



**fidh**

# The Rome Statute at 25: Making Victim-Centred Justice work at the ICC

FIDH Recommendations to the ICC Assembly of  
States Parties, 4-14 December 2023, New York



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# Introduction

The 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC or “the Court”) will be held at UN Headquarters in New York, from 4 to 14 December 2023. This year, the official [ASP agenda](#) notably includes the election of six new judges (one-third of the ICC bench), the adoption of a permanent due diligence procedure for all ICC elections, the adoption of a new legal aid policy, discussions and agreement on the 2024 programme budget of the Court, and debates on state cooperation with the Court. FIDH and its member organisations welcome the opportunity to participate in-person and organise side-events with ICC States Parties, as well as to join plenary sessions via livestream. This hybrid model of participation ensures engagement between civil society and the governing body of the Court. However, stringent visa restrictions and the exorbitant costs in New York mean that the ASP is significantly less accessible for civil society organisations than when it is hosted in The Hague, Netherlands.

In 2023, the ICC continued to face numerous challenges, including insufficient or lack of state cooperation, limited resources, attacks and intimidation against [ICC high officials](#) following arrest warrants issued in the context of the Situation in Ukraine, as well as an unprecedented [cyber-attack](#). These persisting challenges continue to hinder the Court's progress in its preliminary examinations, investigations and cases. Despite these obstacles, this year, the [25th anniversary](#) of the Rome Statute was celebrated with events around the world highlighting the ICC's central role in promoting justice and accountability for grave atrocities, and ways to improve the Court's effectiveness within the international justice system. A significant milestone was [Armenia's ratification of the Rome Statute](#) on 14 November 2023. On 1 February 2024, Armenia will therefore become the 124<sup>th</sup> ICC State Party, marking a positive step towards broadening the Court's jurisdiction and strengthening accountability and the rule of law.

As the ASP approaches, the world is witnessing intensified hostilities and a further spate of severe human rights violations in Israel and the occupied territories, resulting in tragic civilian suffering and casualties. Despite this, a culture of impunity for gross human rights violations persists in the region. On 29 October 2023, at the Rafah crossing into Gaza, the ICC Prosecutor, Karim Khan, confirmed that his office is actively investigating alleged crimes committed in Israel on 7 October 2023, as well as in Gaza and the West Bank, with the Court's jurisdiction dating back to 2014. In an open letter published on 19 October 2023, FIDH joined [over 100 genocide scholars](#), Palestinian and international civil society organisations to call on Prosecutor Khan to take the next step and issue arrest warrants, investigate Israel's crimes, and intervene to deter incitement to commit genocide in Gaza.

The response from most governments, particularly ICC States Parties, however, has been noticeably muted on the issue of accountability. This contrasts sharply with the broad global reaction to the Ukraine crisis. One striking example: on 17 November 2023, [five ICC States Parties](#) referred the Situation in the State of Palestine to the ICC Prosecutor, which pales in comparison to the [39 ICC States Parties](#) that referred the Situation in Ukraine on 2 March 2022, joined by four additional States Parties in the weeks that followed. This significant discrepancy underscores the need for consistent and impartial support for international justice across all situations of international crimes.

FIDH is calling for an end to double standards and urges ICC States Parties to support impartial justice globally, regardless of the geopolitical context. Attempts to marginalise the Court's role in the Israel-Palestine situation could undermine its legitimacy. FIDH urges ICC States Parties to openly express support for the ICC's role and use public channels to advocate for the Court's work. This is a pivotal moment for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to justice, accountability, and the rule of law.

It is also imperative for States Parties and the Court to extend their focus to other grave crimes, whether in [Afghanistan](#), with the ongoing escalation of gross human rights violations by the Taliban, especially against women and girls; [Bangladesh/Myanmar](#), where the Rohingya have been waiting six years for justice; [Sudan's](#) ongoing conflict where mass killings and rapes have been reported and millions of people displaced; or [Venezuela](#) where the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) has found sufficient grounds to believe crimes against humanity have been committed as part

of a state policy to repress opponents. Each ICC situation merits concerted attention and action. Consistency and impartiality in the pursuit of justice must be prioritised, irrespective of the location or nature of international crimes.

