of the need to strengthen the ICC's record on gender issues and the prosecution of gender-based crimes within an environment where there is a high-level of goodwill towards the new Prosecutor and enthusiastic support for the role of the Special Advisor.



“Gender justice is not an add-on or a supplement; it is a way forward toward justice for all. It has taken decades of efforts to address the gaping holes that once existed in international law and approaches to accountability, particularly around rape and other forms of sexual violence, that left egregious harms and violations unaccounted for, as though they were inevitable or somehow not redressable. This appointment signals a commitment on the part of the Prosecutor to bring the hard-fought and hard-won promises of the Rome Statute more fully to life as the Court enters this next critical phase.” *Pam Spees, Staff Attorney, Centre for Constitutional Rights, USA; former Programme Officer of the Women’s Caucus for Gender Justice and NGO delegate to the Rome Statute negotiations.*

“I am extremely pleased that Brigid Inder has been appointed to provide strategic advice to the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor on gender issues. Ms Inder’s deep expertise in the field of gender justice will be of immense assistance to the Prosecutor, as she implements her goal of further integrating a gender perspective into all areas of the OTP’s work.” *Associate Professor Valerie Oosterveld, University of Western Ontario; Canadian government delegate to the Rome Statute negotiations.*

“Gender justice is a vision created, supported, and lived despite the violence which characterises armed conflicts in the DRC and elsewhere in the world. We are confident that Ms Inder’s presence alongside Prosecutor Bensouda will allow her to pay specific attention to the gender-based crimes currently under investigation by the ICC, as well as to future crimes, so as to discourage and prosecute all those who have transformed women’s bodies into battlefields.” *Emérite Mongelwa Tabisha, Coordinator, Action de Femmes pour le Développement (AFD), Fizi, South Kivu, DRC; Stella Yanda, Executive Secretary, Initiative ALPHA, Bukavu, South Kivu, DRC.*

“There are very few people who know so well all three main spheres of the ICC, - the intergovernmental process, the Court itself, and the local level where the crimes are committed.” *Jutta Bertram-Nothnagal, Director of Relations with Intergovernmental Organizations, Union Internationale des Avocats.*

“The Coalition for the International Criminal Court applauds the appointment of a leader of one of its Steering Committee Members, Ms Brigid Inder from Women’s Initiatives, as the new Special Gender Advisor to the Prosecutor. Even after ten years, many do not realize the historic advances in the ICC treaty relating to the protection and rights of women and victims. We congratulate the decision of the Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda on this appointment. Ms Inder’s longtime expertise on gender justice issues and strong commitment to women’s rights will greatly enhance the efforts of the Prosecutor’s Office in ending impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes.” *Bill Pace, Convenor, Coalition for the International Criminal Court.*

Priorities

In accepting the position, Brigid Inder said she was honoured to have been appointed to the post by Prosecutor Bensouda and sees this position as an opportunity to support and contribute to the ICC’s prosecution of gender-based crimes and to advance international justice in this area.

Ms Inder said that from her perspective some of the immediate priorities for the OTP include strengthening the identification and articulation of gender issues and gender-based violence within

Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice



the OTP's cases and filings; securing charges for gender-based crimes; increasing access and gender-justice outcomes for victims/survivors; strengthening the institutional knowledge and structural responses of the OTP to gender issues more widely; and expanding awareness of and support for the OTP's mandate.

