

REPORT

Core Report Fiscal Year 2021

April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

June 2021



Cover Image: Gambian women gather to share their experiences under the dictatorship during ICTJ-led consultations. (ICTJ)

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About ICTJ

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) works across society and borders to challenge the causes and address the consequences of massive human rights violations. We affirm victims' dignity, fight impunity, and promote responsive institutions in societies emerging from repressive rule or armed conflict as well as in established democracies where historical injustices or systemic abuse remain unresolved. ICTJ envisions a world where societies break the cycle of massive human rights violations and lay the foundations for peace, justice, and inclusion. For more information, visit www.ictj.org

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Introduction

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected every corner of the world. Not only have millions already succumbed to disease, but countless more found themselves out of work or scraping by in a sinking global economy hampered by measures taken to slow down the contagion. Increasingly, we are seeing authoritarian governments leverage the pandemic situation as a moment to expand and abuse power, including efforts to impede justice. Political instability and the economic crisis related to the effects of COVID-19 has also weakened governments and caused serious setbacks to transitional justice processes. Even as vaccines rolled out at different speeds across the globe, many countries experienced new waves of the virus and the health crisis continued to expose inequality and exacerbate justice gaps.

Countries torn apart by conflict or where past or ongoing repression has left state institutions weak and society grappling with a legacy of mass atrocities have been hit the hardest. In these already fragile, unstable, and often poor nations, the most susceptible to COVID-19, the political repercussions, and the fallout of the economic downturn are members of marginalized communities and vulnerable social groups, such as victims of human rights abuses and refugees and displaced persons. Women who previously helped support their families financially found themselves unemployed, many confined at home with an abusive spouse, and caring for and educating children who had been in school most of the day before the pandemic prompted school closures. COVID-19 has profoundly affected every country where ICTJ currently works or has a presence.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency, and has triggered a new crisis for human rights and for justice. During the reporting period, ICTJ has continued to experience increased demand for our support. For example, the organization had to quickly develop and respond to urgent demands by actors working for peace and accountability in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, and Venezuela, among others. In addition to requests from less developed societies, ICTJ has experienced a new demand from wealthy developed nations facing social unrest and struggling to deal with systemic racism and the continued impact of abuses committed in the past. This includes our work on the racial justice agenda in the United States and on the rights of aboriginal people in Australia, funded entirely by designated philanthropic support.

ICTJ's institutional flexibility and agility to respond to emerging and rapidly developing contexts enabled the organization to quickly develop contingency plans in each program which adapted our approach to the evolving crisis in each unique context. This method of working is supported by our adaptive management approach which emphasizes timely and ongoing analysis, data

collection, and reflection on lessons learned through internal reporting, risk analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and regular planning mechanisms throughout the year. This enables us to review program implementation and its relevance to the context and stakeholders as well as adjust our approach while simultaneously fulfilling our mission. Not only was ICTJ able to adjust to continue our work during the crisis, but we were able to embrace new, innovative, and beneficial ways of working. For example, this includes an increased focus on the role of arts and cultural interventions in shaping discourse about justice in society, better use of digital tools to democratize access to international discussions, and greater attention to psycho-social support for victims.

At a time when many organizations were pausing or stepping back in their work due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, ICTJ proactively reached out to our partners and the communities where we work to reassure them and offer our support. ICTJ made itself available and listened to our partners. We learned important insights about the new challenges they face as well as their priorities and needs. We share these insights later in this report. Informed by our partners, ICTJ's persistence and strategic thinking helped keep transitional justice processes alive and galvanized civil society in dire straits, such as in Uganda and Lebanon. ICTJ support has helped ongoing transitional justice processes in places such as Colombia, Tunisia and The Gambia tread difficult waters and move forward. ICTJ contributed to strengthening institutions that lead justice processes, empowering civil society actors to participate and make their voices heard, ICTJ also has played a key role in guiding efforts to collect and use data to inform these processes.

In 2020, ICTJ played an increasingly important role linking international policy discussions to the realities on the ground within the quickly changing environment. This is especially true in discussions regarding Syria, universal jurisdiction, monitoring and evaluation, prevention, and around the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its independent external evaluation. We are pleased to see an increasing acknowledgement among the international community that international accountability structures need to be more inclusive of victims' rights and a broader recognition of the relevance of transitional justice processes to the global policy agenda through its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals and prevention of violence and abuses.

In these difficult times, ICTJ is especially grateful for the support of our partners and allies, who in the past year have stood with us in defense of justice and the rights of those most vulnerable. What is more, as ICTJ convened and participated in efforts to combat the crisis, we found an increased desire for alignment and coordination among international partners, donors and civil society. ICTJ continued to be an actor able to convene a variety of stakeholders together to find alignment, coordination, and consensus. This role was particularly important in an increasingly virtual space and advanced global discussion and international knowledge sharing on a number of long standing gaps in the field, including methods of monitoring and evaluating transitional justice processes among others mentioned in more detail in the following report.

This core report provides a more detailed overview of ICTJ's work at the global, country, and institutional level during its 2021 fiscal year; an unprecedented year in which the world dealt with the political, social, and economic fallout of a once-in-a-century pandemic. We at ICTJ welcome your inquiries about any aspect of our work and are happy to share additional informational about any of the rich, multifaceted, and complex contexts where we work beyond what this brief report provides. To offer more insight on specific areas of our work, each section includes links to relevant resources and ICTJ products.

Global Level

Innovative Research and Impact on Policy

ICTJ's Research and Policy played an important role connecting the organization's country work with key discussions and priorities in the global policy agenda as well as knowledge production in the field of transitional justice. In 2020 as political priorities shifted at the international level, we continued to emphasize this work along established and new tracks, including sustainable development, prevention, and racial justice.

As a long-standing and active member of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO),¹ the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN),² and the European Union (EU) Facility on Justice in Conflict and Transition, ICTJ contributed to the development and strengthening of the EU approach to transitional justice and advocated for greater consideration of human rights, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in several strategic discussions at EU level. ICTJ also spearheaded a collective contribution to the EU on the thematic pillar of their programming urging support to justice activists and transitional justice processes.

At the same time, ICTJ has advocated in multiple forums for a transitional justice approach to racial justice by examining and understanding historical grievances rooted in massive human rights violations that have not been properly addressed and whose impact has perpetuated structural racism or marginalization. By engaging with multiple stakeholders we have brought to the agenda the valuable role that truth telling, reparations and institutional reforms can have and comparative experiences and lessons learned of other countries. We have established a partnership with a consortium of international law firms to conduct research on the lessons learned from comparative country experiences with truth and reconciliation commissions that would be most relevant for racial injustice initiatives in established democracies such as the United States. The results of this initiative will inform ICTJ's ongoing participation in policy discussions and publications on the issue.



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¹ICTJ is a current member of the EPLO steering committee.

²The EPLO and HRDN are two thematic Brussels-based networks focusing on European Union policies.

Sustainable Development

With the COVID-19 pandemic exposing and exacerbating social, political, and economic problems rooted in historical inequality, exclusion, and injustices, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are more relevant and important than ever by offering a pathway to longer-term solutions to bridge the justice gap, achieve gender equality, and reduce inequality in society. Within this context where the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, including victims of human rights abuses have borne the brunt of the pandemic's social, security, health, and economic consequences, ICTJ has continued its research and policy work aimed at further clarifying the contribution that transitional justice can make to the Sustainable Development Agenda. This included a project on the provision of justice for victims of human rights violations in fragile contexts, using the Central African Republic (CAR) as a case study, the findings of which were presented at a multisectoral policy discussion in December 2020 and published in a [final report](#) in March 2021.³ A collaborative project with Cordaid, the study reviews notions and institutions of justice in CAR; articulates key contextual and operational challenges of providing justice to victims; highlights the importance of meaningful participation of victims; and makes clear the overall importance of transitional justice in fragile contexts to sustainable development. This research has been very well received by stakeholders working in the country as it presents important insights regarding prevention and the prioritization of justice measures that are useful in other fragile contexts.

Further research relevant to the SDGs was conducted throughout 2020 on measuring progress and results in transitional justice. In advance of publishing a [report](#) on the topic in January 2021, ICTJ held several events to disseminate and discuss its findings and policy insights: a panel discussion at the annual conference of the Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law; a roundtable discussion with practitioners, policymakers, donors, and academics; and a meeting of the Working Group on Transitional Justice and SDG16+. The conversation this work generated responds to an identified demand to develop appropriate evaluation and monitoring approaches using evidence to better inform policy options and build legitimacy for justice processes, and understanding how measurement fits within broader policy frameworks such as the SDGs. It combines both the policy and technical aspects of evaluation work, bridging gaps between policymakers and researchers, and overcoming barriers that policymakers face in collecting and using data.

Prevention

ICTJ continued to investigate and articulate the value of transitional justice to the notion of prevention, which remains a top priority on the global policy agenda and an integral element of the SDGs. Our research and policy work considers the preventive capacity of transitional justice—in relation to massive and serious human rights violations and to violence, violent conflict, and authoritarian repression more broadly.

ICTJ conducted the majority of our research project on transitional justice and prevention structured around five country case studies—Colombia, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, and Sierra Leone. The findings demonstrate that transitional justice can contribute to prevention by addressing the consequences and causes of injustice by fostering inclusion at the individual, collective, and structural levels; making the rule of law more inclusive; and reforming exclusive and abusive institutions. Common challenges to the preventive function of transitional justice include risks of instability, difficulties in process and implementation, political and security factors, and the need for transformational changes across society.

³ See Annex A for a list of ICTJ's FY21 publications.

ICTJ’s research on prevention continues to inform our policy and other organizational work. It was presented, for example, at ICTJ’s Annual Roundtable on Transitional Justice in October 2020; incorporated into our annual courses on Prevention and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence: The Role of Transitional Justice, which includes policymakers and practitioners from countries around the world and was successfully held completely virtual for the first time due to the pandemic; and, in 2021, will form the basis of our intervention in a project on prevention conducted by the former UN special rapporteur on transitional justice at New York University’s Center for Human Rights and Global Justice.

Supporting Complementarity

ICTJ continued to prioritize the promotion of efforts to implement the concept of complementarity in the fight against impunity and in support of respect for the rule of law.⁴ ICTJ actively participated in various policy and advocacy initiatives with peer INGOs and networks.⁵ Specifically, ICTJ contributed to providing inputs and expert advice to the panel of Independent Experts in charge of the Review of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rome Statute through collective assessments, reports and analysis, including as members of the Hague and New York Working Groups of the Bureau and at the [regional level](#). As part of this ongoing effort, ICTJ supported critical discussions among civil society and the international community to advocate for transparent and independent elections, including of the prosecutor and judges, and the meaningful implementation of reforms of the Court.

Bringing together international experts and national authorities to discuss practical ways to implement the Rome Statute’s complementarity principle, ICTJ convened a [side event](#) during the 19th session of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP) of the ICC in December 2020.⁶ ICTJ launched its report [Advancing Global Accountability: The Role of Universal Jurisdiction in Prosecuting International Crimes](#) during an event praised for its novelty that reflected on the application of universal justice to advance accountability for international crimes and its implications for Syrian victims.⁷ Separately, ICTJ moderated a panel discussion during the 19th session of the ASP hosted by NYU’s Center for Global Affairs on “The Key to Unblocking Security Council Referrals: Vetoes and Atrocity Crimes.”

As in other issues, our research and policy work on complementarity and accountability at the global level remains closely tied to our work in specific country contexts. In Colombia, ICTJ continued to provide technical advice based on domestic law and international comparative



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⁴ The concept of complementarity appears in the Rome Statute and asserts that accountability for mass atrocities can only be achieved if national judicial systems are fully involved and cooperate with other justice mechanisms such as reparations programs, institutional reforms, and truth-seeking processes. Accordingly, the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and prosecutes serious crimes only where states are unwilling or genuinely unable to do so.

⁵ This included the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), the World Federalist Movement/Institute of Global Policy (WFM/IGP), Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI), and others.

⁶ See also ICTJ’s website for a [piece](#) about the event.

⁷ The event was held in partnership with the Governments of Australia, France, Germany and The Netherlands.