While the ICC is a key player in the expanding international justice system, it operates within a broader network of domestic, regional, and global justice entities committed to holding perpetrators of atrocity crimes accountable. As the Court grapples with limited resources and geopolitical challenges affecting its capacity to deliver justice, the principle of complementarity becomes all the more significant. Expectations of the ICC's role should be tempered by a greater emphasis on States Parties' obligation to investigate and prosecute the vast majority of international crimes at the domestic level.

This paper outlines FIDH's views on the Court's recent work, which the Federation and its member organisations have closely followed over the course of the year, and presents six key recommendations to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ASP on ways to make victim-centred justice work at the ICC.

# 1. Invest in Victim-Centred Justice and Support the Implementation of a Trauma-Informed Approach at the ICC

While States Parties and the ICC have worked at great lengths to create a victim-centred institution that respects the dignity, diversity, and needs of victims, the practical implementation of these rights face persistent challenges. Victims frequently face hurdles in exercising their rights, including restricted access to information during investigations, and limited participation in certain stages of proceedings. The current funding shortfall for victims' activities at the ICC is a significant challenge, especially given the budgeting mismatch with the ever-growing number of participating victims each year. Insufficient funding hinders the Court's capacity to execute these programmes effectively, potentially compromising victims' access to justice.

Since the inception of the ICC, civil society organisations and affected communities have called on both the Court's organs and States Parties to dedicate adequate efforts and means to facilitate victims' right to **participate in proceedings**, in accordance with Article 68(3) of the Rome Statute. Meaningful victim participation means recognising the unique experiences of victims, facilitating the early expression of their views and concerns in proceedings, enabling them to choose their counsel, and, in general, empowering them to actively contribute to and derive benefits from the judicial process. Since the Court opened, FIDH has [monitored and advocated for victims' rights](#) to ensure victims and affected communities have a [significant role](#) in all phases of ICC proceedings. The FIDH [Judicial Handbook on Victims' Rights at the ICC](#) (FIDH Judicial Handbook) is grounded in research and expert interviews, and assesses the implementation of victims' rights at the ICC until 2021. It provides practical recommendations to strengthen victim participation, uphold their rights, and enhance the overall effectiveness of the ICC. Regrettably, FIDH's ongoing research and consultations reveal persistent obstacles that impede the complete, effective, and meaningful participation of victims.

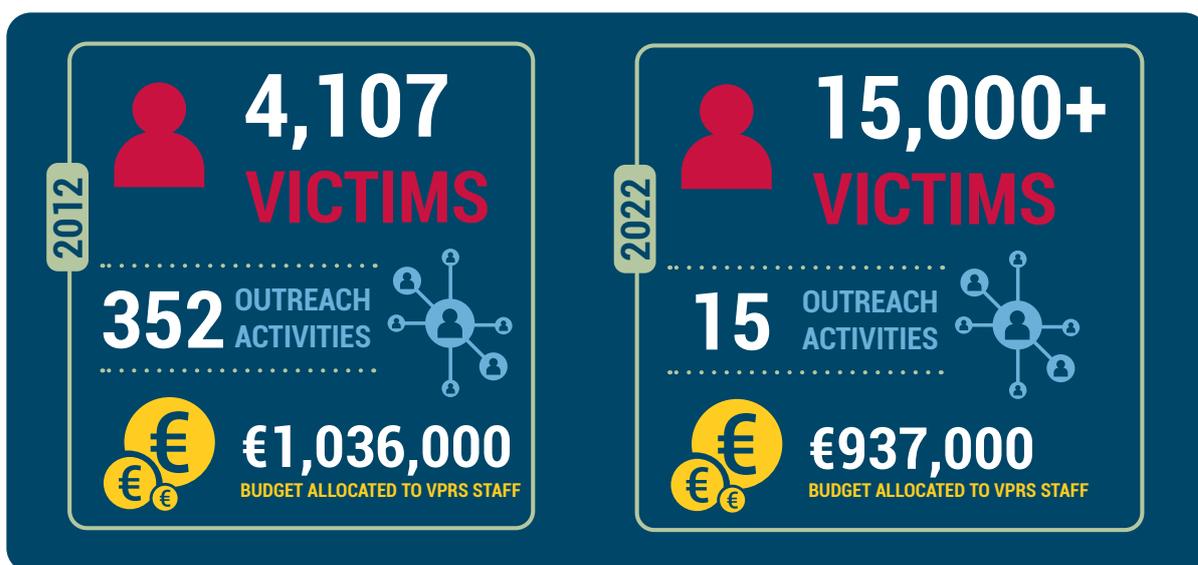
In addition to concerns about the right to participation, according to FIDH members and practitioners across all ICC situation countries, the Court's **outreach** activities (Registry and OTP) are not meeting the needs of victims and affected communities so they can adequately understand the Court's mandate, proceedings, and decisions. This has negatively affected victims' connection to the Court and their **right to information**. The ICC is widely criticised for its shortcomings in terms of outreach and engagement with victims, with almost all individuals interviewed for the FIDH [Judicial Handbook](#) specifying outreach as one of the main challenges for the effective and meaningful implementation of victims' rights at the ICC. Concerns were particularly strong among respondents

