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ICC Registrar hosted a seminar on protection of victims and witnesses

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The ICC Registrar speaking before seminar participants in the seminar on the protection of victims and witnesses © ICC-CPI

On 24 November, 2010, the Registrar of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms Silvana Arbia, hosted a seminar at the seat of the Court in The Hague to discuss the protection of victims and witnesses.

The seminar, sponsored by the Republic of Finland, was organised around four themes:

- the system of protection before international jurisdictions;
- the system of protection before national jurisdictions;
- relocation agreements; and
- strengthening national capacity and the handover of witnesses.

Each theme was discussed by a panel moderated by a facilitator. The panels were composed of protection experts from the ICC Registry and Office of the Prosecutor, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), as well as experts from national jurisdictions (Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), the Netherlands, and Belgium), and from international organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

The seminar was directed at enhancing discussions and enabling the different experts and States involved to reflect on and offer solutions and strategies, as well as to combine efforts to increase efficiency in the field of victims and witnesses' protection.

In her [opening allocution](#), the Registrar thanked the Republic of Finland, represented by Ms Sari Mäkelä, Legal Counselor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and Mrs

Miia Aro-Sanchez, First Secretary of the Embassy of Finland, for the support provided in the organisation of the seminar.

During the first two sessions on "Systems of Protection", each expert was invited to provide his or her comments on the different measures of protection available at the ICC and in other jurisdictions, thresholds for entrance in protection programs, resources available and challenges faced. The experts also answered questions related to the vulnerability of witnesses. In addition, different aspects of the protection of victims and witnesses before national jurisdictions were addressed by the representatives of Italy, the UK, and the Netherlands.

The sessions dedicated to "Cooperation with States" addressed the different modalities pertaining to relocation procedures, as well as the practical issues and needs of the ICC and receiving States. Participation in the development of national capacity as well as the complex issue of the handover of witnesses to receiving States were also debated. In addition, the panel of experts exchanged ideas on mechanisms that could be put in place by international jurisdictions at the national level and the challenges for them to work in partnership with local private or public partners in order to ensure the protection of victims and witnesses.

For further information, please contact Fadi El Abdallah, Associate Legal Outreach Officer, by telephone at: +31 (0)70 515-9152 or by e-mail at: fadi.el-abdallah@icc-cpi.int

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