Portraits of Syrian detainees are displayed outside the Higher Regional Court in Koblenz, Germany, where trials began in April 2020 of two former Syrian intelligence officials for war crimes inside Syrian prisons. (Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression)

experiences to key state institutions. In July 2020, ICTJ [brought together](#) three prominent experts on restorative justice providing an opportunity for dialogue among the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), victims, former combatants, the armed forces and academics to discuss the role of restorative justice in the recognition of criminal responsibility in general, and specifically in Colombia. Leveraging valuable cross-country learning and exchange, ICTJ facilitated the exploration of strategies to strengthen collaboration, improve access to justice, and give meaning to the principle of complementarity during a webinar on lessons, opportunities, and challenges for national jurisdictions in CAR, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Uganda in pursuing accountability for international crimes. In Uganda, ICTJ advanced production of the Judicial Bench Book (JBB) on the practice

and procedure for the adjudication of international crimes by the International Crimes Division (ICD) to enhance the effectiveness of the institution through a common resource and improve victim participation. In the CAR, the ICTJ-produced comprehensive [study](#), not only focuses on the role of transitional justice in fragile contexts to sustainable development mentioned above, but it also highlights potential innovative strategies and explores victim-centered approaches to justice, including that of existing mechanisms, victims' perceptions, and their feasibility in a context of profound fragility and extreme poverty.

In addition, ICTJ monitors and weighs in on events at the ICC pertinent to its work to advance accountability. Recently, this included developments in [Uganda](#), and in [Côte d'Ivoire](#).

Promoting Victim-Centered Peace Processes

While the pandemic altered many stakeholders' priorities, victims' demands for justice persisted throughout the year. Despite being some of the most complex and controversial elements in peace negotiations, addressing justice demands are vital to the credibility and legitimacy of peace process and agreements. As the pandemic presented new challenges and shifting political dynamics resulted in abrupt changes to peace processes, ICTJ remained steadfast in our commitment to ensuring victims' perspectives and needs are incorporated into peace negotiations as well as in the implementation of peace agreements. In Libya, the resumption of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum created a new platform to discuss human rights, justice, and accountability amidst the extremely fragile peace process. Working with Lawyers for Justice in Libya (LFJL), ICTJ supported efforts to ensure victims' perspectives were understood and

“I am already using the JBB to support my work.”

— Hon. Justice David Wangutusi

considered by stakeholders in any emerging transitional justice process. In Sudan, ICTJ focused on elevating the concerns of victims and the Sudanese population among key state actors and advocating for the participation of civil society within transitional processes. Another element of ICTJ's work is acting as an integral partner to stakeholders directly involved in peace negotiations by offering technical assistance grounded in comparative examples, lessons learned, and best practice. With input from ICTJ, the Syrian Negotiations Committee (SNC) has drafted proposals to include transitional justice in the constitution under negotiation. However, progress stalled due to the impact of COVID-19. Meanwhile, ICTJ provided technical support to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) within the context of ongoing or emerging peace negotiations. ICTJ programs provide support and advice to address transitional justice in peace negotiations and connecting those considerations with peace agreements in several contexts including Colombia and Sudan. ICTJ also continues to monitor relevant developments in possible negotiations in Venezuela.



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Even when negotiations have concluded, ICTJ continues to play a role in supporting victim-centered implementation of agreements. ICTJ continued supporting the SJP and Truth Commission in Colombia and monitored developments in the implementation of the peace agreement in South Sudan.

Advancing Gender Justice and Gender Equality

During the pandemic, women, who already faced additional economic and social challenges as victims due to structural inequalities and societal gender norms, encountered additional burdens throughout the year, challenging the progress they've made so far. For example, in The Gambia, women report an increase in early and forced marriage due to the closure of schools during the pandemic and in Uganda reports of gender-based violence are unprecedentedly high and many women risk arrest by violating curfew and stay at home orders to continue working to earn a living.



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ICTJ continues to emphasize the importance of how different identities intersect to shape the types of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) experienced by victims as well as the harms and enduring consequences caused by human rights violations. ICTJ seeks to be context-specific in its understanding of how gender, as well as factors such as age, ethnicity, religion, can influence the types of accountability, truth, and redress victims prioritize. This is why, for example, in a project on advancing gender-sensitive reparations for victims of conflict-related sexual violence in Nepal, ICTJ and our implementing partner have taken active steps to ensure that victims residing in remote areas, Dalits,⁸ ethnic minorities, the disabled and other potentially vulnerable or marginalized groups are included.



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⁸ In Nepal's centuries-old hierarchical caste system, Dalits are the lowest caste and therefore the most discriminated against group of people.

ICTJ continues to push the debate on how the transitional justice field, including both practitioners and policymakers, conceptualize the role gender plays in the targeting of different communities and how to pursue meaningful accountability for violations. Following up on support given to Colombian civil society organizations, ICTJ helped [host](#) a conference to launch the book, *Orders of Prejudice: Systematic Crimes Committed against LGBT People in the Colombian Armed Conflict*. ICTJ provided expert remarks at the event, framing the book within the field's historic resistance to addressing violations against this community of victims and, in light of this resistance, stressing Colombia's groundbreaking contributions on the topic, including on the issue of prevention and the prosecution of systematic crimes under international law.

Given women's lack of access to economic and political power in many contexts in which we work, ICTJ has always understood that national, and in certain cases global, policymakers are often unaware of and/or indifferent to the types of SGBV that have occurred and the gendered consequences of human rights violations that continue to take place. For a national transitional justice process to be gender-sensitive, technical assistance must be provided to relevant policymakers, and women's groups must be involved. This work at the national level must always be accompanied by local, community-based initiatives. In many of the countries in which ICTJ works, it is at the community level that women have been most impacted by violations and the ongoing violence that they continue to endure. In some contexts, work at the local level also offers the most immediate opportunity for change. For example, in The Gambia, ICTJ found that due to highly rigid gender norms and the internalization of violence against women as normal, many women do not recognize themselves as victims when asked about violations they have suffered. In addition to helping women sensitize their communities to the national transitional justice process, ICTJ supported grassroots women's groups in establishing safe spaces in their local communities for women to talk about their situation and advocate for their protection. This work was accompanied by community dialogues with local authorities to raise their awareness of the gendered dimensions of human rights violations and encourage them to take steps to support women victims in their communities.

As an example of the important convergence between the global policy and work on the ground, for the past several years, ICTJ has been giving input on the establishment of the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), which is focused on the issue of reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). ICTJ helped shape the discussion around reparations, encouraging that the fund's mission and mandate (and name) not inadvertently give states an excuse to not fulfill their obligations to provide reparations. During this past year, we also contributed substantive comments to the framework document for GSF's Multi-Country Study on Opportunities for Reparations for Survivors of Conflict Related Sexual Violence, sharing lessons learned on doing no harm and other topics related to working with survivors of CRSV. GSF approached ICTJ about leading the study in Nepal, Uganda, and The Gambia, given our longstanding and highly regarded work in each place. ICTJ has also advised GSF and its consultants on the studies being undertaken in Kenya and Libya, connecting them with key contacts and co-facilitating awareness raising events. The studies seek to not only assess the opportunities for different forms of reparations in each country, but also increase understanding of the right to reparation and solidarity among CRSV survivors, and public support for inclusive reparations. In a process-oriented approach, each country team will be working with local partners to ensure that survivor's participation in the study will itself be valuable, through the networks established and the direct forms of support that will be offered. Throughout all of this work, ICTJ continues to emphasize that while the role of non-state actors in providing interim assistance with reparative value for survivors is important, it is ultimately the state's legal obligation to provide reparations, including forms of acknowledgment, to victims.

As our partnership has progressed, we have also been able to stress with GSF and the implementing partners that SGBV typically happens on a continuum of violence and discrimination. It is not a one-time violation that has a clear demarcation of ‘before’ and ‘after,’ and redress and other forms of justice must take this reality into account. This has been important working in a context such as The Gambia, where we were able to explain that the SGBV that occurred did not always take ‘typical’ forms and was often committed in conjunction with other violations such as forced labor and witch hunts, which are also essential to examine from a gender lens. Overall, ICTJ’s work with the GSF is consistent with ICTJ’s approach of using data to bring the perspectives of victims to the fore, identify roadblocks in access to justice, and propose context-sensitive solutions.

Finally, ICTJ is committed to gender mainstreaming. We continue to be a member of the International Gender Champions group. We are proud to report that we continue to maintain gender parity among of executive leadership. Of ICTJ’s 54 staff members worldwide, 37 are women and 17 are men. 23 staff are nationals of Global North countries, while in 31 staff are nationals of Global South Countries. ICTJ’s senior experts include 4 women and 4 men, while the head of ICTJ’s country offices and programs include 7 women and 2 men.

Increasing Engagement of Youth in Transitional Justice Processes

A central component of ICTJ’s most innovative work involves collaboration with youth activists and artists to help amplify their voices, as well as increase their civic engagement and participation in transitional justice processes to actively shape the national narrative. In the last fiscal year, ICTJ continued to build on the success of its work with youth, particularly around using creative approaches to amplify messages for truth and justice. With the challenge of a global pandemic, we had to find new ways to open spaces for necessary reflection. In response to challenges posed by the pandemic and leveraging the power of the arts to transcend barriers and spark conversation, ICTJ adapted its approach and found new ways to continue engaging youth through the arts online. In Colombia, for example, ICTJ hosted an [International Hip Hop Encounter](#) that explored the role of hip hop music and culture in uncovering truth, preserving memory, and resisting violence and oppression.⁹ The festival included a live concert streamed online, prerecorded music recordings and videos, a virtual art exhibition, and themed panel discussions. Artists from across Latin America and Africa,¹⁰ including in many countries where ICTJ has active programming, performed music and discussed their experiences and perceptions of the intersection of hip hop, truth-telling, peacebuilding, and in strengthening democracy.



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Given the strong oral tradition in The Gambia, ICTJ launched a National Poetry Competition in partnership with [Our Nation Our Voice](#) and the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) outreach unit. For young Gambians who are typically marginalized from the transitional justice process and public discussion, poetry provided a unique and creative space for them to engage in topics related to addressing legacies of the past and to reflect on the impact of the dictatorship and their role in advancing democracy and justice. Through poems on building democracy, reconciliation, respect for human rights, and promotion of women rights, youth called on their communities and leaders to foster a social climate more supportive of human and women’s rights. Youth were simultaneously able to play a role in informing their fellow

⁹ ICTJ documented the event in a [web feature](#) and [short video](#).

¹⁰ This included Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, The Gambia, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast.

citizens about transitional justice concepts and its importance to contribute to a more inclusive public discussion in The Gambia.

With measures to control the spread of COVID-19 evoking memories of repression and generating fears of returning to authoritarianism in Tunisia, ICTJ hosted the [Create to Connect Art Contest](#) encouraging emerging artists to reflect on the enduring impact of Tunisia's past inequalities and marginalization through new visual mediums and innovative formats. Selected by a well-respected panel of judges, the top three finalists were awarded a prize and the top 16 will be featured in an online exhibition. This art prize expanded ICTJ's work to a new constituency of online artist activists, who have not been involved in the formal transitional justice process, but who are crucial voices for change among younger Tunisians. In a similar effort to help youth connect past and present, in Uganda, where youth activists have been central in efforts to challenge President Yoweri Museveni's over three decades-long hold on power, ICTJ hosted a youth dialogue with university students focused on helping them frame their present grievances in relation to unresolved injustices of the past. This is part of ICTJ's larger effort to broaden the conversation about transitional justice in Uganda beyond Northern Uganda, and to instill it as a national priority.



