EU must act to protect the International Criminal Court

The EU and its member states must urgently take action and invoke the Blocking Statute to protect the International Criminal Court (ICC). Coming after months of escalating US sanctions targeting individual ICC judges and prosecutors, on 9 October, the US designated the ICC itself as a sanctioned entity. Such sanctions threaten to dismantle one of the key global institutions tasked with upholding international law and ensuring justice for the victims and survivors of the most serious human rights violations. Against the backdrop of an unprecedented assault against international law, US sanctions on the Court and its officials represent yet another crippling blow.

Set up in 1998, the ICC was established to prosecute individuals responsible for the gravest of atrocities including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. EU member states must stand up and robustly protect the institution they helped build.

Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Helen McEntee TD has called on the US to withdraw all measures against the court and its officials. Ireland should use its EU Presidency to help protect the ICC.

Statements of support and solidarity must now be matched by robust political action to protect the Court and the companies and NGOs that interact with it. The EU should urgently move to bring the US measures against the ICC within the scope of the Blocking Statute, protecting EU firms and organisations from the extraterritorial effects of the sanctions. Diplomatic avenues seeking to revoke the US sanctions should not delay concrete action to protect the Court and those who cooperate with it.