

Press Release: 28 November 2025

## ICC and Keio University hold Inaugural Asia-Pacific Academic Forum in Tokyo



On 27 and 28 November 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC), in collaboration with Keio University, held the Inaugural Asia-Pacific Academic Forum at Keio's Mita Campus in Tokyo, Japan. The Forum brought together representatives from ten leading universities across the Asia-Pacific region that are currently engaged with the ICC to discuss avenues for future academic cooperation, with the aim of encouraging dialogue on issues related to the Court's mandate, fostering deeper engagement with the ICC, and supporting strengthened regional collaboration for the advancement of international justice.

In her opening remarks, ICC President Judge Tomoko Akane underlined the importance of this initiative in enhancing understanding of international criminal justice in the Asia-Pacific region, and expressed her hope that the forum will pave the pathway for further meaningful and sustained engagement between the Court and the region. She stated "in an interconnected world, all countries should work together for the rule of law and the protection of human rights. The ICC is an essential part of those efforts, and it belongs to the countries and the people in the Asia-Pacific just as much as it belongs to any other part of the world."

Kohei Itoh, President of Keio University, welcomed participants to the Forum, then referred to the lecture given by ICC President Akane at Keio last year and his upcoming interview with former Prime Minister Ishiba, a Keio graduate, on the same day, stating that, "We should focus on the importance of Academia pursuing the universal truth so that,

when challenges arise, we can combine forces, and of course, support the ICC to stand for the rule of law."

The two-day event featured discussions on the ICC's strategic vision in the region, opportunities for academic collaboration, and the creation of a long-term regional academic network of universities on international criminal justice. The last session of the event included a student research presentation, offering graduate students the opportunity to present their work to an academic panel that included former ICC Judge Chang-ho Chung.

This Forum forms part of the ICC's broader Asia-Pacific Engagement Strategy, which seeks to strengthen the Court's relationships in the region through academic cooperation, capacity building, and outreach. As a long-term prospect, it is also hoped that greater understanding of the Court will lead to a significant increase in the number of Asia-Pacific States that are Parties to the Rome Statute. Only 19 States out of the 55 States that make up the Asia-Pacific region are States Parties, making it the region with the lowest representation. This event has shed light on both the importance and viability of deepening cooperation between the ICC and leading academic institutions, potentially serving as a model for future engagement in other regions. It has also reflected the shared interest of the Court and academic partners in fostering greater understanding of international criminal justice and encouraging dialogue on related issues.

The Court and Keio University are very grateful to the European Union for its generous financial support of this event and previous Asia-Pacific initiatives held since 2018. We also wish to express our appreciation for the strong partnership between the ICC and Keio University in co-hosting the event. Finally, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to the professors and graduate students for their engagement and contributions.