A young Gambian reads her original work of poetry at the National Poetry Competition. (ICTJ)

Country Level

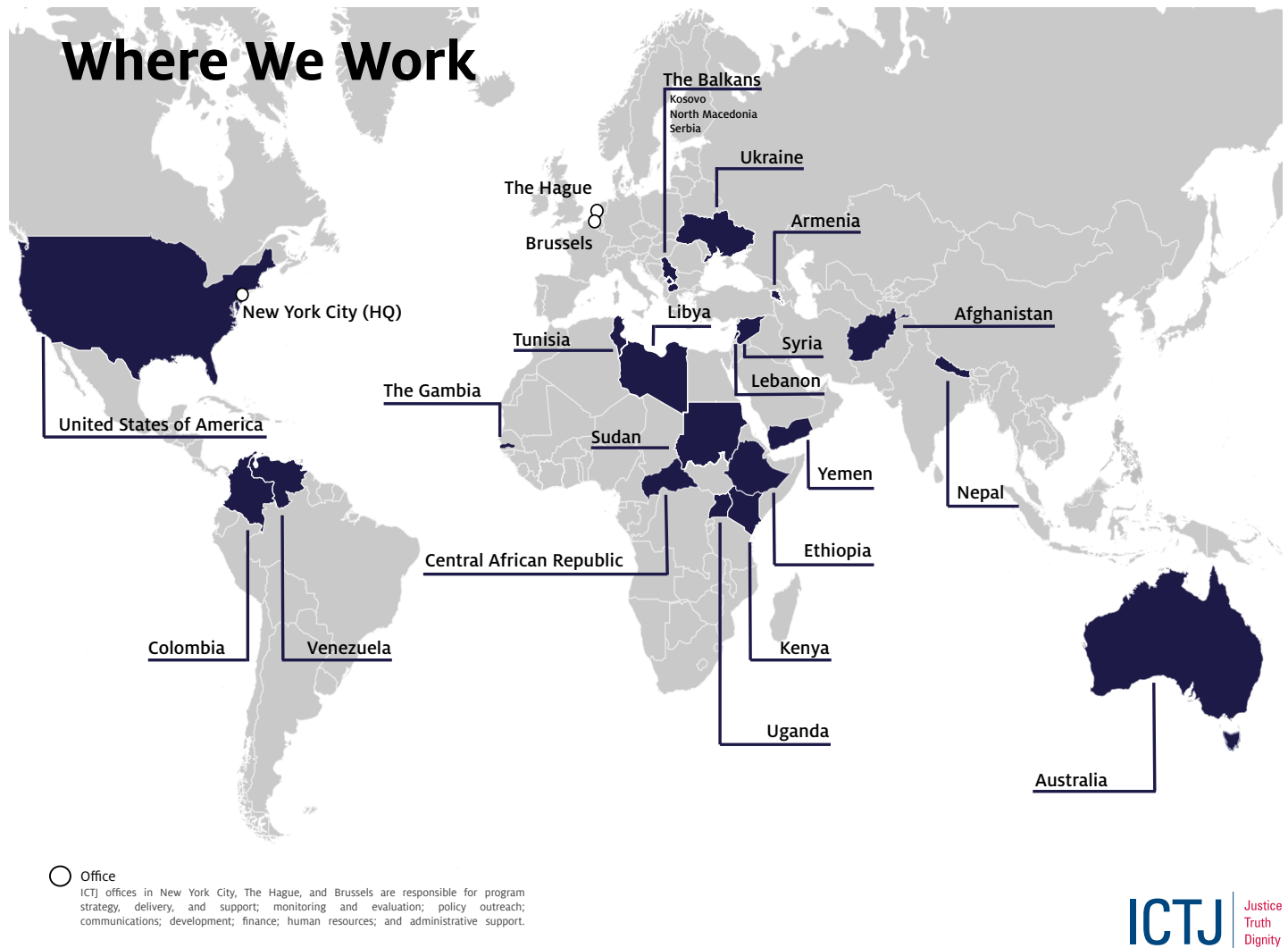
In contexts of formal and informal transition, as well as protracted and resurgent conflict and authoritarianism, ICTJ continued to advance justice. Wherever we work, we are constantly assessing and adapting our programming to act on emerging opportunities to seek truth and accountability in each country's unique context. Significantly, the pandemic shifted the context dramatically around the world and has created new and exacerbated old challenges to transitional justice and in victims' daily lives. In contexts such as Syria, Lebanon, and Venezuela, the pandemic worsened already deteriorating political, economic, and health systems. It has amplified the legacies of dictatorship and past abuses in the countries where ICTJ works. Moreover, the economic impact is already being seen in Colombia where the budgets of transitional justice institutions are being cut, and in Tunisia where the viability for reparation is being debated. Restrictions on movement and gatherings to stem the spread of the virus have negatively affected victims' participation in justice processes.

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As the pandemic unfolded, ICTJ stressed in all its work the importance of pursuing justice even in the face of the deadly coronavirus disease, the social restrictions put in place to curb its spread, the economic downturn many countries are experiencing, and shifting priorities to health and humanitarian measures. ICTJ proactively sought to understand how the pandemic disproportionately affected victims' daily lives and their priorities for justice. Our frequent communication with and outreach to victims and local partners with whom we work on the ground, in addition to increasing internal coordination among ICTJ offices, enabled us to identify gaps and patterns in contexts, which in turn informed ICTJ's approach, ensuring our work and advice reflected realities on the ground. Leveraging virtual platforms and innovative methods, we customized discussions to enhance victims' voices in addition to keeping transitional justice on the agenda. This included contributing to a more global discussion on transitional justice solutions grounded in comparative examples and cross-country learning and exchange as well as bringing victims' input to the attention of a wider audience and to influence justice, truth, and accountability initiatives and opportunities.

ICTJ partnered with a diverse group of domestic and international stakeholders to implement our programs during FY21. A full list can be found in [Annex B](#).

Where We Work



NOTE: The map represents ICTJ's countries of operation at the end of fiscal year 2021 (March 2021).

Country Programs

Over the course of decades of conflict and repression in **Afghanistan**, there have been periodic moments of hope for peace and justice to address widespread and systemic violations of human rights and humanitarian law. At parallel negotiations, including the historic Intra-Afghan Peace Negotiations, which broke down in early 2021, and higher-level meetings in Moscow, discussions over transitional justice have resurfaced. ICTJ quickly responded to emerging requests to improve stakeholders' capacity to advance victim-centered justice within the rapidly changing context. This included a series of 12 webinars with a study group convened by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) on reparations and amnesties in the context of peace processes. While still in the early stages of developing our program in Afghanistan, ICTJ occupies a trusted and respected position. This is evidenced by invitations to closed-door meetings on victim-centered justice in Afghanistan convened by the AIHRC and Dutch MFA and contributions to analysis in a report on local justice initiatives in Afghanistan, which will improve the United States' understanding of the situation. Our partnerships will be expanding to incorporate the well-known victims' rights organization, Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO).



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Since the 2018 revolution in **Armenia**, the government has made limited progress fulfilling promises to reform state institutions as well as address past corruption and human rights abuses and prevent their recurrence. The resumption of conflict with Azerbaijan in September 2020 and its outcome has presented new challenges to Armenia's democratic transition by highlighting ongoing efforts to roll back advances made since the revolution, while the outcome of the conflict has led to rising frustration with the current government. Before the start of conflict, ICTJ sought to enrich and inform public debate around transitional justice as well as broaden understanding and support for a variety of transitional justice measures to address the legacy of impunity and prioritize citizen and civil society participation. Targeting a diverse group of both policymakers and society, ICTJ disseminated information by translating relevant ICTJ materials and publications into Armenian, fostered informed discussion, and offered technical assistance in response to the needs and priorities of Armenian stakeholders. To build comparative knowledge, ICTJ facilitated a discussion with experts on constitutional reforms during a webinar titled "[Recovery of the Judiciary in the Context of Constitutional Amendments](#)." Based on the analysis and lessons learned on judicial vetting and reforms shared during the webinar, civil society developed recommendations advocating for a full judicial vetting process, which were delivered to the state and during other public discussions. ICTJ provided comments on the draft truth commission law that highlighted the importance of a politically independent process. While these comments were discussed with the Ministry of Justice and shared with civil society, the establishment of a commission was delayed due to the onset of conflict with Azerbaijan. Throughout the year, ICTJ held meetings among a variety of stakeholders including victims' representatives, youth activities, human rights defenders to monitor social perceptions and share updates on the transitional justice process. At the end



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of 2020, we recalibrated our work in Armenia to respond to emerging needs following the resolution of conflict and to support protecting the gains of the revolution.

In **Australia**,¹¹ the Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews in March 2016 announced that the state government would commit to discussing a Treaty with the Victorian Aboriginal Community. Following consultations, the First People's Assembly of Victoria, made up of 31 traditional owners of Victoria, was established in 2019 as an independent and democratically elected voice for Aboriginal people in future treaty discussions. Following growing public awareness about systemic racism through the Black Lives Matter movement and protests drawing attention to Aboriginal deaths in custody and other injustices in Australia, the Victorian government supported the assembly's motion to establish an independent truth and justice process. In the fall of 2020, the Victorian government and the First People's Assembly contacted ICTJ seeking advice on best practices in truth telling. ICTJ has since provided strategic advice, technical support, and accompaniment to both parties through several brainstorming sessions, workshops, and advice memos. ICTJ's strategic guidance has been instrumental in the establishment of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission ("yoo-rook" is the Wemba Wemba / Wamba Wamba word for "truth"), which is Australia's first truth-telling inquiry investigating both historical and ongoing injustices committed against First Peoples since colonization. For example, in October 2020, ICTJ prepared a guidance note on how to ensure the legitimacy of the commission through an open and independent process to select commissioners. The First People's Assembly and Victorian government followed all our key recommendations and established an independent assessment panel that was seated in April and that recommended five exceptional individuals to Victoria's acting premier to be appointed to lead the commission's ground-breaking work.

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The legacies of the 1990-2001 conflicts continue to shape social relations and influence regional politics in **the Balkans**. Continued denial of war crimes and rising ethno-nationalist politics have created an environment where it is increasingly difficult for victims, especially women, to share their experiences as well as find truth and redress. During the fiscal year, ICTJ contributed to the design of an assessment study which will be the first step in our program working with civil society groups in Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia to support meaningful and victim-led transitional justice initiatives in the region.

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Armed conflict and the assassination of social leaders, human rights defenders, and demobilized FARC combats persisted in **Colombia**, increasing in some parts of the country. Faced with continued political opposition, the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (Comprehensive System) continued to operate,¹² and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) issued its first indictment in macro-case 001 by charging eight former members of the FARC with kidnapping over 20,000 people and inhuman treatment of victims. Throughout the year, ICTJ continued to play a multifaceted and integral role in ensuring Colombia's transitional justice processes are implemented in a way that advances accountability of all actors to the internal armed conflict and the fulfillment of victims' rights. This included serving as an important source of technical assistance to the SJP, the Investigation and Indictment Unit (IIU), and the Analysis and Information Group (GRAI),¹³ as well as high-level staff in the Executive Secretariat. The trust and legitimacy we have

¹¹ This work is fully funded by dedicated philanthropic support.

¹² The Comprehensive System includes three transitional justice institutions: Truth Commission, Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and Unit for the Search for People Deemed as Disappeared.

¹³ The GRAI is charged with analysis of information available on the cases being investigated by the SJP and, when possible, prima facie evidence of the elements of crime.

established enables ICTJ to influence important processes and increase capacity within the SJP to incorporate international and national standards and best practices into their work, while developing innovative solutions that are context specific. Notably, ICTJ was invited to the SJP's new Commission for the Implementation of the Transitional Justice Policy, which offers ICTJ a position to help improve some of the SJP's internal processes and provide input on critical discussions. Moreover, ICTJ facilitated technical dialogue with experts that helped to clarify and develop the content and scope of the SJP sanctions regime and strengthened knowledge of the IIU, the Chamber for Acknowledgment of Truth and Responsibility, and the GRAI through training on war crimes and crimes against humanity. ICTJ also enabled former FARC combatants to better understand the framework for their acknowledgment of responsibility. While the pandemic interrupted a course on restorative justice and victim-perpetrator mediation with SJP magistrates and civil society representatives, virtual workshops were offered to participants, with experts providing information on complementarity as participants worked toward a certificate from the Center for Restorative and Justice and Perpetrator-Victims Mediation from the University of Milan-Bicocca. These SJP magistrates will be the first-ever judicial experts in Latin America able to conduct this kind of mediation during criminal proceedings for serious or international crimes.



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With the Truth Commission (TC) due to issue its final report in 2021, ICTJ provided technical advice to the TC on the formulation of recommendations for its final report and on the establishment of a commission, which will monitor the implementation of recommendations,¹⁴ the legacy of the TC, processes of acknowledgment of responsibility, and guarantees of non-recurrence and prevention. ICTJ is the only organization that is supporting the TC in the area of acknowledgment of responsibility by different actors to the armed conflict (military, former paramilitaries, and former FARC combatants), filling a significant gap in support to the process and the role of acknowledgment of responsibility in Colombia.

Given limited participation by certain sectors of society, primarily military personnel, we also focused on strategies for societal endorsement of the final report to increase understanding about the past. In society, we have also sought to improve participation in the Comprehensive System, improve public perceptions, increase civic trust, and create an environment that is favorable to the implementation of transitional justice. Within the Comprehensive System, we continued to assist civil society organizations in submitting to the SJP and TC their reports detailing violations and their impact for both institutions to consider. Outside the Comprehensive System, we supported local initiatives to facilitate reflection on and understanding of the past and encourage community ownership. This included the International Hip Hop Festival, mentioned earlier, and Mapa Teatro, which developed an interactive online platform to disseminate the results of an acknowledgment of responsibility process with former combatants that concluded in November 2019.