from (or involved in) situation countries, including Georgia, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Myanmar/Bangladesh.

A powerful recent example is the Palestine Situation. The Registry's [Report on Information and Outreach Activities](#) dated 13 November 2023, on victims and affected communities in the Palestine Situation, mentions victims' troubling concerns about the Court. Legal Representatives for Victims (LRVs) reported that victims "overwhelmingly articulated a wish for reassurance that the ICC investigation is progressing and an expectation to see the Court on the ground." Victims considered the events recently organised by the Registry, which focused on civil society, to have failed, as the activities "did not specifically allow for direct engagement or outreach to victims themselves and affected communities." LRVs further stated that "[t]he escalation of violence since 7 October 2023 has only increased the sentiment that the Court's presence must be felt tangibly." Victims' interlocutors and LRVs also poignantly remarked that "at this desperate time, Palestinians do not expect the Court to resolve their situation but they do expect it to do its job."

**Numbers speak volumes: there are now fewer ICC staff members dedicated to victims' support and outreach than a decade ago, despite the increase in the number of situations and cases.**

For instance, the Victims Participation and Reparation Section (VPRS), both at headquarters and in-country, has experienced a substantial reduction in resources. As of 31 August 2012, [4,107 victims](#) were participating in ICC proceedings, and that year the approved budget for VPRS staff was [EUR 1,036,000](#). In terms of outreach and public information the Registry reported that an impressive [352 activities](#) were organised from January to August 2012, including interactive sessions with affected communities and radio and television broadcasts in several situation countries. Skipping forward a decade, a combined total of [over 15,000](#) victims participated in cases before the Court from 2022-2023, representing over three times the 2012 figure. However, the approved budget for VPRS staff in 2022 was only [EUR 937,000](#), almost EUR 100,000 less than the 2012 budget, without factoring in inflation. The Court's website only reports [15 outreach activities](#) in 2022.



Numbers extracted from publicly available data on ICC website and in ICC documents

There is therefore a critical need to close the distance between the Court and victims, so that they feel more seen and heard. This requires a reevaluation of strategies and budgetary allocations. Timely, comprehensive, and accessible information about the proceedings is an integral part of meaningful participation. **Empowering victims also necessitates adequately funded participation and outreach activities to ensure informed engagement.** At a time when the ICC is facing legitimacy challenges from both States and affected communities, establishing a robust relationship with the primary beneficiaries of the Rome Statute system, who also drive the proceedings, is crucial. Without this connection, there is a risk that engagement with the Court will be limited, frustrating, and, in some cases, re-traumatising.

