



Cour
Pénale
Internationale

International
Criminal
Court

Le Président

The President



Judge Sang-Hyun Song
President of the International Criminal Court

Tribute to A.N.R. Robinson at State Ecumenical Service

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
1 May 2014

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to pay tribute, on behalf of the International Criminal Court, to President Arthur Robinson.

As the international justice community stands with the people of Trinidad and Tobago in mourning the passing of a great statesman, we take solace in the fact that his immense legacy is flourishing– in the form of a new system of international criminal justice that most likely would not exist today, had it not been for President Robinson’s vision, initiative and persistence.

At the United Nations in 1989, he set in motion a process that would later lead to the creation of the world’s first permanent court with the mandate to hold individuals accountable for the most heinous atrocities imaginable – genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

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President Robinson’s initiative was by no means a whim of the moment – rather, it was the culmination of his intense interest and activism on the subject over several decades.

It was always clear in his vision that the international criminal court is not a goal in and of itself, in isolation – rather, he saw the ICC as an essential building block of a stable international community. “Neither a free State nor a free world can long endure without adequate safeguards for the rule of law”¹, he said. These words resonate just as much today as they did quarter of a century ago.

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¹ Statement to United Nations General Assembly, 4 October 1990.

President Robinson did not rest at the creation of the ICC in 2002. He continued his advocacy in support of a strong and independent system of international justice, and went on to serve on the Board of the ICC's Trust Fund for Victims.

Such is the extent of his contributions that the ICC's first courtroom was named after him – it is known as the Robinson Courtroom.

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President Robinson's reputation far surpasses the borders of Trinidad and Tobago, and I believe that the entire Caribbean region can be proud of his global legacy. Indeed, all but three CARICOM members have joined the Rome Statute, and I hope [and believe] that the rest will do so soon.

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Today we bid farewell to a great man, whose contribution to a rules-based international order will stay with us forever. We can truly call Arthur Robinson the grandfather of the International Criminal Court, an institution which – and I quote President Robinson – “we must defend against all attacks in order to ensure the future of our children and of all mankind”.²

Thank you.

²Statement by A.N.R. Robinson on “The United States administration's campaign against the International Criminal Court”, 23 Aug 2002.