

# Adelaide Christian Centre

609 Grange Road

GRANGE

SA 5022

28th November 2000

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I am responding to your advertisement in the Weekend Australian of 4th November inviting comments to the Treaties Committee, whether it is in the national interest to ratify the Statute for the International Criminal Court.

I am strongly of the opinion that it would not be in Australia's best interests to ratify this Statute, because to do so would over-ride this country's national sovereignty.

1. Our system of democracy has been developed over hundreds of years and is arguably the best in the world. In Australia the government is answerable to the people, and if the people do not approve of their government they vote them out at the next election. Who has the right of jurisdiction over the ICC, apart from themselves? Would they be answerable to an outside authority?

It is fundamentally wrong to ratify a Statute that removes any authority from our own government, or seeks to change the laws of this country without the peoples' approval.

2. Government should always be kept as close as possible to the people, ie Local Government, State Government and Federal Government. The people know their representatives and have a voice in the running of their own country. I disapprove of a 'faceless', unelected forum in a distant part of the world being given any authority over the will of the people of Australia, their established laws and their elected government.

3. How can sixty countries rightfully impose their will over the sovereignty of the many more remaining countries of the world who have not ratified the Statute?

4. There is no guarantee that the members of the ICC do not have a hidden agenda when they say that ICC laws should take precedence over local laws when there is a discrepancy between the two.

eg. 4.1 The present European Union began with the European Common Market, purely for trade we were told. Last week it was announced they have voted themselves the right to have their own army.

eg. 4.2 English laws must now be subject to The European Convention of Human Rights Act 1988, that came into effect in October. The English legal system was originally based upon Christian principles of justice derived from Magna Carta; Australia has inherited this system. I question to what extent the ICC embraces Christian principles in its concepts.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 1, para. 1; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 1, para. 1, states "***All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*** "

The stated aims of the ICC contravene these objectives, therefore Australia should not ratify this Statute.

It would not be in Australia's best interests to ratify the Statute for the International Criminal Court.

Yours sincerely

John Ridley  
Pastor (Rtd)