



The Judges of the Court



Inaugural ceremony
of the Court

Photo: ICC-CPI/

Wim van Cappellen

The first eighteen judges of the International Criminal Court were elected in February 2003 by the Assembly of States Parties and sworn in on 11 March 2003 in The Hague.

To ensure continuity, at the first election, one-third of the judges were selected by lot to serve for three years, one-third for six and one-third for nine. Any judge elected for three years or less is eligible for re-election for a further full period of nine months. The next elections took place during the resumed fourth session of the Assembly of States Parties which was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 26 and 27 January 2006, during which six judges were elected for full nine-year terms. They were elected by secret ballot, having obtained the highest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of the States Parties present and voting.

The judges are persons of high moral character, impartiality and integrity with the qualifications for appointment to the highest judicial offices in their countries. All have extensive experience relevant to the Court's judicial activity and are elected on the basis of their established competence in criminal law and procedure in relevant areas of international law, such as international humanitarian law and the law of human rights. Judges have judicial expertise in specific issues, including violence against women or children. All are fluent in at least one of the working languages of the Court, English and French.

The election of the judges takes account of the need to represent the world's principal legal systems, a fair representation of men and women, and equitable geographical distribution.

At present, eight of the judges at the Court are women and ten are men. Six come from the Western European and others Group of States, three from the Latin American and the Caribbean Group of States, three from the Asian Group of States, four from the African Group of States, and two from the Group of Eastern European States. All are nationals of States Party to the Rome Statute and no two judges may be nationals of the same State.

The judges are independent in the performance of their duties. Judges required to serve at the seat of the Court on a full-time basis may not engage in any other professional activities, and even those who do not serve full-time must refrain from activities 'likely to interfere with their judicial functions or to affect confidence in their independence'. A judge may not participate in a case in which his or her impartiality might reasonably be called into question on any ground.

The judges elect the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the Court from among their ranks. Acting on behalf of the Court, the Presidency can propose that the number of judges be increased if this is considered both necessary and appropriate. In such cases, the Registry circulates the proposal to all States Parties for a final discussion by the Assembly of States Parties.

The judges can serve for nine years and are not eligible for re-election. However, a judge assigned to a Trial Chamber or the Appeals Chamber remains in office to complete any trial or appeal which has already begun before that Chamber.



President of the International Criminal Court: Judge Philippe Kirsch (Canada)
Elected for a 6 year period from the Western European and others Group of States (WEOG).
Assigned to the Appeals Division.

Judge Kirsch is member of the Bar of the Province of Quebec and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1988. He has extensive experience in the establishment of the International Criminal Court, international humanitarian law, international criminal law and public international law. In 1998, Judge Kirsch served as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court (the Rome Conference). He was also Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court (1999 - 2002). Judge Kirsch's experience in international humanitarian law includes serving as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the International Conference on the Protection of War Victims (1993), and of the Drafting Committee at the 26th and 27th International Conferences of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (1995, 1999) and related meetings. He also chaired the Canadian National Committee on Humanitarian Law (1998 - 1999) and was a member of the Group of International Advisers to the International Committee of the Red Cross (2000 - 2003). Judge Kirsch has extensive experience in the development of international criminal law, with particular regard to issues related to terrorism. He served as Chairman of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee for the Suppression of Acts of Terrorism (1997-1999) and as chairman or president of international conferences addressing terrorism-related issues such as the suppression of unlawful acts in the contexts of international civil aviation and maritime navigation. He was also Chairman of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee that elaborated the International Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (1993-1994). Judge Kirsch appeared twice as an Agent before the International Court of Justice. He has also participated in international arbitrations and was a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (1995-1999). He has written extensively on the International Criminal Court and other international legal issues.



First Vice-President: Judge Akua Kuenyehia (Ghana)
Professor Kuenyehia was elected for a nine-year term from the African Group of States, and is assigned to the Pre-Trial Division.

