

# AMICC

American Non-Governmental Organizations Coalition for the International Criminal Court

## Secretariat

John Washburn  
Convenor

Anne Heindel  
Deputy Convenor

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*ABA Section of Int'l Law & Practice*  
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*Amnesty Int'l USA*  
*Baha'is of the US*  
*Jacob Blaustein Inst.*  
*Campaign for UN Reform*  
*Church World Service*  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*  
*Fellowship of Reconciliation*  
*Feminist Majority Found.*  
*Human Rights Watch*  
*Independent Student Coalition for the ICC*  
*Int'l Comm. on Offensive Microwave Weapons*  
*Int'l Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul Univ.*  
*Int'l Federation of Women Lawyers*  
*Int'l NGO Coalition for an ICC (CICC)*  
*Lawyers Comm. for Human Rights*  
*Lawyers Comm. on Nuclear Policy*  
*Maryknoll Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Missioner's*  
*National Ass'n of Criminal Defense Lawyers*  
*National Service Conf. of the Am. Ethical Union*  
*Network of Solidarity with the People of Guatemala*  
*Philadelphia Bar Ass'n*  
*Presbyterian Church, USA*  
*Unitarian-Universalist Ass'n*  
*United Methodist Church*  
*United Nations Ass'n USA*  
*Veterans for Peace, Inc.*  
*World Federalist Ass'n*

## Observers

*US Committee for UNICEF*  
*Women's Caucus for Gender Justice*  
*Women's Bar Ass'n*

## AMERICAN LEGION INITIATIVE

In the October issue of American Legion Magazine, both in hardcopy and on-line, the feature article, "Unauthorized Authority: The Dawning of the International Criminal Court," is rife with inaccuracies and misperceptions. This is especially troublesome since the magazine has a readership of around 3 million veterans, many of who already harbor suspicions about the International Criminal Court (ICC). This article will confirm their worst fears. It could also induce the membership to initiate a policy position against the Court, something that it has not yet done.

In response to this article and the importance that the American NGO Coalition for the ICC (AMICC) attaches to educating and informing American veterans about the ICC and obtaining their support, we have begun a two part campaign to (1) encourage letters to the editor by American Legion members, and (2) initiate the adoption of an American Legion resolution in support of US cooperation with the ICC when it is in the interest of servicemembers.

Any assistance, information, or advice you can provide us related to these efforts will be warmly appreciated. You can access the Magazine article at:

[http://www.legion.org/publications/pubs\\_mag\\_index.htm](http://www.legion.org/publications/pubs_mag_index.htm).

### (1) Letters to the Editor

We need urgently for a large number of **only American Legion members** to write rebuttal letters to the editor.

If you are an ICC supporter, but not a Legion member, please ask your Legion friends and acquaintances to assist this action. Please also ask groups to which you belong if there are any Legion members who would be willing to participate.

The more letters we can send in, the more likely we will be able to begin a fair and accurate dialogue with the Legion through which we can convince a critical American constituency both that the Court is not out to get servicemembers, and even more important, that it will serve their interests.

Responses should be e-mailed to [magazine@legion.org](mailto:magazine@legion.org).

Letter writers can choose from among suggested talking points located on our website at:

[http://www.amicc.org/new\\_amicc.html#letters](http://www.amicc.org/new_amicc.html#letters).

Among these, it is important to remember that the ICC benefits American servicemembers:

- The Court will provide an additional enforcement mechanism for armed conflict law, which protects soldiers from all types of inhumane conduct;

- The Court will prosecute those who abuse prisoners of war;
- The Court will try leaders who foment wars of aggression and use inhumane methods to conduct those wars, which lead to the deaths of American soldiers;
- The Court will apply a body of international law that has been largely created by and is fully acceptable to the United States. The US has specifically approved the Court's jurisprudence and trial procedure. Thus, if an American soldier were to be captured and accused of war crimes by a hostile state, and the ICC were able obtain jurisdiction over the case, that soldier would be much more likely to receive a fair trial than if they remained in the custody of an enemy state.

## **(2) Legion ICC Resolution Campaign**

We are seeking to identify Legion Departments (55 in all including one in each state, DC, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico, and the Philippines) that would be willing to sponsor a Legion resolution calling on the US to work with the ICC to:

- Assist any American servicemember that becomes involved with the Court's activities,
- Promote the rights of servicemembers in any ICC case involving POWs, and
- Cooperate with the Court in prosecuting foreign nationals accused of the kinds of atrocities that lead to wars.

Such a resolution would bring the Legion's support to establishing closer relations between the United States and the Court without directly confronting the Legion's refusal to endorse the ICC. Put another way, it would allow the Legion to pursue its interests in the ICC pragmatically without abandoning the principles the Legion believes require it to reject the concept of the Court. All three of the main points suggested for the resolution are permitted by the American Servicemembers' Protection Act and the last one is specifically authorized by the Dodd amendment to the ASPA.

Since the Legion follows a "bottom-up" approach in adopting policy statements, we are encouraging ICC supporters to confer with local Legionnaires about how best to get the Department in their state to sponsor such a resolution at the next American Legion National Convention, to be held in St. Louis, MO from August 22-28, 2003.

AMICC is a coalition of 30 US non-governmental organizations, including UNA-USA, that are committed to achieving full United States support for the ICC and the earliest possible US ratification of the Court's Rome Statute. Coalition members coordinate and support each other's national programs involving the ICC and promote grassroots activity in support of the Court. This includes the formation of local ICC alliances composed of organizations such as bar associations, women's groups, human rights organizations, religious organizations, veterans groups, victims organizations, students and young adults, and others. Local ICC alliances combine their diverse constituencies to create in their areas awareness of and support for the importance of US cooperation in a strong ICC. For more information write to [amicc@amicc.org](mailto:amicc@amicc.org).