¹⁴ Article 32 of Decree 588 of 2017, which establishes the Truth Commission. The Committee to Monitor the Implementation of the Recommendations will become operational once the final report is published.

Moving to the Beat of Justice: Hip Hop, Truth, Memory, and Resistance

In November 2020, ICTJ cohosted the third International Hip-Hop Festival in Colombia. The four-day virtual and in-person event brought together more than 80 musicians and artists from across Latin America and Africa, as well as activists and members of civil society, for live performances and panel discussions on the role of hip hop music and culture in uncovering truth, preserving memory, and resisting violence and oppression.

In 2019, ICTJ's office in the Gambia [teamed up with young hip-hop artists](#) to educate youth about the transitional justice processes underway in the country and encourage their participation in them. This project inspired María Camila Moreno, head of ICTJ's Colombia office, to do something similar in Colombia. Soon after, she forged a partnership with the Movement of Latin American Expressions of Hip Hop (MELAH) and the online cultural outlet Revista Cartel Urbano to cohost the third International Hip-Hop Festival in Colombia.

In discussing ideas for the festival, ICTJ, MELAH, and Cartel Urbano discovered a shared conviction: Hip-hop has the potential to build peace from the bottom up by reaching young people in local neighborhoods and communities. "Wielding an aerosol can or a microphone is very different from wielding a weapon," explained José Serralde, director of Cartel Urbano. "And that is what we are all about, using culture to transform society."

The festival was initially planned as an in-person event slated for June 2020, but the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the ICTJ and its partners to reconceive it as hybrid virtual and in-person event and postpone it until November. The event sparked impassioned conversations among the participants about homelessness, incarceration, fighting in an armed conflict, persons living with disabilities, and persecution for political beliefs, among other pressing issues. "It is in the world of arts and culture that we can generate dialogue and produce knowledge and transformations," said Serralde in a panel discussion.

Since the festival, many of the attendees have expressed heartfelt gratitude. The diverse participants appreciated the new space for dialogue. The artists relished the chance to perform on stage. The festival was also well received by the general public, reaching more than 291,000 people through the ICTJ, MELAH, and Cartel Urbano Facebook pages. The event continues to broaden ICTJ's network and open up new opportunities and forums to advance transitional justice in Colombia and beyond.

PHOTO: Hip hop figures from Colombia and across Latin America, such as Zkirla and Lucía Vargas (center), participated in the event. María Camila Moreno Múnera, head of ICTJ's Colombia office, and José Serralde, director of Cartel Urbano, gave the opening remarks. German Ambassador in Colombia, Peter Ptassek, also sent a welcoming video message to participants.



The people of **Lebanon** faced grave difficulties and multiple ongoing crises, including civil unrest, political paralysis, increasing poverty and unemployment, and soaring cases of COVID-19. While commissioners were appointed to the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) issued its long-awaited verdict, 20 years after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, there is growing frustration from decades of endemic corruption, mismanagement, and impunity. The deadly explosion in the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020, was just the latest example shedding light on the many unresolved issues of Lebanon's past and highlighting the need for a country-wide process to finally deal with these painful truths at the social-cultural and institutional levels. ICTJ aimed to enhance



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“Throughout the project, I gained significant knowledge on the issue of the missing and forcibly disappeared in Lebanon. My involvement in this project also opened my eyes on new topics and drove me to dig deeper and to do my own research and analysis of the past. It also increased my curiosity to know the truth and to realize the importance of the right to know.”

— Student volunteer with the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared

public debate by linking present-day grievances to the country's past and the root causes of these recurring challenges. This is particularly prevalent in the briefing paper [“Dead at the Root: Systemic Dysfunction and the Failure of Reform in Lebanon,”](#) which focuses on political deadlock and impunity in Lebanon and explores the connections between the root causes of the deadly explosion and unaddressed consequences of the war and systemic impunity. Additionally, it looks at the role of comprehensive reforms, truth seeking, and public dialogue in building a holistic understanding of the past. ICTJ also issued poignant statements prompted by current events. This included initiating a joint statement [“Time for Change Is Now,”](#) which called for immediate action to promote accountability in response to the explosion and a new, non-sectarian political system in Lebanon, and an [Op-Ed](#) reflecting and analyzing the impact of the STL, its verdict, and what is needed to deliver justice. Despite the pandemic and its effects, we continued to work with the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and

Disappeared and support its archive of all relevant documents and information about the many individuals who went missing or were forcibly disappeared by funding and training volunteers to work remotely and advancing website design to host the archive.

Ongoing violence and conflict continued to plague **Libya**, contributing to the context's extreme volatility and jeopardizing delicate peace processes. Against this backdrop, some opportunities to advance transitional justice, accountability, and reform progressed within the domestic and international processes. The resumption of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum renewed the international media's interest in Libya and created a platform to promote human rights, justice, and accountability. ICTJ, in partnership with Lawyers for Justice in Libya (LFJL), worked to ensure emerging transitional justice processes in Libya are participatory, consider victims' perspectives, and support the establishment of accountable institutions. ICTJ contributed to the design of a study conducted by LFJL to bring victims' perspectives into public discussion and use data to inform transitional justice processes, as well as

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provided guidance on managing victims' expectations. The study is being finalized. Furthermore, ICTJ helped LFJL develop guidelines on engaging civil society with investigative bodies and participated in an online workshop of the Working Group on Civil Society Engagement with Commissions of Inquiry. This resulted in a [fact sheet](#). Illustrative of our respected position, ICTJ has been invited to speak on transitional justice in Libya in various forums.

In **Sudan**, the departure of President Omar Al-Bashir in April 2019, following months of nationwide demonstrations calling for freedom, peace, and justice, brought an end to 30 years of repressive military, Islamist rule and initiated an historic transition. With initial progress on reforms and the signing of a peace agreement on October 3, 2020, the debate about defining transitional justice continued. Building on a successful assessment in Khartoum in March 2020, ICTJ's report sheds light on the gaps in knowledge about transitional justice among Sudanese society while also exposing a range of sometimes polarizing expectations regarding reconciliation, gender equality, anti-corruption efforts, and the level of reforms required to transform society and government.

Throughout the year, ICTJ sought to inform domestic and international discussion around transitional justice in Sudan and promote a consultative process. In addition to sharing the report's findings with domestic and international stakeholders and participating in discussions on transitional justice, ICTJ provided technical expertise to international agencies conducting research on public perceptions of transitional justice in the country. ICTJ's input focused on drafting the comprehensive inception report, designing methodological tools, and briefing stakeholders on the research findings. Targeting the Sudanese government and international stakeholders, the study underscored the importance of consultations and found that respondents recognized the need for comprehensive reparations that prioritized women and children, institutional reform, and initiatives to address marginalization. Moreover, ICTJ offered guidance to the Minister of Justice on the selection of transitional justice commissioners and on engaging the diaspora based on comparative examples.

In **The Gambia**, consolidation of the country's democratic transition suffered an initial setback in September 2020 when the draft constitution to replace the 1997 constitution and reform the country's governance system failed to secure enough votes after the president's cabinet rejected its presidential term limits. Originally set to end in December 2020, the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) received a six-month extension to complete its work and final report. However, the TRRC still seems to find it extremely challenging to produce a quality report that examines victims' experiences and proposes recommendations to heal and support a society that respects human rights.

Focusing on some of the most marginalized populations, ICTJ worked to ensure that the transitional justice process responds transparently to the needs of victims and helps establish civic trust and respect for human rights and breaks the culture of impunity and repression. To advance a more comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of violations women suffered, ICTJ continued creating spaces for an unofficial extension of the truth-seeking process through community consultations in rural and marginalized areas. Expanding our reach in this way strengthened our connections with women's groups in Sintet, Janjanbureh, and Basse and



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“The [ICTJ] program] has enabled us to have knowledge and skills in human rights, and to work on these issues with less fear. I really enjoy working with ICTJ and every time we have an activity my courage grows. The women of the province have appreciated the knowledge gained at the meetings.”

— Leader of local women’s groups in Jan-janbureh

created some of the first opportunities for women from Essau and Farafenni to share their experiences. With the support of ICTJ, women’s representatives from rural regions and the capital developed a summary document that was shared with policymakers, in which they elevated the concerns and recommendations identified during the consultations and advocated for a gender-sensitive approach to the TRRC’s final report and for reparations. Our efforts with women’s groups helped encourage better connections between those in the regions and those in the capital. This is an important step in overcoming the capital-based approach primarily used by the TRRC that has made transitional justice less accessible to rural women in particular. We continued to raise awareness of women’s experiences and the need to strengthen protection of their rights through podcasts and televised panel discussions.¹⁵ Notably, the televised panel discussion

brought SGBV into the public discourse, a meaningful step toward sensitizing the population. It also initiated a conversation about transitional justice after the closure of the TRRC and when its recommendations are to be implemented, a topic minimally discussed beforehand. Building on our work enhancing the participation of Gambian youth in the public sphere, the National Poetry Competition, described in more detail above, contributed to a more inclusive public narrative and helped to spread information about and advocate for transitional justice in local communities.

While the pandemic created devastating new challenges in **Syria**, civil society remained committed to justice and accountability and to addressing the needs of Syrians. Elevating the voices of Syrians is at the heart of ICTJ’s work in this context, evident by our continuing close engagement with a group of eight Syrian civil society organizations.¹⁶ Building on the lessons learned from the [Save Syrian Schools Project](#), ICTJ and these organizations formed the “Bridges of Truth Project” focusing on the impact of enforced disappearances on victims and their families. Over the course of four virtual workshops this past year, the group made headway on the production of a handbook and a 12-minute animation film highlighting the voices and experiences of families of the disappeared in the search for their loved ones. Drawing on our work with Syrian civil society since 2017, which has focused on attacks on schools and enforced disappearances, ICTJ and our partners made a submission on these issues to the Human Rights Committee for the 130th session following its request for information on human rights issues to transmit to the Syrian government. Within the context of the Syrian conflict, tens of thousands of people have been taken prisoner. To be imprisoned in Syria often means to be disappeared. ICTJ’s report, [“Gone without a Trace: Syria’s Detained, Abducted, and](#)



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¹⁵ Panels included [Recommendations to TRRC for Meaningful Promotion of Women’s Rights Through the Truth-Seeking Process](#); [How and What Reparations for Women Victims During the Dictatorship](#); and [the Importance of Truth Seeking in Acknowledgment of Women’s Experiences During the Dictatorship and Promotion of Their Rights](#).

¹⁶ The organizations are: [Badael Foundation](#), Center for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria (CCSD), [Dawlatty](#), Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights (LDHR), [Syrian Institute for Justice](#), The Day After (TDA), Violations Documentation Center in Syria (VDC), and [Women Now for Development](#).

[Forcibly Disappeared](#),” written in coordination with the Center on International Cooperation at New York University (CIC-NYU), examines the dark realities of detentions in Syria and presents a thorough analysis of Syria’s security system and the effects on detainees and their families. The report was widely circulated and received considerable positive feedback, including from the office of the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Syrian interlocutors, and senior UN practitioners and staff. ICTJ has been informed that the report has helped shape the direction of current international efforts for accountability in Syria and given more prominence to the issue of detainees.

For Syrians, recourse to accountability has long been out of reach given political and legal dynamics surrounding the conflict. However, war crimes investigations and universal jurisdiction cases across Europe have provided a sense of hope. To reflect on the various accountability efforts underway related to crimes in Syria, ICTJ hosted a side event at the 19th session of the ASP in December 2020 on the role of universal jurisdiction in the context of the Syrian conflict. At the event, ICTJ launched the report, [“Advancing Global Accountability: The Role of Universal Jurisdiction in Prosecuting International Crimes.”](#)

Bringing Syrian Voices Together in Support of Victims

Over the past four years, ICTJ has worked with a group of eight Syrian civil society organizations based in Turkey, Lebanon, and across Europe. These organizations differ considerably in their views of the Syrian conflict, and these views often color the way they interact with one another and their approach to the work the organizations are undertaking together. ICTJ always encourages partners to adopt a victim-centered approach that helps ensure the voices and needs of victims are at the heart of all that they do. At times, the strong anti-regime stance taken by some members of the collaboration has clouded their approach to victims and their demands for justice.

In the past year, ICTJ has observed a real improvement in these organizations’ attitude. During the production of ICTJ’s short animation film about the struggles facing the families of detainees, for instance, the organizations unanimously agreed to remove depictions of the Syrian Revolution flag after consultations with victim groups revealed that many victims prefer not to see imagery that might champion any sides in conflict. These partners have undergone an immensely important change in which they no longer allow their political views to overshadow the needs of victims and their families.

