

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **STATEMENT BY THE PROSECUTOR RELATED TO CRIMES COMMITTED IN BARLONYA CAMP IN UGANDA**

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, will investigate the crimes committed on Saturday 21 February 2004 in Barlonya camp, North Eastern Uganda. The latest reports estimate the number of deaths at over 200. These crimes are the most serious committed in the country since 1995, when 240 people were killed in Atiak, north of Lira. These crimes could fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC. The Court has responsibility for the prosecution of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, in order to bring an end to impunity for these crimes. The Office of the Prosecutor will take steps to ensure that the crimes committed in Barlonya camp will be investigated and that those bearing the greatest responsibility will be prosecuted.

The situation in northern Uganda was referred to the Office by the government of Uganda last December. Since then, the Prosecutor is examining information and is seeking the cooperation of states, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. A formal announcement of the initiation of an investigation will take place soon.

The investigation will be carried out in an independent and impartial way, with paramount importance being given to the interests of victims. Accordingly the Prosecutor met recently with representatives of non-governmental organizations from Uganda and traditional leaders. They expressed their concerns about crimes committed by different groups in the region, and about the ongoing local negotiations to stop the violence. Most of the members of the groups concerned are children who were abducted and forced to become soldiers. The Office of the Prosecutor is aware of these concerns. The Prosecutor has explained that he will conduct independent investigations and receive complaints about all crimes. He also explained that his Office will only prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for crimes committed after July 2002.