The **introduction of a trauma-responsive approach** to victims that fosters connections and trusting relationships is required. Prioritising healing and psychosocial support from the outset – while providing comprehensive translated information and clearly managing expectations – is

an essential prerequisite for victim-centred and gender-responsive approaches, aligning with the central principle of “Do No Harm”. FIDH’s experience shows that integrating sustainable trauma-responsive justice efforts can boost the participation of women, youth, and marginalised groups, while mitigating the risk of re-traumatisation in criminal justice processes. The first step towards such an approach would be for the Court as a whole to evaluate the prevalence and impact of trauma in ICC proceedings. For instance, trauma experienced by victims can disrupt emotions, memory, and decision-making, potentially leading to conditions like PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Understanding the influence of trauma on cooperation, testimony, and behaviour, in addition to cultural contexts and gendered norms, informs fairer and more effective legal responses.

Engaging in justice processes can further provide survivors with a sense of purpose and agency, helping them overcome past traumas and strengthening resilience, and enhance our understanding of these dynamics, ultimately fortifying the individual and societal impact of justice mechanisms such as the ICC. This approach also fosters trust in all parties including the defence, encourages disclosure, and enables a more comprehensive understanding of events, ultimately strengthening the ICC’s capacity to uncover and address the truth behind alleged crimes. FIDH welcomes the OTP’s new initiative to enhance the Office’s trauma-informed approach to its investigations and prosecutions, with ongoing with civil society consultations. However, the approach must be Court-wide and supported by States Parties so that it is properly funded and integrated by the Registry, as well as judges, in the courtroom. States should further endorse the establishment and implementation of a baseline level of engagement between the Court and victims, along with affected communities, to underscore and sustain these vital initiatives.



**FIDH is co-sponsoring a related side event at ASP 22 with NGOs and ICC States Parties, titled “A Victim-Centred ICC: Navigating Challenges to Realising Victims’ Rights and Reparative Justice from 1998-2023”, on 8 December 2023, from 13:15 to 14:30 in Conference Room 9 at UN Headquarters in New York.**

#### **FIDH calls on ICC States Parties to:**

- ▶ Adequately fund the VPRS both at headquarters and in situation countries. This is essential to ensure that victims can effectively participate in judicial proceedings, from early stages through to the reparation phase.
- ▶ Actively address the outreach gap and support the development of a mandated baseline level of engagement between the Court and victims and affected communities in each ICC situation country. Adequate funding is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of two-way engagement activities.
- ▶ Endorse and support a Court-wide trauma-responsive strategy to meet the diverse needs of victims, prioritising healing and psychosocial support, and to foster trust.

## **2. Adopt an Equitable Legal Aid Policy that Upholds Victims’ Rome Statute Rights and Ensures Fair Remuneration for Counsel**

After numerous previous attempts, the ICC Registry and States Parties are currently undertaking a comprehensive reform of the Court’s Legal Aid Policy (LAP). As the final stages of this reform approach, FIDH strongly supports the overhaul of the ICC LAP, a crucial and long-awaited initiative aimed at safeguarding the rights of victims to representation and ensuring equitable working conditions for their legal representatives appearing before the ICC.

During pre-ASP negotiations, there has been broad agreement among States Parties to adopt a new LAP, with a specific focus on endorsing "Scenario B+". This scenario, as calculated by the Registry, ensures higher remuneration for the majority of external team members, guaranteeing that no ICC counsel receives remuneration below their current level. While FIDH supports "Scenario B+" and calls on States Parties to adopt the proposed LAP reform during the 22nd session, there remains a crucial need to implement more flexible funding approaches and processes to accommodate the unique circumstances of each case and the needs of participating victims.

**A well-funded and efficient legal aid system** is essential to uphold the ICC's proper administration of justice, ensuring fair trials, and enabling **meaningful victim participation**. The redesigned legal aid system must allocate adequate resources at each stage of proceedings, and States Parties are urged to adopt a LAP which includes flexibility in funding to adapt to the unique circumstances of each case. Rooted in broader human rights and access to justice principles, legal aid is aligned with the fundamental right to a fair trial, as set out in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). By addressing inequalities in access to justice, legal aid upholds the principles of equality before the law, as outlined in Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Additionally, legal aid plays a crucial role in protecting victims' rights in international criminal proceedings, by ensuring their meaningful participation. Legal aid is thus founded on these universal principles and rights.