PHOTO: Members of the Bridges of Truth Project attend a workshop in Istanbul. (Center for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria).



Ten years since the 2011 revolution in **Tunisia**, there remains much work to be done to fulfill the the still unmet demands such as addressing ongoing marginalization and ensuring the state upholds its responsibility to fully implement transitional justice measures. While the Dignity and Rehabilitation Fund for the Victims of Totalitarianism (Dignity Fund) was established in December 2020, debate over who is eligible for reparations remains contentious, and political forces continue to threaten the future of transitional justice in the country by leveraging lingering frustrations with the Truth and Dignity Commission (TDC), which closed in 2018 and has since issued multiple, conflicting versions of its over 2,000-page final report.

Amidst the political, economic, and health crises facing the country, ICTJ focused on ensuring the transitional justice process in Tunisia continued to operate and implement effective solutions that affirm dignity and uphold human rights. We worked with victims, state actors, civil society, and youth to build a common understanding of the past, the technical elements of transitional justice, and victims' rights and needs. A unique feature in Tunisia's transitional justice process is its focus on addressing dictatorship-era corruption. Accordingly, ICTJ advanced a national discussion by offering technical assistance to the State Litigation Agency (SLA) and the Tunisian Anti-Corruption National Authority (INLUCC). The report "[Truth, Accountability, and Asset Recovery: How Transitional Justice Can Fight Corruption](#)" summarizes the discussion from the March 2020 workshop by the same name and provided a basis for several public events convening international experts and facilitating cross-



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An Art Contest in Tunisia Sparks Dialogue About Injustice, Memory, and Resilience

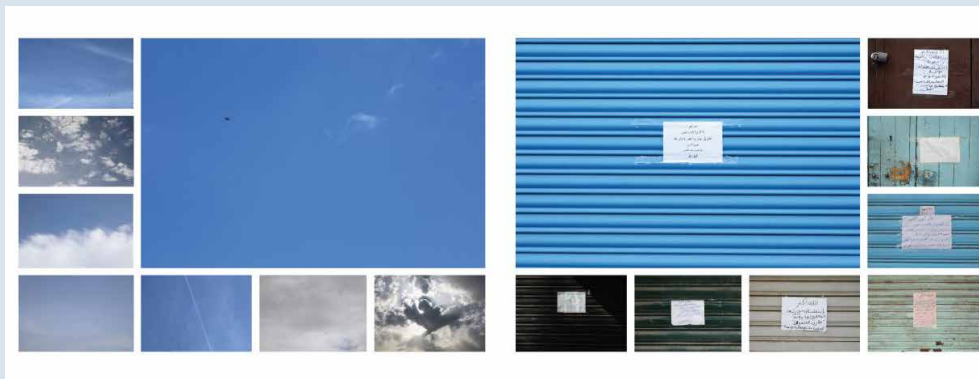
Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed enduring legacies of repression. Tunisia's stay-at-home orders have been accompanied by a rise in surveillance, increased police brutality and stronger military presence in working-class neighborhood which have evoked memories of repression and generated fear of a return to authoritarianism. In this sense, the global health crisis has served a reminder of democracy's fragility and the ever-present dangers of censorship and oppression.

In Tunisia, where the wounds of the Ben Ali dictatorship are still fresh, the importance of this reminder has not been lost. ICTJ Tunisia launched "Voices from Isolation," an online campaign about memory. This campaign proactively engaged with Tunisians affected by the global health crisis, encouraging them to find creative ways to tell their stories. It also encouraged Tunisians to remember and reflect on marginalized groups who have borne the brunt of the coronavirus disease the lockdown measures put in place to contain its spread.

The Voices from Isolation campaign included the "Create to Connect" art contest. The competition was open to emerging and mid-career Tunisian artists as well as artists from elsewhere but based in Tunisia. The artists, who work in a wide-range of mediums, all created the pieces they entered in the contest in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and an exploration of its connections to the past. "The situation with COVID-19 remains turbulent, and reflecting on one's own life at this time feels like a constant work in progress,

(continued)

which involves stepping back from the present in an attempt to understand its shifts,” said photographer and first-prize-winner Lotfi Gharini.



The global pandemic brought to the surface and exacerbated underlying injustices, forcing artists to reexamine society, history, and their relationship to the world around them. “In this project, I let the past—embodied through my personal memories and childhood universe in Sbiba [a city in Tunisia’s Midwest]—serve as a starting point to explore and bifurcate three essential questions concerning the future. What can I know? What must I do? What can I hope for?,” explained Issam Smiri, a textile artist and the second-place winner. “Confinement allowed me to explore this universe further and served as a creative catalyst.”

Through Create to Connect, ICTJ was able leverage art to spark important conversations about Tunisia’s past as well as ongoing inequality and exclusion in the country. It also shined a spotlight on Tunisia’s talented artists and encouraged them and others to continue their vitally important work.

PHOTO: Lotfi Gharini’s work of photography on individual memory, entitled “First Wave Second Wave,” won third prize in the Create to Connect art contest. (ICTJ)

country learning and exchange.¹⁷ By convening an international workshop,¹⁸ smaller consultative meetings with victims’ groups, and bilateral discussions with the Dignity Fund, ICTJ created spaces for stakeholders to gain insight into reparations programs develop tools to advocate for and implement victim-centered and gender-sensitive reparations programs.

The divisive rhetoric in Tunisia over transitional justice has resulted in limited empathy for victims and indicates that more needs to be done to develop an inclusive preservation of memory and understanding of Tunisia’s past. ICTJ multimedia products, such as the documentary film

¹⁷ This includes an [online launch event](#) in October 2020 and a workshop “[Truth, Reparations and Asset Recovery: How Transitional Justice Can Fight Corruption?](#)” held during the [2020 International Anti-Corruption Conference](#) in December 2020.

¹⁸ The November 2020 international workshop, “How to Fund and Design Reparations Programs?” garnered over 8,000 virtual views across two days. Prominent international experts highlighted best practices and challenges faced by the establishment of reparations programs in contexts such as South Africa, the Philippines, Peru, and Colombia. They discussed critical issues such as using debt forgiveness and ill-gotten assets to fund reparations, identifying beneficiaries for collective reparations, and data management.

“[A Path to Redress: Transitional Justice in Tunisia](#),” which follows the experience of six victims pursuing justice in Tunisia for past violations, and the [virtual tour](#) of the 2018 Voices of Memory exhibition, seek to raise awareness of victims’ experiences.¹⁹ ICTJ actively engaged youth in public dialogue about Tunisia’s past and future, encouraging them to reflect on the historical roots of current grievances in a workshop series and to examine what the current situation reveals about the past in the Create to Connect art contest, mentioned above. We further helped to foster innovative memorialization initiatives by facilitating cross-country exchanges among national institutions, local community members, civil society organizations, independent artists, and cultural stakeholders in an international workshop.²⁰

Uganda witnessed a worrying backslide in democracy and human rights as the pandemic provided an opportunity for the state to dilute recourse to accountability and expand abusive practices. Unprecedented levels of state violence marred the lead up the general election on January 14, 2021. Since President Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power since 1986, was declared the winner of the election, attacks on civilians, reports of enforced disappearances, and the closing of civic space have continued. In a step toward justice for thousands of victims in Northern Uganda, the ICC found Dominic Ongwen, former child soldier and commander of the Lord’s Resistance Army, guilty on 61 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes.



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ICTJ sought to advance an inclusive citizen-led process to fight impunity and demand redress for gross human rights abuses. While the pandemic interrupted progress on the National Transitional Justice Policy, ICTJ played a crucial role keeping the public debate on transitional justice. Using virtual platforms, we seized opportunities to open up dialogue with a variety of stakeholders on the pandemic’s impact on victims of human

rights violations and the future of transitional justice in Uganda. In the absence of a national reparations program, we continued to advance alternative paths to redress and found that local officials in Lira and Omoro in Northern Uganda were utilizing what they learned in past ICTJ trainings to prioritize victims, specifically women and mothers, in pandemic relief efforts. The study [Building Blocks for Reparation: Providing Interim Relief to Victims Through Targeted Development Assistance](#) provides a valuable resource for state officials on ways to address urgent needs and deliver interim relief to victims of conflict-related human rights violations. Additionally, to improve effective and victim-centered court proceedings and victim participation, ICTJ made progress in the production of the Judicial Bench Book, mentioned

“This training was so educative. It has imparted more knowledge about Transitional justice. When I go back to the community, I will help people exercise justice and fight for their rights. I want to suggest that you engage us in more training. Thank you, ICTJ.”

— Female participant

¹⁹ Developed by a collective of nine Tunisian women, the Voices of Memory project includes an interactive art exhibition, a graphic novel, a book, and podcasts to tell the women’s stories and invite others into a conversation about the past and its impact on the present. In 2019, the exhibit visited four cities across Tunisia, reaching over 1,600 people and encouraging the broader community to reflect on the past.

²⁰ The workshop titled “Remembrance as a Guarantee of Non-Repetition” was held in collaboration with OHCHR and UNDP. Panelists from around the world presented groundbreaking work on memorialization and archives in Argentina, Germany, Guatemala, the Philippines, and the United States.

above, as well as kept victims informed of updates in the Ongwen trial at the ICC. Building on our efforts to support a national and inclusive approach to addressing the country's past, we enhanced the capacity of local stakeholders in the southwestern Rwenzori region to engage in transitional justice dialogue and advance their demands for accountability. During the year, we finalized the first-ever report mapping conflict and its effects in Rwenzori, a first step toward the acknowledgment of violence and violations in the region. Further expanding inclusive dialogue on transitional justice, ICTJ encouraged youth to reflect on the impact of the past on present day grievances and discuss their role as agents of change in regional dialogues, mentioned above.

The killings of Breonna Taylor on March 13, 2020, and of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 at the hands of police in the **United States** set off a wave of national and international protests demanding the country address legacies of slavery, seen in persistent racial discrimination and inequality.²¹ ICTJ responded to a variety of requests from stakeholders seeking justice and working to address the past, including law firms and universities, as well as local authorities and civil society organizations developing local initiatives to advance acknowledgment and reconciliation. With citizens' demands focused on the historical roots of the crisis and needs for reform, ICTJ developed a [paper](#), drawing on examples from South Africa, Colombia, Tunisia, and Canada, on how transitional justice can help frame the discussion in the United States around root causes of current violence and racial injustice as well as identify steps that can be taken to end and redress systemic harms. In partnership with NYU, ICTJ held an online panel discussion in October 2020, about applicability of transitional justice in the United States, entitled [Time for Action: How Transitional Justice Can Help Address Legacies of Racial Injustice in the United States at the City, State, and National Level](#).²² The discussion brought together experts and activists leading transitional justice initiatives at the national, state, and community levels. ICTJ offered reflections on how international transitional justice experiences can serve as a source of inspiration and guidance for efforts to address racial injustice in the United States. In partnership with over 20 other institutions, ICTJ is cosponsoring a panel series on [Transitional Justice in the United States](#).²³ Several partners have remarked how important it is for ICTJ to be present in these national debates, noting that our name lends credibility to these initiatives and discussions. Additionally, we have developed a partnership with the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, focusing in particular on helping the commission develop an effective public outreach and engagement strategy as it prepares to hold public hearings in fall 2021.

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The political and humanitarian crisis worsened throughout the year in **Venezuela**. In the absence of a clear opposition leader, Venezuelan civil society has become more assertive, demanding a start to negotiations on electoral commissions and humanitarian aid. Within this context, ICTJ continued to receive and respond to requests from civil society, building on the knowledge and capacity developed among civil society in recent years regarding various transitional justice strategies.

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ICTJ responded to ad hoc requests for analysis and technical assistance to domestic and international stakeholders as well as monitored developments in **Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mexico, Nepal, Kenya, and Uzbekistan**.

²¹This work is fully funded by dedicated philanthropic support.

²²Nearly 200 individuals attended the conference.

²³The inaugural panel, featuring ICTJ, had 468 attendees. The recording of the panel has already received 269 visitors.