Judge Kuenyehia was Dean, Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana before her election as a judge. During her time at that university, she taught criminal law, gender and the law, international human rights law and public international law. She was co-ordinator of a research project entitled 'Women and Law in Anglophone West Africa', which covered Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. She has written three books and numerous academic publications on gender and the law, family law and international human rights. Judge Kuenyehia is a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Ghana. She has experience as a solicitor, advocate and human rights expert, and in criminal law and procedure. She also has experience as an administrator and has expertise in gender and the law, international human rights issues and was a member of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



Second Vice-President: Judge René Blattmann (Bolivia)
Judge Blattmann was elected for a six-year term from the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States (GRULAC), and is assigned to the Trial Division.

Judge Blattmann has extensive experience in international law, criminal law and human rights. He has been a professor of criminal and international law. As Minister of Justice and Human Rights, he focused his work on the systematisation and modernisation of the judiciary system and on implementing the protection and promotion of human rights and citizen guarantees. He launched the National Rural Mobile Public Defence and created human rights offices in conflict zones, especially in indigenous areas. Judge Blattmann served as Chief of the Human Rights and Justice Area of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, responsible for the verification of the Global Agreement on Human Rights, established by the Peace Agreements. For his commitment and achievements in human rights and justice reforms, Judge Blattmann has been distinguished with international awards, including the Robert G. Story International Award presented by the South-Western Legal Foundation - Academy of American and International Law (USA), the Monseñor Leonidas Proaño Latin American Prize for Human Rights, the 2001 Carl Bertelsmann Prize of the Bertelsmann Foundation (Germany), and has also been distinguished with the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Basel (Switzerland).



Judge Georghios M. Pikis (Cyprus)

Judge Pikis was elected for a six-year term from the Asian Group of States, and is assigned to the Appeals Division.

Judge Pikis was President of the Supreme Court of Cyprus from 1995 to 2004, and a Supreme Court Judge since 1981. Prior to this he had been President of the District Court from 1972 to 1981 and a District Judge from 1966 to 1972. He has competence in law and human rights, criminal law, criminal procedure and international criminal law. Judge Pikis served as *ad hoc* judge of the European Court on Human Rights on two occasions, in 1993 and 1997.

He was elected as a member and served on the United Nations Committee against Torture from 1996 to 1998. In his capacity as President of the Supreme Court, he served until 2004 as Chairman of XIIIth Conference of European Constitutional Courts.

Judge Pikis has written numerous legal publications (books, papers and reports) and given lectures and speeches on human rights, the rule of law, judicial independence, constitutional law, the doctrine of separation of powers, English common law and rules of equity and their application in Cyprus, basic aspects of Cypriot law, criminal law, criminal procedure and sentencing.



Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica)

Judge Odio Benito was elected for a nine-year term from the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States (GRULAC), and is assigned to the Trial Division.

Judge Odio Benito has comprehensive practical and academic experience in the field of human rights and international humanitarian law. She is Professor Emeritus at the University of Costa Rica and she was awarded the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa by St. Edward's University in 2004.

Judge Odio Benito has been a member of the Costa Rican Group to the Permanent Court of Arbitration since 2000. She was Second Vice-President of Costa Rica from 1998 to 2002, and served twice as Minister of Justice of Costa Rica, from 1978 to 1982 and from 1990 to 1993. Judge Odio Benito was a member of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the main subsidiary body of the Commission on Human Rights, from 1980 to 1983. She is the author and co-author of several publications on human rights, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. From 1983 to 1986 she was Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Discrimination and Intolerance based on Religion or Creed, and wrote a major report on the elimination of religious discrimination and creed published by the United Nations in 1986. From 1993 to 1995, Judge Odio Benito served as Vice-President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), where she was a judge until 1998. In 2000 she was elected President of the Working Group on the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.



Judge Navanethem Pillay (South Africa)

Judge Pillay was elected for a six-year term from the African Group of States, and is assigned to the Appeals Division.

In 1967 Judge Pillay became the first woman to start a law practice in Natal Province, South Africa, and the first black woman to serve in the High Court in her country. She has presided over both criminal and civil cases. As a practitioner, Judge Pillay defended many opponents of apartheid.

Judge Pillay was then elected by the United Nations General Assembly to be a judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where she served for eight years, including four years as president. During her term, Judge Pillay was credited with turning the Tribunal towards a more positive course.

