

# Ratification Of Rome Statute To Pave Way For Ukraine's Membership Of International Criminal Court

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BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, August 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Thursday, August 15th, President Volodymyr Zelensky took a major step by submitting a bill to the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, to ratify the Rome Statute, a major step towards the country's membership of the International Criminal Court (ICC).



Inna Chefranova, Founder and Director of QuestComms.eu

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This treaty, adopted in 1998, serves as the foundation for the ICC, which was established to prosecute individuals responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. The statute came into force in 2002, with the ICC headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands.

For years, Ukraine had resisted joining the ICC, primarily due to concerns within its military.

The Ukrainian armed forces have been wary of the potential legal risks for their members, particularly in light of the ongoing conflict with Russia that began in 2014. The fear was that ICC jurisdiction could lead to prosecutions of Ukrainian soldiers, a concern that has long stalled any

progress towards ratification.

However, the European Union, whose member states have all ratified the Rome Statute, has increasingly pressured Ukraine to take this step.

The EU views Ukraine's ratification as a crucial element of the country's broader [European integration](#) efforts. In 2023, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba sought to dispel fears that ratifying the statute would be detrimental to Ukraine.

"All the speculation that this will somehow harm Ukraine itself is just speculation, and nothing more," Kuleba stated, signaling a shift in the government's stance.

The push towards ratification gained further momentum with the support of Iryna Mudra, deputy head of the office of the Ukrainian president. In an opinion piece published on the Ukrainian website European Pravda, Mudra argued that ratifying the Rome Statute would be a significant demonstration of Ukraine's commitment to European integration.

She emphasised that joining the ICC would enhance Ukraine's ability to hold Russian perpetrators accountable, bolster its diplomatic standing, and contribute to Russia's international isolation.

Ukraine's decision to move forward with ratification has been influenced by growing pressure from various international figures, including European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders and ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan.

The Ukrainian government, faced with mounting external and internal demands, ultimately decided to invoke Article 124 of the Rome Statute. This article provides a temporary exemption from the court's jurisdiction over war crimes for a period of seven years, which was a critical factor in alleviating the concerns of the Ukrainian military.

This compromise, which grants Ukraine a degree of immunity for its armed forces for seven years, helped to break the deadlock that had persisted for years.



Inna Chefranova is a graduate of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, holds an MBA from Britain's prestigious Henley Management College, and has more than 20 years of professional experience of working with EU institutions.

The ratification process, once complete, would firmly establish Ukraine's alignment with international legal standards and reinforce its commitment to justice, not only for the crimes committed against its people but also in adherence to global norms.

Ratifying the Rome Statute would represent a significant step for Ukraine as it navigates its path toward deeper integration with European and international institutions.

By joining the ICC, Ukraine would gain a more robust framework for prosecuting Russian war crimes, an outcome that aligns with both its national interests and broader international efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

Additionally, Ukraine's ratification would send a strong signal of its dedication to the principles of international justice, further solidifying its standing within the international community.

The move is also seen as a strategic response to the ongoing conflict with Russia. By ratifying the Rome Statute, Ukraine strengthens its legal and diplomatic tools to address the war crimes committed on its territory.

This step would enable Ukraine to leverage the ICC's resources and expertise in pursuing justice, while simultaneously enhancing its international credibility.

In conclusion, Ukraine's forthcoming ratification of the Rome Statute marks a pivotal moment in its journey towards closer ties with the European Union and the broader international community.

Despite the concerns of its military, the decision reflects a calculated balance between national interests and the imperatives of international law, and signals a clear commitment to justice, accountability, and European integration.

Inna Chefranova

QuestComms.eu

inna.chefranova@questcomms.eu

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