Table 1. Transitional Justice Solutions, Informed by ICTJ, Implemented in FY21 (Results Framework Indicator 5.1)

| COUNTRY | TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE SOLUTION |
|------------|--|
| Colombia | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special Jurisdiction for Peace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of reports by civil society organizations • Guidelines on self-sanction and works and activities with reparative-restorative content 2. Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes of acknowledgment of responsibility and recognition of victims • Presentation of reports by civil society organizations • Strategy for the legacy of the Truth Commission 3. Special Unit for the Search of Persons Deemed as Missing |
| Lebanon | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared |
| The Gambia | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Truth, Reparations and Reconciliation Commission |
| Tunisia | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. National Authority for the Prevention of Torture 7. Specialized Criminal Chambers 8. National Authority to Fight Corruption 9. The State Litigation Agency 10. Dignity and Rehabilitation Fund for the Victims of Totalitarianism |
| Uganda | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. National Transitional Justice Policy 12. Prosecutions by the International Crimes Division 13. Local Development Programs 14. National Identification and Registration Authority |

Strategic Communications

The global pandemic, along with stay-at-home orders and other safety measures put in place to prevent the spread of the deadly coronavirus disease, understandably required ICTJ to modify aspects of its work to operate in an increasingly virtual world. ICTJ's Communications Department played a critical and strategic role in the organization's successful adaptation to the fast-changing crisis. In response to the pandemic and with travel and in-person events suspended, program experts revised their workplans and developed new deliverables heavily reliant on the Communications Department. For instance, the Department explored a variety of virtual platforms to convene stakeholders and helped programmatic staff organize, promote, and host an unprecedented number of virtual events in addition to advising on and helping produce a range of multimedia and online products that came out of the revised programming, including virtual art competitions, online premieres for films, virtual festivals, and informed public debates held on social media platforms such as Twitter.



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The Communications Department remained agile to respond quickly to emerging and ever-evolving global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd and resulting social unrest. In doing so, the department was not only able to cover these events but also develop storytelling and thought pieces that highlighted the disproportionate impact on countries in transition,²⁴ especially the most vulnerable in these societies such as victims of human rights abuses as well as emphasized the important role of transitional justice processes and its unique potential to catalyze positive social change. At the same time, the Department produced and strategically promoted its regular timely editorial content addressing pressing transitional justice issues and spotlighting the organization's work in English, Arabic, and Spanish. The Communications Department provides vital support to ICTJ's multiple, simultaneous publications from early drafting through editing, design, and targeted dissemination, even with an unexpected influx of publications due to the programmatic shift in prioritizing work that could be impactful in virtual spaces and engaged with remotely. For a list of ICTJ's reports and briefing papers, Expert Choice pieces, and multimedia products, see Annex A. Finally, the team

²⁴ See [Justice in the Era of COVID-19: Our Global Responsibility](#) and [Special Report on COVID-19: Keeping Justice in Sight](#).

brought journalists together with ICTJ experts for interviews, which appeared in prominent outlets around the world including the BBC, NPR, the Economist.

Around the world, reliance on virtual communication channels and tools has dramatically increased. ICTJ's [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and even [Medium](#) account became the only avenues for the organization and its experts to reach some audiences this year during the pandemic. Early in the fiscal year, the communications team kicked off the long-awaited redesign of ICTJ's website (ICTJ.org). The new multilingual website will be optimized for mobile devices and will offer more extensive content in Arabic, French, and Spanish and will feature a robust and intuitive online library that will house all of ICTJ's publications, editorial content, and multimedia from the last 20 years.

Lessons Learned

Faced with challenges to transitional justice in the context of a global pandemic, FY21 tested ICTJ's ability to adapt and react to situations quickly and find ways to advance and protect gains of recent years. Following an initiative piloted by our Uganda program, ICTJ systematically reached out to its local partners and generated channels of communication to listen to their concerns and provide support, learning important lessons about the differentiated impact of the crisis and gaining useful clues about our own activities as well as those of our international partners. Below we share some of the key insights of the past year.



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Adapting to Remote Work

ICTJ adjusted quickly to the new conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We took advantage of virtual platforms to organize meetings, trainings, and seminars with international experts. In spite of our initial assumption that remote work be less time consuming than regular activities, we learned that it takes a lot of effort and work hours to transition to, prepare and implement remote activities at a global scale. Thanks to an extraordinary commitment by our staff, ICTJ was able to transition operations and adjust its work plans to the new context for every aspect of our work in a very short timeframe. On the plus side, a generalized transition to more online work allows for the democratization of participation of stakeholders from the Global South in international events, and therefore more diverse representation and inclusion in the global discussion about justice. However, it is not correct to assume only a positive effect of this change; a shift to more online work introduces potential new security issues that need to be assessed and addressed, as well new forms of bias and exclusion related to access to Internet. For example, working with organizations outside of major cities has in some cases been difficult due to unstable or nonexistent internet connection or equipment (mobile phones or computers). ICTJ is multiplying efforts to reduce inequality in access in its own activities, developing alternative means to reach out to all our beneficiaries (for example “phone trees” and WhatsApp groups, and more formalized relationships with local groups that can act as “antennas”). At the same time, in the international scene our organization is leveraging these new opportunities to include our partners directly and promote a more people-oriented perspective in international discussions about justice.

Leveraging Remote Work to Expand Our Global Reach

ICTJ invested heavily in developing a new strategy for convenings using digital platforms the past year. By leveraging the functionality to offer simultaneous interpretation into multiple languages during our activities, we were able to facilitate the participation of international experts and other stakeholders more broadly as compared to previous methods of holding interventions solely in-person; considering the value added by the participation of international experts virtual attendance, this is something ICTJ has incorporated for the future. This approach also aided us in reaching a wider audience and made it possible to quickly organize and replicate workshops in response to demand. Our 2020 Annual Roundtable on Transitional Justice brought together a record number of over 50 participants, including: a greater diversity of donor states representing European nations, US, Canada, Australia, an exponentially greater number of philanthropic institutions based in Europe, US, MENA, and Africa and Latin America, and, for the first time we were able to secure participation of the private sector. In order to maintain our work to diversify our funding through philanthropy, ICTJ created a new program of quarterly virtual briefings, “Inside ICTJ”, as a cultivation vehicle for individual prospects. We continue to focus on improving processes and identifying operational needs that will become subject of our fundraising efforts.

Lessons Learned from Local Partners Facing a Global Emergency

The effects of the global pandemic in the well being of local organizations is multi-dimensional and overall, quite negative.

- Organizations such as victim groups and civil society organization in less developed countries reported additional stress and limited ability to adapt to online work.
- At the same time, representatives of these groups feel additional stress and uncertainty about the future. One of their major sources of concerns is uncertainty regarding donor’s agenda and a shift of domestic political agendas away from justice. In most of the countries where ICTJ works the justice agenda has been slowed or halted while other issues dominate the political discussion.
- In some cases, there has been an increase in repression and further restrictions to civic space linked to COVID-19 containment measures, including negative outcomes and harm directly related to these measures. This is particularly concerning in Uganda, but also in Kenya.
- At the level of individuals and their families, the pandemic is having a negative effect on gender relations including increased burden for women who work and an increase in gender-based violence.
- ICTJ also found that victims have suffered disproportionately the negative effects of the pandemic, including health and security, economic hardship, and difficulties in access to food and trauma.
- These impacts are exacerbated on children, refugees, the detained and other vulnerable populations, particularly in Syria, Lebanon, and Libya.

Local partners expressed overwhelming approval of ICTJ measures to keep in touch and communicate, even though the organizations’ ability to materially support them were quite limited. There are here important lessons to be learned regarding the different dimensions of

support, and the role that organizations can play with minimal investment. Partner organizations emphasized the importance of continued and regular communication through emails or chat rooms, both bilateral and among themselves. These initiatives strengthened networks of solidarity among organizations (for example, the resurgence of the Roundtable for Truth in Colombia) and we expect some of these networks and channels to continue after the crisis has passed.

Following lessons from past work, ICTJ encouraged its programs to adapt their approach to each context and innovate accordingly: In some cases, ICTJ offices created specific Whatsapp groups, conducted phone calls, developed radio programs and found ways to keep in touch despite logistical challenges. ICTJ's adaptive management approach and its flexible structure allowed ICTJ staff to react very quickly to changing environment and even exploit opportunities unseen at the moment of planning, in some cases incorporating new elements in our programming. For example, partnering with Women's International Peace Center and TRAC FM in Uganda to survey the perspectives of beneficiaries who were isolated in the pandemic and keep the public informed and engaged in the discussions on accountability and redress for human rights violations; similar work was also done in Tunisia via the "Voices of Isolation" campaign.

Another key learning has been the need (and appreciation) for psychosocial support in justice work, an element which ICTJ is planning to emphasize more in the future. In some critical cases, ICTJ has also identified needs related to humanitarian support, which the organization is not well suited to channel. However, ICTJ can help groups articulate their demands and connect them to resources at either the national or international level.

In almost all contexts, our domestic partners highlighted the importance of political support from ICTJ and their partners to sustain the justice agenda and protect gains from previous years of work.

For ICTJ's international partners, especially those who via development agencies and embassies act as donors in the countries where ICTJ works, our analysis indicates the following:

- Programs and their administrative structures should allow (and communicate) greater flexibility to local organizations in the implementation of programs.
- In light of the findings of our surveys it is also advised to provide and include resources for psycho-social aid, which is often neglected in justice and peacebuilding programming.
- At the international level, it is urgent to position the issues of women, children, refugees and the detained more prominently in policy and development discussions; and bring in a differentiated analysis of the situation of the most vulnerable persons in each context.
- Advocate for and support the protection of information, as malicious actors may seize the opportunity of a COVID-19 dominated agenda to suppress the truth and destroy documentation
- Promote an international discussion on the transformation of the transitional justice agenda in this context.
- Foster engagement by the international community with domestic media actors to highlight the links between justice gaps and structural issues
- ICTJ's local partners also highlighted the key role of international organizations in identifying partners and priorities, bridging funding opportunities between global

donors and smaller domestic organizations and fostering a global debate that better includes voices from the South.

- Allocate some resources to respond to emerging humanitarian crisis in some contexts, such as Yemen, Syria, or Libya, but also in “more stable” countries such as Kenya and Lebanon, for example.

Broadening the Scope of the Justice Discussion to Ensure Sustainability

ICTJ’s long term strategic priorities have focused in articulating the links between the justice agenda and the SDGS, well beyond SDG 16. The COVID-19 crisis revealed the socio-economic vulnerabilities affecting the resilience of victims in case of crisis. For example, in The Gambia, the lack of investment during the dictatorship coupled with the misappropriation of public funds have resulted to very poor access of the general population to basic social services, including health. While transitional justice processes generally focus on serious human rights violations, it seems appropriate that discussions at the society level also address the social and economic impacts of conflict and dictatorship on the lives of states and populations in general. Demands we get from our partners on the ground are consistent with this reflection and indicate a growing recognition among stakeholders of these concerns (something that ICTJ has pushed for in our policy efforts as well). Following that line of thought, ICTJ advises that institutional reforms recommended by truth commissions should take into account aspects related to the economic and social development of countries emerging from crises, further integrating the SDGs into their approaches and mechanisms.

Similarly, from more general perspective, when countries engage in development plan discussions and/or report regarding the SDGs, the justice agenda should be integrated as a process with transformative aspirations. In practice, we see these transitional justice and SDGs run parallel, often managed by different parts of government, with the transitional justice agenda at times secluded as a criminal accountability matter only. Part of ICTJ’s present and future work is aimed to contribute to the integration of these agendas at the national level to ensure they are mutually reinforced, sustainable and meaningful.

This separation at times also operates at the level of human rights organizations and groups. For example, in 2020, ICTJ’s Armenia program reported what they call “a segmented perception of transitional justice in the field of human rights.” That is, most activists in Armenia consider transitional justice only in its dimension as a tool to address certain type of violations in the past, without understanding that the institutional reforms and other future looking solutions are equally important for enacting change and prevention of reoccurring violations. Our program was able to engage and discuss with organizations in the broader civil rights and legal space and managed to build broader coalitions to support and sustain reform processes under threat.

Gathering for Resilience

Several experiences in the past year and a half have provided ICTJ evidence that about the importance of bringing actors of different contexts together and fostering discussions.²⁵ Beyond what they gain in terms of technical expertise, individuals who participate take courage and inspiration from others as they discover they face similar problems. We have evidence of participants discussing and leveraging each other’s’ experiences to design practical solutions, but

²⁵ Examples in 2020 were the Barcelona Course and Tunisia activity regarding reparations; prior examples include Gender Symposium in 2019, exchanges regarding anti-corruption and meetings to discuss prosecutorial strategies in the Great Lakes region.

also establishing networks that outlive those exchanges. Being an international organization with a long trajectory in the field puts ICTJ in a unique position to identify and bring together disparate but analogous groups and experiences from all over the globe, which represents huge added value. As mentioned in the paragraph above, ICTJ has consistently made efforts to go beyond the usual suspects and use our thorough political analysis to identify sectors and stakeholders with an interest in pursuing change and accountability (not only human rights activists). Consistent with this line of work, we also make concerted efforts to share with domestic stakeholders how other relevant experience have benefitted from this inclusion

ICTJ has taken up this lesson to leverage its added value and include this line of work more prominently and systematically in our future strategic plan.