She has written on and practised in international criminal law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and more particularly on crimes of sexual violence in conflicts.



Judge Sang-hyun Song (Republic of Korea)

Judge Song was elected for a nine-year term from the Asian Group of States, and is assigned to the Appeals Division.

Judge Song has extensive practical and academic experience in the area of court management, criminal procedure and the law of evidence. As a member of the advisory committee to the Korean Supreme Court and Ministry of Justice, he participated in the reform of the national litigation system and in particular of its Penal Code, the Code and the Court Rules of Criminal Procedure and criminal court processes.

Professor Song has experience in relevant areas of international law, in particular in international humanitarian law and human rights law.

He also has extensive experience in a professional and legal capacity as Vice-President of UNICEF/Korea, among others. Judge Song has worked as an attorney and visiting professor in a number of foreign countries including Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. He is the author of several publications on relevant legal issues.



Judge Hans-Peter Kaul (Germany)

Judge Kaul was elected for a nine-year term from the Western European and Others Group of States (WEOG), and he is the President of the Pre-Trial Division.

Judge Kaul is qualified for the German Bar. In 2002, he was appointed Ambassador and Commissioner of the Federal Foreign Office for the International Criminal Court. Since 1996 Judge Kaul has participated as head of the German delegation in the discussions and negotiation process of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, in his capacity as Head of the Public International Law Division of the Federal Foreign Office (1996 - 2002), he was responsible, *inter alia*, for several cases involving Germany which were before the International Court of Justice. He has written extensively on the International Criminal Court and other fields of public international law.



Judge Mauro Politi (Italy)

Judge Politi was elected for a six-year term from the Western European and Others Group of States (WEOG), and is assigned to the Pre-Trial Chamber.

Judge Politi has been a full professor of international law at the University of Trento since 1990. Prior to this, and since 1976, he had taught at the Universities of Cagliari and Urbino. As Legal Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations (1992-2001), he participated actively in the negotiation process that led to the adoption of the Rome Statute.

He also served on the Italian delegation to the Preparatory Commission for the ICC. During his judicial career (1969-1983), he was a judge at the Tribunals of Oristano and Milan.

Judge Politi was also Deputy Prosecutor at the Juvenile Court of Milan. In 2001, he was elected by the United Nations General Assembly to be on the list of *ad litem* judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. As a former judge and prosecutor, he has dealt with numerous cases of human rights violations and of violence and abuse against women and children.

Judge Politi has published several articles on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and on the related Elements of Crimes.



Judge Erkki Kourula (Finland)

Judge Kourula was elected for a nine-year term from the Western European and others Group of States (WEOG), and is assigned to the Appeals Division.

Judge Kourula has a PhD in international law from the University of Oxford. He has held various research positions in international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights, and acted as a professor of international law. His experience includes working as a district judge in Finland dealing with criminal cases. Between 1985 and 2003, he served the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in various legal capacities, culminating in his appointment as Director General for Legal Affairs; he was also agent for Finland before the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Communities. In 1991 he was appointed Legal Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in New York, serving until 1995. He followed closely the developments leading to the establishment of the ICTY and ICTR and was actively involved in the negotiations of the Rome Statute (1995-1998) as head of the Finnish delegation to the Preparatory Committee and as head of the Finnish delegation to the Rome Conference on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. From 1998 to 2002, Judge Kourula served in Strasbourg as Permanent Representative of Finland (Ambassador), holding the chair of e.g., the Rapporteur Groups on Human Rights and National Minorities of the Council of Europe (2000-2002). He has participated in many international conferences, contributed to publications and written articles on international law, including victims' issues.



Judge Fatoumata Dembele Diarra (Mali)

Judge Diarra was elected for a nine-year term from the African Group of States, and is assigned to the Pre-Trial Division.

