



***MEDEL expresses deep concern over the latest attack launched by the U.S. administration against the International Criminal Court and calls for urgent action to defend its independence and the integrity of the Rome Statute system.***

In its previous statements, MEDEL has sounded the alarm regarding the systematic attack launched by the U.S. administration against the International Criminal Court and the rules-based international order<sup>1</sup>. The new sanctions designations unveiled on August 18 by the US administration - this time targeting the ICC President Judge Tomoko Akane, and a senior trial lawyer at the Office of the Prosecutor, Abdoulaye Seye - marked a further escalation in the strategy implemented since the executive order signed on February 6, 2025: these new sanctions are indeed part of the ‘sweeping campaign’ announced on July 13 while stating the purpose of dismantling ‘the threat that the International Criminal Court poses to U.S. sovereignty’ and systematically neutralizing, through a wide range of actions, the ICC’s ability to operate. The U.S. administration has also expressed its expectation that other countries will join the campaign, by ending their funding of and participation in the Court, labelled as a corrupt and politicised institution that has abused its authority and exceeded its mandate.

In the face of this unprecedented attack, we must once again reaffirm that the ICC stands at the heart of international criminal justice: the attack on its independence and legitimacy is therefore an attack on the universality of human rights. What is at stake today is the whole system that we have painstakingly built to ensure that those responsible for atrocity crimes are held accountable for their actions, and to protect victims seeking justice.

But vis-à-vis the latest actions of a coordinated campaign and full-scale strategy, aimed at “dismantling” the Court and preventing it from continuing to carry out its mandate of investigating cases involving such atrocity crimes, it is not enough to reaffirm the commitment to upholding the principles of international justice and rule of law: concrete, urgent and collective actions are required in order to protect the Court and the values enshrined in the Rome Statute.

While reaffirming its full support and solidarity with the ICC officials targeted by the sanctions, MEDEL recalls that:

- the attack on the ICC is part of the current assault aiming at subverting the international legal order, based on the rule of law, and replacing it with a different order, based on the arbitrariness of the strongest;
- it is a legal and moral duty of the European and international community, and of all States Parties to the Rome Statute, to effectively act in defence of ICC’s independence and of its operational capacity, and continue to support the collective efforts in pursuing justice and ending impunity;

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<sup>1</sup> [https://medelnet.eu/medel-stands-in-support-of-the-international-criminal-court-and-in-solidarity-with-its-officials/#\\_ftn1](https://medelnet.eu/medel-stands-in-support-of-the-international-criminal-court-and-in-solidarity-with-its-officials/#_ftn1); <https://medelnet.eu/medel-statement-in-support-of-the-international-criminal-court/>; Joint Statement <https://medelnet.eu/eu-should-defend-the-icc/>

- the EU and its Member States have long been strong advocates for the ICC as a pillar of the international legal order, and have made legally binding commitments to promote the universality and integrity of the Rome Statute, and support the ICC's effective and efficient functioning;

MEDEL therefore urges the international and European community, as well as States Parties:

-to openly condemn and reject any direct or indirect pressure to withdraw from the Rome Statute or to weaken in any form the support to the ICC;

-to adopt all available measures to shield the ICC from any action that directly or indirectly seeks to undermine its independence and legitimacy;

-to strengthen political and financial support for the Court and protect its officials and staff;

-to ensure that States Parties fulfil their obligations under the Rome Statute and the governments across the EU respect the EU's commitment on the ICC, including cooperation, universality and integrity of the Rome Statute, and the safeguard of the independence of the Court.

***August 21, 2026***