Intergenerational Dialogue to Build Bridges

ICTJ continues to find innovative ways to bring together individuals from different sides of the armed conflict to participate in spaces for dialogue and exchanges. In FY21, together with the Truth Commission, ICTJ in Colombia began a series of roundtable sessions with the sons and daughters of former combatants, FARC and paramilitary, who will engage in an intergenerational dialogue on their experiences in the armed conflict, with a focus on the legacy of the Truth Commission. This type of initiative provides a safe and intimate space that adversaries or antagonists would not usually have to meet and reflect on their experiences and find common ground. This follows up similar lessons learned by our program in Lebanon and in Tunisia, and it yet another way to innovate to construct a societal narrative about the past that unites and allows for forward thinking and hope. This intergenerational work is also necessary for sustainability and is consistent with our work with youth and art. As we know, transitional justice processes include reforms and



Youth workshops in Tunisia encouraged participants to reflect on how the past relates to the present and future as well as their role in shaping the society they want for their country. (ICTJ)

transformation that require time and sustained political will. The next generation cannot forget, must know what happened and remember, reflect on how what happened influences or is linked to what they themselves suffer at present and learn what to do to protect and sustain the results of transitional justice.

Key Results

Transitional justice processes and their results vary greatly from context to context. Factors such as institutional capacity, political will, coalitions' strength for pushing for reform, societal endorsement, pressing financial or humanitarian needs, security constraints, and the role of domestic and international civil society actors all influence progress and results. Transitional justice processes are cyclical, iterative ones, whose effects should be monitored and followed over the long term, rather than discrete instances when everything happens at once. However, they can often experience rapid developments leading to significant change. It is important to remember that in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge negative impact in the countries where ICTJ works (in terms of health, security, the economy, political stability, and other important contextual factors) which significantly hindered or slowed ongoing processes in spite of interventions. It is against this backdrop that results should be understood. Below, we follow outcomes in our results framework to interpret the data we collect and present some highlights of the most significant progress in FY21.

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Landmark Victories

- *Societies implement responsive and gender-sensitive solutions to address legacies of massive human rights violations and lay the foundations for peace, justice, and inclusion.*

During the fiscal year, ICTJ supported processes facing strong domestic challenges. ICTJ's work helped more than 36,000 men and women participate in various processes, increasing their access to justice through solutions to address massive human rights violations. For example, over the past three years, ICTJ has contributed to the work of the TRRC in The Gambia, which is now reaching the end of its mandate. ICTJ's work has contributed to making the TRRC's approach more inclusive and effective, despite its limitations. With the support of ICTJ, and in coordination with other organizations such as the UNDP, the TRRC was able to conclude its public hearings, having received 392 witnesses during the past year, in addition to 462 testimonies it had collected the year prior. In addition to this, interim reparations were provided in terms of health care, educational support, and other forms of assistance to victims.

In Colombia, ICTJ provided vital support to the implementation of the mechanisms and policies defined in the Peace Accords. ICTJ played a leading role, not only providing expert advice, but also

“We thank ICTJ, who has been like an “angel” for the Truth Commission.”

— Colombian Truth Commissioner Martha Ruiz

joining forces with the European Union to enable the SJP and other national institutions to receive and use critical support when the national budget for transitional justice institutions was severely reduced by the Colombian government. This support enabled the institutions to access and use European Union funds to continue operating effectively, and identify the actions needed for a more efficient and strategic operation, including an important process of receiving statements from civil society to consider.

With ICTJ's support the SJP continued receiving inputs from civil society. As of April 2021 the SJP reported it had received 358 reports from civil society organizations and state institutions, documenting violations committed during the conflict and opening a path for justice for over 324,682 victims who have been accredited as such in the seven macro cases opened by the jurisdiction. ICTJ provided technical support to a handful of civil society organizations making these submissions to the SJP. Moreover, ICTJ directly contributed to work of the Colombian Truth Commission, who received 6,607 testimonies involving 12,996 people as reported in December 2020.

The Colombian Search Unit, in turn, completed its National Search Plan. Following this strategy, they produced 14 specific regional search plans, which will begin implementation in 2021, to search for 1794 missing persons. The Unit has already found 100 bodies in 2020 and taken 446 DNA samples to assist with their identification.

In Tunisia, the tenth anniversary of the revolution welcomed the creation of the long-awaited Dignity Fund, ICTJ has consistently pushed for its creation and recently has been a resource for the Head of the Dignity Fund, offering comparative expertise and technical advice, particularly on developing the Fund's statement taking form. Throughout the year, ICTJ also supported different actors in the Tunisian state, such as the SLA and INLUCC, as they redouble efforts to recover assets stolen by the former dictatorship, his associates, and close family members. These assets would be critical to fund reparations and implement the recommendations of the TDC.

Enhanced Processes, Increasing Participation

- *State and other institutions successfully put forward and implement proposals (laws, reforms, programs, or institutions) to advance transitional justice solutions that are gender sensitive, take account of the context, and respond to the needs of rights-holders and the demands of victims and civil society.*

In FY21, ICTJ provided comparative experience, accompaniment, and technical advice to state actors and others with the power to act and with responsibility to victims. These efforts resulted in tangible, concrete progress in transitional justice processes in the form of more than 18 policies, norms, practice guides, and other tools. Examples this year include but are not limited to: key contributions to the draft Laws on Fact-Finding Commission for the Republic of Armenia, and a

“As we close this important chapter of the Commission’s work, i.e., the public hearings, I take this opportunity on behalf of the Commissioners, the Legal Team and all staff of the TRRC to express our most sincere gratitude to all Gambians and members of the international community—especially the UN Peace Building Support Office, UNDP-Gambia, the OHCHR, ICTJ, the Institute for Integrated Transitions and International Idea—for their unflinching support over the past three years.”

— Public Statement by the Chair of the Gambia’s TRRC, Dr. Lamin J. Sise

draft Law on Judicial Vetting; significant contributions to Colombia's SJP, especially to its chambers of acknowledgment, as well to the strategies of the Search Unit and the Truth Commission; and contributions to the strategy of the Tunisian government regarding funding for reparations; and the National Transitional Justice Policy in Uganda. ICTJ also provided advice that contributed to the law establishing the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission in the Central African Republic, ICTJ's advice resulted (among other elements) in the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons and other minorities in the selection of commissioners, and it also contributed to the consideration of indirect victims such as women and children in the scope of that law.

Despite having developed the program quickly in response to urgent demands associated with the Afghan peace process, ICTJ was able to also contribute to the preparation of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission's (AIHRC) paper on reparations. The paper is intended to serve as a guiding strategy for the AIHRC on reparations.

Perhaps one of ICTJ's unique strengths is its ability to find avenues to foster dialogue with all duty bearers, including non-governmental actors with responsibilities over conflict. In the past year, ICTJ contributed to efforts by the SNC to include transitional justice considerations in constitutional negotiations, in the context of critical peace negotiations related to Syria. In Colombia, after

months of confidential dialogue between ICTJ and the FARC, ICTJ facilitated exchange between the former combatants and Italian experts on restorative justice, a process that significantly contributed to a shift in position by the former guerrillas and a communique signed by eight former FARC commanders in which they explicitly acknowledged responsibility in cases of kidnapping and asked forgiveness.²⁶

As an international organization supporting domestic state actors around the globe, ICTJ has continued fostering exchange and cross-learning across countries. We create platforms for the exchange of ideas, experiences, and lessons among stakeholders dealing with similar problems. For example, the international workshop "How to Fund and Design Reparations Programs?" mentioned in the Tunisia country section

"Kidnapping is a practice that we can only regret; we know there is no reason or justification for taking someone's freedom away from them. We reiterate our commitment to being held accountable before the justice system."

— FARC communique

earlier, a lesson learned by ICTJ is that the unique position of the organization as an actor that is relevant both at the local and international level adds great value to such exchanges. Evidence collected and our analysis of it has been that there are many positive externalities to these South-South cooperation exchanges, therefore we are determined to continue promoting such events in a more systematic and strategic manner (both for representatives of government, but also, perhaps more importantly, among civil society stakeholders).

- *Victims and civil society have the necessary knowledge, capacity, and support to advance their demands for justice.*

During FY21, ICTJ conducted over 72 capacity building interventions, strategy discussions, and roundtable convenings with our civil society partners (these activities were conducted for

²⁶ See <https://twitter.com/ComunesCoL/status/1305651081410736128?s=20>.

the most part online or remotely). While we are reporting fewer convenings than in previous years, given the impact of the pandemic and shift to new modes of remote and virtual work, ICTJ was able to adapt and produce a significant output in the short time. We received feedback from domestic partners that they appreciated ICTJ's ability to keep lines of communication and collaboration open. Quantitative data collected by ICTJ's design, monitoring, and evaluation team confirms their reports with over 85 percent of our civil society partners sharing that they improved their ability to pursue justice and demand their rights.

It is noteworthy that, when looking at gender-disaggregated data regarding the perception of capacity reported by ICTJ's partners, our organization's activities tend to perform better among women compared to among men (83 percent among men compared to 90 percent among women, average). This data point is consistent with other recent reports and might be indication of the effect of ICTJ's gender mainstreaming policy, or a byproduct of a larger proportion of gender-focused activities in our collaboration with civil society partners in The Gambia, Uganda and Colombia, for example. At this moment we do not have enough evidence to produce a confident analysis on the matter.

“It is not a coincidence that it is ICTJ who supported the project. They have historically been one of the greatest promoters of rigorous knowledge production in Colombia in relation to contextual analysis of system crimes.”

— Representative of Civil Society Organization Colombia Diversa

ICTJ's impact is not only evidenced by the perception of our partners, but also by what they do. Thanks to our support, they are better able to articulate their demands in an effective way, to engage with transitional justice processes led by the state, and to monitor their implementation. In the past year, our partners produced over 18 proposals, drafts and position papers to inform processes, including legal analysis and comments on legislation in Armenia, strategy documents for civil society action and their allies in Lebanon and a submission to the Human Rights Council by ICTJ Syrian civil society partners.

In Colombia alone, ICTJ significantly contributed to the analysis and presentation of 12 reports from civil society organizations to the Peace accord institutions, providing data and analysis from civil society to inform both truth seeking and judicial processes. Some of these include: “The Nobodies: The Memories of Youth of the Armed Conflict in San Vicente del Caguán 1998-2013”, “reports on impact of paramilitary infiltration in universities during armed conflict”, and several reports of persecution against LGBTI communities in the context of conflict.

- *Public discourse provides a more conducive environment for addressing the causes and consequences of massive human rights violations.*

ICTJ has highlighted the importance of societal endorsement to sustain reforms and advance accountability, and the value of quality information to counter attempts to derail, erode, or appropriate transitional justice processes. In FY21, ICTJ continued to devote significant effort in this aspect of our work, both due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting need to redirect activities into the digital space as well as due to organic demand.

In the past year, ICTJ saw a significant increase in the organization's reach. For example, ICTJ's website saw an 11 percent increase in overall users compared to the FY20, from 254,566 to 283,707, which also included a 11.6 percent increase in new users. ICTJ's communications is

reported to play a very important role in providing reliable information to users in Colombia, as they make up more than 25 percent of the users who visit ICTJ's sites (more than any other country, including the US). During FY21, ICTJ also increased its content production in Arabic, which resulted an increase of 50 percent in Arabic language users, with correlated with increased web traffic from Lebanon, Tunisia, and Iraq. Interestingly, ICTJ's Arabic Facebook has more followers than the English one and has reached about 100,000 subscribers in the last year.

Meanwhile, our work on the ground has been verified to have contributed to changes in behavior and discourse around transitional justice during the past year. Most notably, efforts made by the Uganda program, particularly media-based initiatives such as radio and tv appearances,²⁷ together with the incredible persistence and commitment of our staff and the influence by international partners were considered critical to maintain a sliver of hope regarding transitional justice, in spite of a context of frustration and overall democratic backsliding. See [Annex C](#) for more examples.

