



# JUSTICE RAPID RESPONSE

2010

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. WHAT IS THE JUSTICE RAPID RESPONSE?

Justice Rapid Response (JRR) is a multilateral stand-by facility that can rapidly deploy active-duty criminal justice and related professionals in situations where human rights or international criminal law violations may have occurred. JRR experts are recruited from participating States and organisations and trained specifically for international investigations before they go on the JRR roster. They are then available to respond to requests by States and international institutions with appropriate jurisdiction. JRR thus makes it possible for the international community to provide much needed support for compliance with and the effective enforcement of international criminal justice, thus helping to make justice an integral and constructive part of conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building. JRR experts can deploy quickly to identify, collect and preserve especially the most perishable information, analyse the information and report back to the requesting authority with recommendations as to the most appropriate justice remedies under the circumstance. The specific functions carried in this context may include: pattern of violence, initial fact-finding investigations and conflict mapping; forensic mapping; documentary evidence investigation; visual image collection; identification of potential witnesses; and identification of potential crime scenes. JRR's long-term goal is to ensure that expertise is maintained from mission to mission and is deployable quickly and efficiently, without having to be recreated anew each time there is a need. In this way, it can significantly reduce response times in providing assistance that is both impartial and meets international standards.

### 2. WHY IS THE JRR MECHANISM NEEDED?

In situations where serious crimes under international law may have been committed, there is often a short security and political window of opportunity to identify, collect, analyse, and preserve information that would be essential to determine and support the most appropriate accountability processes. During conflict or in its immediate aftermath, societies are frequently not equipped, and the international community is not currently sufficiently well-organised to take advantage of such windows of opportunity. Yet the sooner information is collected after the events, the less likely it is that crucial evidence will be lost and the more likely that it can point decision-makers to the most appropriate accountability mechanism(s) for that situation. The early commencement of steps towards accountability could also serve to restore a population's confidence in the rule of law. Even the existence of such a stand-by facility with a rapid deployment capability could help reduce the scale of violations and hasten the success of peace-talks. The JRR enables the coordination of this work quickly and cost-effectively.

### 3. WHERE DOES THE JRR MECHANISM CURRENTLY STAND?

JRR was formally established in November 2007 and became operational in October 2009. It received its first request for deployment in its second month of operation and was able to respond successfully to assist with the International Commission of Inquiry for the September 2009 stadium massacre in Guinea. JRR has also responded to a request by the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for a team of six experts for the investigation of the outbreak of violence, including several deaths, at a prison in Les Cayes, Haiti. Most recently, JRR has deployed to assist an agency within the UN system with an internal investigation. A number of potential requests are also currently under consideration. In order to build the roster of experts, since becoming operational JRR has held two Certification Workshop and two Training Courses to train and certify active duty criminal justice experts, nominated by its participants, for international criminal justice-related deployment. The JRR roster currently has 81 deployable experts from 32 different countries, representing a balance of all regions of the world, including 36 experts from the global south and 36 women. The JRR roster already contains the most relevant expertise required for human rights and international criminal investigations, in all UN languages.

The Interim JRR Secretariat  
is run by  
No Peace Without Justice



Government of Finland

The Interim JRR Secretariat is run with the financial assistance of:



Government of the  
Netherlands



Government  
of Switzerland



Government of  
Germany

**4. WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE JRR MECHANISM?**

There are currently 47 States from all regions of the world and 20 inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations actively involved in JRR. Nine States make up the Coordinating Group, JRR's "executive" body, which directs the work of JRR's Management, i.e. the Chair and Secretariat. The Coordinating Group is composed of: Argentina, Canada (Chair), Colombia, Finland, Germany as represented by the German Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF), Sierra Leone, Sweden, Switzerland and Uganda. The JRR Policy Group meets once a year and the JRR Coordinating Group meets up to three times a year. Canada has chaired JRR since 2007 and No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) has acted as the Interim JRR Secretariat since 2006. JRR is supported by very small, voluntary contributions from some of its members. Its resource requirements are kept modest due to its Chair-centric management model and secretariat support from NPWJ, a civil society organisation. This enables JRR to channel most of the resources into training and deployment, including the sponsorship of experts from the global south, instead of creating a permanent infrastructure.

**5. WHAT MISSIONS CAN JRR FULFILL?**

JRR can only be initiated upon a specific request either by the State where the mission would be deployed, or by an international organisation with jurisdiction in a particular situation. Given the wide breadth of investigative expertise in the roster, JRR is deployable in a variety of situations and missions such as: human rights and international criminal investigations; special political missions; fact-finding commissions; commissions of inquiry; internal investigations requiring independent outside expertise; mediation support; and security sector reform assessment missions. In all these cases, JRR's added values include rapid deployability (in a matter of days) and an ability for JRR experts to investigate, analyse, report and recommend courses of action in situations where human rights and international criminal law violations may have occurred. JRR can thus assist any member of the United Nations system, especially the Security Council, the Departments of Political Affairs (DPA) and Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the International Criminal Court (ICC); States; and Regional Organisations.

**6. HOW DOES JRR FUNCTION IN PRACTICE?**

Experts on the JRR roster come with an in-principle pre-agreement of their employers for deployment. Yet there is no collective decision-making in response to requests for deployment. When a request for assistance is made, and a positive assessment of that request is done, each JRR participant whose expert is identified for the mission decides if it wishes to make its expert available for the mission. The active presence of the JRR operational office in New York enables JRR to develop relationships with International Institutions and States that may require the services of JRR experts. This makes possible early informal dialogue in situations where JRR could be of assistance, leading to realistic and achievable requests, and giving JRR participants adequate notice to respond.

**7. HOW IS JRR FINANCED?**

JRR is a practical expert service and if the requesting entity can afford to do so, it would pay the costs of the requested mission. However, it is anticipated that those requesting assistance may frequently be unable to meet these costs. Therefore, in addition to recurring costs (e.g. training, Policy and Coordinating Group meetings and costs of running the Secretariat), JRR participants and others finance the cost of deployments. The financing of JRR is as flexible and versatile as possible, to allow for the widest possible participation and the most efficient distribution of the burden, with a view to ensuring that participation in JRR will depend on interest and expertise, not on the availability of resources.

**8. DOES JRR COMPETE WITH INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS?**

The JRR is not an international justice institution: its role is limited to that of providing technical expertise for the identification, collection and preservation of information that can lead to timely recommendations as to the most appropriate justice remedies for the circumstances, as well as the preservation of information that could become evidence in future accountability processes. It is complementary to international justice institutions, which can also request its deployment when they have jurisdiction over a situation.

**9. WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE JRR?**

The next steps for the JRR mechanism are: (1) to manage ongoing and new JRR deployments; (2) to install and develop a new on-line roster management system; (3) to continue certifying experts to the JRR roster through further training courses and certification workshops on JRR; and (4) to continue to implement an intensified outreach strategy to raise awareness of the JRR mechanism among potential end-users and other supporters.