



## **Establishing a Seamless Web of Justice: National and International Prosecutors Meet in Arusha**

**26-28 November 2008**

### **STATEMENT**

Paris, London 1 December 2008 – The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and REDRESS participated in the ‘*Forum between Offices of the Prosecutors of UN Ad Hoc Criminal Tribunals and National Prosecuting Authorities*’, which took place in Arusha, Tanzania, from 26-28 November 2008.

The Forum brought together representatives from national prosecuting authorities and Ministries of Justice from over 30 countries, the ICTR, ICTY, ICC, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia and civil society organisations. Participants discussed strategies to foster greater international cooperation in the fight against impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes and addressed the role of national prosecution authorities in the context of the completion strategy of the ad hoc tribunals.

The Forum’s conclusions included a renewed commitment of national prosecution authorities to work together to ensure that no safe havens remain for suspects of serious international crimes and that any work left over from the mandates of the international tribunals is efficiently undertaken by national systems. Throughout the three days of collaboration, the need for States to close the impunity gap resulting from the limited mandate of the tribunals was highlighted as were mechanisms such as extradition procedures and universal jurisdiction.

REDRESS and FIDH commend the organisers of the Forum and urge participating States to actively address the issues discussed in the three day meeting. Key issues to be addressed include:

- A lack of national legislation providing for extraterritorial jurisdiction over serious international crimes with retroactive effect, to, for instance, investigate and prosecute suspects of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, was identified as a serious impediment in the fight against impunity in cases where extradition to Rwanda fails. Justice Hassan Bubacar Jallow, Chief Prosecutor at the ICTR, emphasised the need to provide national courts with the necessary instruments to exercise the obligation to extradite or prosecute and encouraged States to proceed with the incorporation of international crimes in domestic legislation;
- The need for States to follow up on the conclusion to apply international criminal law and the jurisprudence of international criminal tribunals and to establish a regime for the protection and support of victims and witnesses providing not only physical protection, but also medical and psychological support.
- We support the call of some States and Justice Hallow for greater harmonisation of national legislation and practice, in both substantive and procedural criminal law, to render cross-border cooperation in the fight against impunity more effective, thereby contributing to a seamless web of justice.

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