



**29 May 2023**

### **AJC secretariat welcomes the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty**

On 26 May, following two weeks of intense negotiation in Slovenia, States adopted the Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and other International Crimes (Mutual Legal Assistance Convention or MLA Convention).

The Asia Justice Coalition secretariat (AJC secretariat) participated as an observer civil society organisation in the MLA Diplomatic Conference (15 – 26 May). The secretariat welcomes the adoption of an international treaty concerning inter-State cooperation on atrocity crimes.

The AJC secretariat commends the strategic and unified role of civil society organisations prior to, and at the negotiations (such as AJC members International Commission of Jurists and Amnesty International, Trial International, REDRESS, Global Survivors Fund, Global Rights Compliance, and Parliamentarians for Global Action) to ensure the adoption of a robust treaty to end impunity for atrocity crimes.

The MLA Convention is an important step in the right direction in bolstering international cooperation and bridging gaps in international justice architecture. In particular for the Asian region, the Treaty is important in the absence of a regional cooperation framework for atrocity crimes and could play a significant role in complementing the established transnational crime cooperation framework. The AJC secretariat believes that the MLA Convention would encourage greater South-South cooperation on investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes and strengthen the principle of complementarity.

The onus of giving effect to the adopted Ljubljana-Hague treaty now rests with States. The secretariat calls on all States to sign and ratify the treaty without reservations, and to translate their commitment towards international justice and accountability into action.

\*\*\*\*\*