Judge Diarra has a *certificat de licence en droit* (LLB) from Dakar University, a *maîtrise en droit privé* (LLM in private law) from the Mali *École Nationale d'Administration* (national college of public administration), she is a graduate of the *École Nationale de la Magistrature* (national college for the judiciary) in Paris, and holds a diploma in the Implementation of Regional and International Standards for the Protection of Human Rights. Immediately prior to her election to the ICC, she was serving as an *ad litem* judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Before this she had been National Director of the Mali Justice Department, President of the Criminal Chamber of Bamako Appeals Court, President of the Assize Court, as well as an Examining Magistrate and Deputy Public Prosecutor. Judge Diarra civil society positions have included those of Vice-President of the International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (IFWLC), Vice-President of the African Women Jurists' Federation, President of the *Association des Juristes Maliennes* (the Malian women jurists' association) and President of the *Observatoire des Droits de la Femme et de l'Enfant* (women's and children's rights monitoring body). Judge Diarra has published several articles and carried out several studies including one on three branches of law: family, national and international. Furthermore, she has worked with the ICRC on humanitarian law and with the *Agence de la Francophonie* (agency for the francophone world) within the framework of the Preparatory Committee on the draft Rules of Procedure and Evidence and on the definition of the Elements of Crimes which fall within the jurisdiction of the ICC. She has taken part in many international forums on women's and children's rights. She chaired the Preparatory Committee on the participation of Mali at the Beijing Summit in 1995.



Judge Anita Ušacka (Latvia)

Judge Ušacka was elected for a nine-year term from the Eastern European Group of States, and is assigned to the Pre-Trial Division.

Judge Ušacka was elected judge of the Latvian Constitutional Court upon its creation in 1996, where she served until 2003. She has been a member of the International Association of Women Judges since 1997. From 1994 to 1996, she was the Executive Director of the Latvian branch of UNICEF. In 2002, Judge Ušacka was appointed full professor at the Department of Constitutional Law of Latvia University, where she has been academically affiliated since 1975. She has directed and contributed to a number of crucial projects integral to the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. She has written reports and papers promoting the establishment in Latvia of the rule of law, protection of human rights, administrative law reform, constitutional law reform, fair trial guarantees, and judicial training and reform, among others. As a judge and professor she has acquired expertise in international humanitarian and public law, with a particular focus on the rights of women and children. Judge Ušacka obtained her law degree from the Latvia University and completed her PhD at the Faculty of Law, Moscow State University. Since 1990, her foreign training and research experience has included a year at the University of Notre Dame in the United States, studying in Germany on a Max Planck fellowship, and at the Human Rights Institute in Strasbourg.



Judge Sir Adrian Fulford (United Kingdom)

Judge Fulford was elected for a nine-year term from the Western European and Others Group of States (WEOG), and is assigned to the Trial Division.

Judge Fulford has been a barrister since 1978, and a Queen's Counsel since 1994. He is currently a High Court Judge in the United Kingdom. He has established competence in criminal law and procedure and is experienced as both judge and advocate. He has competence in relevant areas of international law, in particular human rights law, and has extensive experience in professional legal ethics.

Judge Fulford has legal expertise on a wide range of specific relevant issues, including violence against women and children; serious acts of violence, such as murder and terrorism; and has extensive practical experience of questions relating to evidence in criminal cases and the handling of sensitive information, including the protection of victims and sources. He has edited important legal publications and has been widely published.



Judge Sylvia Steiner (Brazil)

Judge Steiner was elected for a nine-year term from the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States (GRULAC), and is assigned to the Pre-Trial Division.

Judge Steiner has comprehensive experience in criminal and international law, in particular the international law of human rights and international humanitarian law. She was a lawyer from 1977 to 1982, and subsequently Federal Public Prosecutor from 1982 to 1995, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 1995, she was appointed to the Federal Court of Appeal, where she served as a judge until her election to the International Criminal Court in 2003. From 1989 to 1995, she was a member of the Penitentiary Council of São Paulo, where she served as a vice-president for four years. Judge Steiner obtained her law degree at the Law School of São Paulo University. In 1999 she received her specialist degree in criminal law at Brasilia University and in 2000 obtained her master's degree in international law at the Law School of São Paulo University. Judge Steiner has written extensively on human rights, the rights of women and children, criminal law and international criminal law. Judge Sylvia Steiner is a founding associate member of the Brazilian Institute of Criminal Sciences, and was Deputy Director of the Brazilian Criminal Sciences Journal for four years. She is also a member of the Brazilian Judges for Democracy Association. Judge Steiner has been a member of the Executive Council of the Brazilian Section of the International Jurists Commission. As a lecturing professor, Judge Steiner has addressed classes and given lectures at the most important universities in Brazil and at conferences in Latin America, Europe and Africa. Judge Steiner was a member of the Brazilian delegation to the Preparatory Commission of the International Criminal Court from 1999 to 2002. She was also a member of the Official Working Group on the Implementation of the Rome Statute in 2003, in Brazil.



Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova (Bulgaria)

Judge Trendafilova was elected for a nine-year term from the Group of Eastern European States and is assigned to the Pre-Trial Division.

Judge Trendafilova has extensive experience in criminal law, criminal procedural law and international criminal law. She has been a Professor of Criminal Justice at Sofia University since completing her PhD in 1984 and she also has experience as a human rights expert. She is a member of the Bulgarian Union of lawyers and a member of the Bulgarian Union of Scholars. She was called to the Bar of Bulgaria in 1995. Judge Trendafilova chaired the working group that prepared the reform of the Bulgarian criminal procedure in line with the European and international standards for efficient administration of justice and protection of human rights (1998-1999). She was a deputy district attorney at Sofia District Court (1985-1989) and represented Bulgaria at the UN Commission for Crime and Criminal Justice (1992-1994). She advised the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the establishment of the International Criminal Court and served as an expert to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Parliament of Bulgaria where she chaired the Criminal Division of the Legislative Consultative Council. She has also written over 70 publications in Bulgaria and abroad in the field of human rights law, international criminal procedural law, procedural law and constitutional law.



Judge Daniel David Ntanda Nsereko (Uganda)

Judge Daniel David Ntanda Nsereko was elected to fill a judicial vacancy from the African Group of States. He was elected for a four-year, three-month term and has been assigned to the Trial Division.

He has more than twenty years of comprehensive experience in criminal law and procedure. As an Advocate, he has been representing defendants in criminal and civil cases before Magistrates' Courts, the High Court and the Court of Appeal in Uganda since 1972. He served as a trial observer to Swaziland in 1990 and to Ethiopia in 1996, writing comprehensive confidential reports in the context of international human rights standards. From 1983 to 1984, Judge Nsereko served as expert consultant for the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. He has written extensively on criminal law and procedure, human rights and international humanitarian law. He has been Professor of Law at the University of Botswana since 1996. Judge Nsereko holds the degrees of LL.B from the University of East Africa in Tanzania, M.C.J. from Howard University, and LL.M and J.S.D. from New York University in the United States.



Judge Fumiko Saiga (Japan)

Judge Fumiko Saiga was elected from the Asian Group of States. She was elected to fill a judicial vacancy for a term of fifteen months. Judge Saiga has been assigned to the Pre-Trial Division.

Between 2003 and 2007, Judge Saiga represented Japan as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Norway and to the Republic of Iceland, serving as Ambassador with responsibility for Human Rights from 2005. She has considerable expertise in Japan's relations with the United Nations and has been extensively involved in human rights issues, particularly gender issues. She was active in the process of ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and has legal expertise on gender issues, including violence against women.



Judge Bruno Cotte (France)

Judge Bruno Cotte was elected from the Western European and Others Group of States (WEOG). He was elected to fill a judicial vacancy for a term of four years and three months and has been assigned to the Trial Division.

A senior judge in France, he served for the last seven years as President of the Criminal Chamber of the *Cour de Cassation* (Supreme Court of Appeal) where he dealt with international criminal law cases. From 1984 to 1990, he was Director for Criminal Affairs and Pardons in the Ministry of Justice, dealing with international mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, issues related to the definition of crimes against humanity and associated litigation. Judge Cotte also served as Attorney General of the Versailles Court of Appeal from May to September 1990; Public Prosecutor of the *Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris* (Paris District Court) from 1990 to 1995; and Counsel for the Prosecution of the *Cour de Cassation* from 1995 to 2000.