



Realizing Justice, Close to Home

NATIONAL EFFORTS TO SECURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CRIMES OF MASS ATROCITY

The Issue

When war crimes, crimes against humanity, or acts of genocide are committed, the international community has agreed: perpetrators must be held accountable. Victims have the right to see accountability realized, ideally, by their own justice system. International courts should only be a last resort: under international law, States hold the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute international crimes that fall under their jurisdiction.

Making justice happen close to where mass atrocities have been committed, however, is hard to achieve. Undertaking investigations is especially daunting when the scale of conflict has been massive, the patterns of crimes complex, and the nature of violence horrific. Many countries, and particularly those coming out of conflict, are unlikely to possess the needed expertise for such large-scale and complex accountability.

Sweeping mass atrocities under the rug is dangerous: if perpetrators are never brought to justice and national rule of law is not seen to be exercised, history is only doomed to repeat itself. And the more accountability can be enacted locally, the more justice will be seen to be done, and the rule of law - not of the gun - will be reinforced. For this reason, countries around the world have identified the critical importance of ensuring these crimes are addressed by national authorities.

Our Solution

Justice Rapid Response (JRR) developed its Complementarity Programme to provide, flexible, and cost-effective assistance to States wishing to hold perpetrators accountable or address past crimes through transitional justice processes, but needing the support of professional expertise from the international community to do so.

JRR offers tailored mentoring assistance from its international roster of over 660 experts that enables countries to maintain local ownership of accountability, performed at an international standard. Individuals available for deployment include investigators, prosecutors, transitional justice experts, child and witness protection specialists, military analysts, and experts in conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

JRR's Complementarity Programme empowers national actors to design and implement credible, thorough investigations. The mentoring received by national authorities builds confidence of those increasing the odds for justice to be done for crimes of the past. JRR experts complement efforts to build capacity of justice systems through institutional reforms, which are essential in post-conflict settings in order to reassert the rule of law and build resilient societies.



Our Approach

In response to inquiries from States, JRR first sends a small team of experts for a consultation mission in order to map the needs of national authorities. Working with local authorities and the international community not to duplicate assistance already being provided, JRR will propose areas where our experts would be best placed to provide mentoring support. JRR provides expertise in a wide range of specializations, including:

- ❖ International Criminal Law
- ❖ Criminal Investigations
- ❖ Transitional Justice
- ❖ Prosecutions
- ❖ Sexual and Gender-based Violence
- ❖ Child Protection
- ❖ Forensic Analysis
- ❖ Case Management
- ❖ Witness Safety and Management

About JRR

JRR is a multi-stakeholder facility that manages the rapid deployment of human rights and criminal justice professionals from a stand-by roster. We deploy our experts upon the request of the international community to investigate, analyze and report on situations where serious human rights violations and international crimes have been reported. Since 2009, JRR has deployed experts on more than 130 missions around the world.

Contact Us

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Our Impact

As a result of JRR's Complementarity Programme, countries dealing with the aftermath of mass atrocities are better able to meet their obligations under international law. From evidence-gathering in the field to presenting it in the courtroom, JRR experts have ensured national authorities on the ground have the knowledge and tools they need. When justice for crimes of the past is seen to be done, rule of law is strengthened and societies become more resilient to future conflict.

At a Glance

Guatemala continues to deal with the legacy of human rights abuses and serious crimes committed during its decades-long internal armed conflict. JRR has been working with prosecutors on a number of cases, further strengthening capacity to bring justice for victims of conflict-related violence.

Mali is working to address the crimes that have been committed on its territory both recently and in the past. JRR has provided expertise to mentor prosecutors who wish to proceed with conflict-related cases, as well as professionals of the Commission on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, ensuring they have the tools they need to carry out their respective mandates.



Photo: JRR Expert with Regional Office of CVJR, Bamako, 2017 (IRR)