

Press Release

**19-04-2004**

**Prosecutor receives referral of the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

ICC-OTP-20040419-50

**Situation:** Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, has received a letter signed by the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) referring to him the situation of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court allegedly committed anywhere in the territory of the DRC since the entry into force of the Rome Statute, on 1 July 2002. By means of this letter, the DRC asked the Prosecutor to investigate in order to determine if one or more persons should be charged with such crimes, and the authorities committed to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

After receiving several communications from individuals and non-governmental organizations, the Prosecutor had announced in July 2003 that he would closely follow the situation in the DRC, indicating that the situation would be a priority for his Office. Since then, the Office has continued its work in analyzing the situation in the DRC, especially in Ituri. In September 2003, the Prosecutor informed the Assembly of States Parties that he would be prepared to seek authorisation from a Pre-Trial Chamber to start an investigation under his proprio motu powers, but that a referral and active support from the DRC would facilitate the work of the Office of the Prosecutor.

In accordance with the Rome Statute, the Prosecutor will now proceed to determine whether there is a reasonable basis to initiate an investigation in respect of the situation referred. The Office of the Prosecutor will therefore assure itself of the basis for an investigation under the Statute and examine the modalities for such an investigation, in order to reach an informed decision.

The Prosecutor takes note of and welcomes the affirmation by the DRC of its readiness to cooperate with the Court in all of its efforts pursuant to the referral.