In several of the countries where we work, ICTJ has been central to galvanizing civil society, mainstreaming the discourse around transitional justice, and linking it with the reform agenda of the future. One evidence of such leadership is the role ICTJ played in articulating civil society's response to the events of August 4, 2020 explosion in Beirut harbor, as was described in the Lebanon country section above.

- *Victims and parties with the responsibility to act come together, hear each other, and advance solutions.*

According to its Theory of Change, ICTJ considers enabling victims and other citizens to engage with those responsible for policy decisions and designing transitional justice solutions as key to making those processes more responsive and to effectively address the justice gaps experienced by people. In spite of a challenging context in 2020, ICTJ managed to facilitate over 30 such convenings (mostly remotely).

Better-Informed Policy Decisions

- *Practitioners and policymakers at the international level have better information and expanded capacity to advance responsive, gender-sensitive, and context-specific solutions.*

One of the key elements of ICTJ's strategy is combining our presence on the ground, our international network with our research and policy capacities to foster the use data in transitional

“The ICTJ kept the Transitional Justice conversation alive even when the momentum had waned among other actors. They kept reigniting the discussions that ensured victims' concerns, past injustices, and human rights violations remain a stronghold in political and policy discourse... These efforts, among interventions by other stakeholders, ultimately resulted in the enactment of the Transitional Justice Policy.”

— Independent Evaluation of ICTJ's Uganda program supported by the Austrian Development Agency, April 2021

²⁷For example, the show “Citizens' perspectives on transitional justice” on the Ugandan channel NTV was viewed by more than 539,000 people www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6lpgl3M-h4, a similar appearance on UBC to discuss reparations got more than 215,000 views

justice and of influence international responses to massive human rights violations. ICTJ's work is geared to identify roadblocks in access to justice and provide timely feedback to government and other institutions. At the same time, we contribute to the evidence base of what works where in transitional justice. In FY21, ICTJ leveraged its position to provide advice regarding methods, scope and approach to partners in Sudan and Libya that resulted in assessments and surveys that will provide evidence regarding the preference and perceptions of the population regarding potential transitional justice solutions in those countries. ICTJ's programs have also exercised that function directly, contributing evidence and analysis regarding the performance of local development programs (Uganda), monitoring the Specialized Chambers (Tunisia) and surveying the functioning of the three main Peace Accord institutions (Colombia).

In FY21, ICTJ also lead a discussion on measuring progress and results in transitional justice, convening practitioners and stakeholders to discuss and share insights about the subject, linking that discussion with the SDGs, as was mentioned in the policy section above.

ICTJ also provided contributions and technical advice that were then incorporated into several reports, procedures, declarations, and policies of governments, multilateral organizations, such as the European Union, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, and other international bodies. Table 2 presents a list of these policies, procedures, resolutions, and proposals in FY21 that include, reflect, or acknowledge ICTJ inputs.

Table 2. ICTJ's Contributions to National and International Policies, Procedures, Resolutions, and Proposals, FY21

| | |
|----|---|
| 1. | The report of the Bureau of the ICC ASP on complementarity |
| 2. | Council of the European Union, Concept on EU Peace Mediation , December 7, 2020 |
| 3. | European External Action Service (EEAS) and European Commission, Directorate General for International Partnership (INTPA), 2020 Guidance note on the use of conflict analysis in support of EU External Action |
| 4. | European External Action Service (EEAS), "Non Paper Main conclusions and recommendations for the UN Peacebuilding Support Office," April 27, 2020 |
| 5. | United Nations University, Center for Policy Research, "The UN Security Council and Transitional Justice: A Preliminary Look," 2021 |
| 6. | United Nations Development Programme, "From Justice for the Past to Peace and Inclusion for the Future: A Development Approach to Transitional Justice," 2020 |

Institutional Progress

During FY21, ICTJ continued working according to the teleworking guidelines for staff designed to respond to the global pandemic, operating according to the contingency plan that had evolved during the year in response to shifts in the public health guidelines. We continued to respond to the needs of our staff through a set of systematized meetings and individual check-ins and provide staff with flexibility regarding working hours, deadlines, and leave to accommodate other responsibilities, including caregiving and homeschooling. ICTJ has also produced a protocol for the gradual re-opening of offices and resuming some activities (traveling, convenings, workshops, in-person meetings, etc.) to be applied in each context depending on the situation of the pandemic.

ICTJ continued and increased the diversity of our partnerships and developed new sub-granting arrangements with local actors in need of support. ICTJ was able to develop novel mechanisms to meet compliance requirements of funding institutions and play a role as a force multiplier, helping address the increasing needs of the local organizations (not only as a vehicle to support them in terms of funding, but also developing their capacity and increasing their legitimacy and reach). ICTJ has learned important lessons and developed internal best practices that are key to entering more funding cooperation modes and contracts in order to deliver targeted services to meet the demands of this moment. This will continue to be a major part of our business/funding model as leader in the field. ICTJ ended FY21 with a balanced budget, a small reserve and approximately 85 percent of the FY22 budget secured. While we have not been able to increase our institutional reserve during the pandemic, we celebrate an achievement of aligning our fundraising and spending plans to balance our budget during this year of crisis, and we are grateful to the flexibility of our donors and to the Skoll Foundation that provided two different grants dedicated to mitigating the impact of the pandemic and worked with ICTJ to form a strategy to increase the philanthropic community's attention to transitional justice and to ICTJ as a thought leader in our field.

The ICTJ development program is anchored in:

1. Partnerships with governments of The Netherlands, Sweden, and Luxembourg, whose funding modalities are designed to support long-term justice processes.
2. Increasing range of restricted grants from public, philanthropic and hybrid institutions;
3. Support from our board of directors and other gifts from individuals.

In addition to deep level of engagement with our key partners, ICTJ development functions

has focused extensively on cultivation efforts that resulted in a record number of foundations represented at the 2020 Roundtable by program officers, including regional offices. During the last quarter of FY21, as we followed up on the Roundtable, we have learned about strategic revisions and decision-making processes at these institutions as they respond to tectonic changes in our world and engaged with several foundations around ICTJ funding needs.

During FY21, the ICTJ Board of Directors, working within the now established committee structure under the leadership of Joan Spero, has been deeply involved in our work with the philanthropic community worldwide and the private sectors. For example, two of our board members have worked steadily to bring to the attention of the US philanthropic community the demand for transitional justice approaches to the racial justice agenda in the nation, and helped us secure new dedicated funding covering all costs associated with this work.

In terms of direct board support, we have reached a historical record for the organization. We are developing new strategies to engage individual donors, including with support from our board around building a pipeline of individual donors with capacity to provide annual gifts. The newly created “Inside ICTJ” program of virtual briefings helped us engage board contacts and increase our cultivation efforts at large.

ICTJ is grateful for support from our donors and welcomes any inquiries about our report and the work that took place towards justice, peace, and inclusion in FY21.

Table 3. ICTJ’s Major Donors, FY21

| Governments | Foundations and Individuals (\$25,000+) |
|--|--|
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs German Federal Foreign Office Austrian Development Cooperation | Anonymous (2) Charina Endowment Fund Chubb Rule of Law Fund Cordaid Ford Foundation Joan and Michael Spero Family Charitable Fund Legal Horizons Foundation Mai Family Foundation Open Society Foundations Skoll Foundation |
| Multilateral Organizations | Other Organizations |
| Democratic Governance Facility The European Commission United Nations Development Programme United Nations Peacebuilding Fund | Global Survivor’s Fund International and Ibero-American Foundation National Endowment for Democracy |

ICTJ wishes to express its most heartfelt thanks to the commitment and professionalism of each and every one of its staff members who are carrying out visible and invisible tasks to make our work possible.

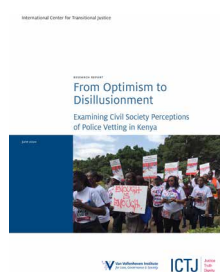
Annex A: Publications and Select Editorial Content

Reports

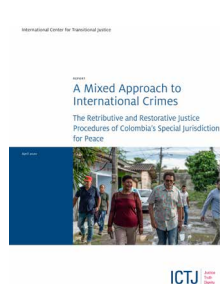


[Gone Without a Trace: Syria's Detained, Abducted, and Forcibly Disappeared](#) (May 2020)

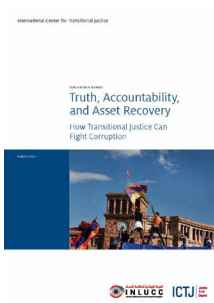
Also available in [Arabic](#).



[From Optimism to Disillusionment: Examining Civil Society Perceptions of Police Vetting in Kenya](#) (June, 2020)

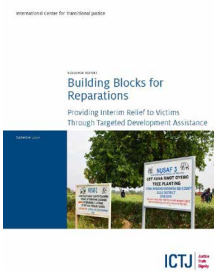


[A Mixed Approach to International Crimes: The Retributive and Restorative Justice Procedures of Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace](#) (July 2020)

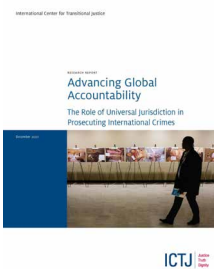


[Truth, Accountability, and Asset Recovery: How Transitional Justice Can Fight Corruption](#) (August 2020)

Also available in [Arabic](#)

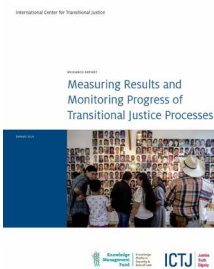


[Building Blocks for Reparations: Providing Interim Relief to Victims Through Targeted Development Assistance](#) (September 2020)



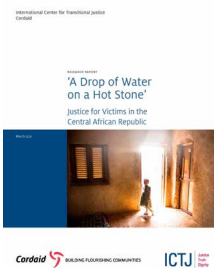
[Advancing Global Accountability: The Role of Universal Jurisdiction in Prosecuting International Crimes](#) (December 2020)

Also available in [Arabic](#)

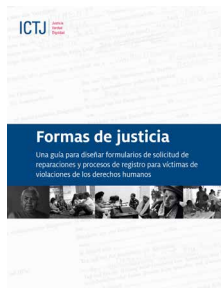


[Measuring Results and Monitoring Progress of Transitional Justice Processes](#) (January 2021)

Also available in [Arabic](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#)



[‘A Drop of Water on a Hot Stone.’ Justice for Victims in the Central African Republic](#) (March 2021)



[Forms of Justice: A Guide to Designing Reparations Application Forms and Registration Processes for Victims of Human Rights Violations](#)

(Spanish version published March 2021, originally published December 2017)

Briefing Papers

- [Hearings and Decision Making During Transitional Vetting Processes: Insights from Kenya](#) (June 2020)
- [Reflections and Recommendations for Transitional Vetting](#) (June 2020)
- [Reflections on Transitional Justice in Mexico: Paradoxes and Possible Processes](#) (Spanish only) (November 2020)
- [Dead at the Root: Systemic Dysfunction and the Failure of Reform in Lebanon](#) (December 2020), also available in [Arabic](#)

Expert's Choice

- April 2020** [Nour El Bejjani, COVID-19 Set to Deepen Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis](#)
- May 2020** [Howard Varney, Groundbreaking International Justice in Germany](#)
- June 2020** [Santa Falasca, Who Is Worth A Statue?](#)
- July 2020** [Ruben Carranza, Don't Call It 'International Justice Day'](#)
- August 2020** [Maria Camila Moreno, The Case Against Former President Uribe](#)
- September 2020** [Anna Myriam Roccatello, What Does a Heart-Felt Apology from FARC Mean for Colombia?](#)
- October 2020** [Agatha Ndonga, A Unified Military Force Vital for Peace in South Sudan](#)
- November 2020** [Mohamed Suma, It Is Not Too Late for Justice and Healing in Côte d'Ivoire](#)
- December 2020** [Ilaria Martorelli, Ethiopia's Transition at a Crossroad](#)
- January 2020** [Fernando Travesí, A Recipe for Violence: Uganda's Flawed Elections Subvert Democracy](#)
- February 2020** [Salwa El Gantri, An Imperfect Transition: Tunisia's Revolution 10 Years On](#)

March 2020 [Nour El Bejjani, Can a Saudi Peace Plan Finally End the War in Yemen and the Suffering of Millions?](#)

Select Multimedia Products

- Interviews, [Restorative Justice Conversations in Colombia](#), July 2020
- Documentary film, [A Path to Redress: Transitional Justice in Tunisia](#), July 2020
- Digital campaign to promote the [Voices of Memory Virtual Tour](#), August 2020
- Livestream of the [International Hip Hop Festival in Colombia](#), November 2020

ICTJ

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