FIDH has closely followed the process of reforming the ICC legal aid system from the outset, to ensure the LAP fully respects the rights of victims under international law and the ICC Statute, including their right to meaningful participation and legal representation. In October 2023, FIDH, REDRESS, and the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice (WIGJ) sent a [joint letter to States Parties and the ICC Registry](#) highlighting key concerns and recommendations to make the LAP fair and effective for victims and their counsel who play an essential role in ensuring victims' views and concerns are heard. FIDH conducted consultations with Legal Representatives of Victims (LRVs) in October 2023, who have worked on at least eight cases and situations during all stages of ICC proceedings. They expressed deep frustration and disappointment that they have not been sufficiently consulted in the LAP reform process, especially during the final crucial phase of discussions. The joint letter took into account feedback from LRVs based on their extensive experience as practitioners working directly on these issues over many years, to obtain their views on the proposed LAP reforms.

FIDH welcomes the introduction of a clear presumption of indigence for victims in the latest draft LAP and is pleased to note that some of its key recommendations set out in the joint letter have been added to the draft LAP. These include the introduction of criteria that are more specific to the needs of victims in the new complexity assessment of cases and of increased flexibility with regard to accommodation and transportation costs for counsel travelling to The Hague on official business, as well as moving costs for counsel relocating to The Hague. FIDH also welcomes concrete measures to improve the working conditions of LRVs and their teams with the extension of basic labour rights and employment protection to support staff members in external teams – a welcome step towards aligning the conditions of external counsel with those of ICC staff.

Despite these improvements, some of the proposed reforms remain of concern with regards to victims' rights under the Rome Statute to meaningful participation and representation. Among FIDH's key concerns, the LAP reform proposal includes a EUR 30,000 cap on Victims' Legal Aid during the **"early stages of proceedings"** regardless of case complexity (levels 1, 2 and 3). While early-stage resource allocation is a critical improvement, the proposed fixed EUR 30,000 cap appears arbitrary and insufficient. [LRVs consulted by FIDH](#) in October 2023 supported this view and emphasised that this cap is "problematic," "absurd," and even "unfeasible" for most situations. Additionally, given that "early stages" can extend over years, this sum may be insufficient to cover basic expenses. In the words of one legal representative, "Optimistically, [the early-stage cap] may be enough for minimal-level representation for one year. But proceedings at the situation level might last for five, ten or more years. The Registry has given absolutely no indication of how this figure was arrived at. It appears to be an absolutely arbitrary number." Furthermore, the reform suggests that a single legal team per situation would receive these funds, which is untenable when multiple teams representing victims with significant conflicting interests are involved.

Similarly, the LAP reform proposal recommends a capped lump sum of EUR 60,000 on victims' legal aid during the newly established implementation period in the **reparations phase**. While FIDH

acknowledges the need to divide the reparation phase into "litigation" and "implementation" stages, there is deep concern about the proposed cap on legal aid during the "implementation" period, as it overlooks the varying complexities of cases. As with the early-stage cap, the reasoning behind the proposed capped lump sum in the reparations implementation phase has not been clearly explained or sufficiently justified by the Registry.

The one-size-fits-all lump sum approach completely disregards the unique characteristics of each situation, such as the number and geographical spread of victims, security concerns, political complexities, and the potential for delays or prolonged proceedings. The imposition of capped lump sums as currently proposed appears arbitrary and does not reflect the reality of the wide diversity of situations and cases. As such, it risks compromising victims' effective and meaningful participation and representation in the long term. Victims may be deprived of essential representation, especially in lengthy or complex cases, and a reassessment of funding modalities must be available to uphold victims' rights to counsel and participation during the complex reparations phase. Further, a lump sum payment, rather than an annual or biannual arrangement, poses significant challenges for financial planning when the duration of the situation is uncertain.

The Rome Statute right to legal representation is a cornerstone of fair trials, with the meaningful participation of indigent victims of mass atrocities hinging on having adequate legal support. Insufficient legal aid fundamentally undermines the Court's commitment to delivering justice and accountability. It is the collective responsibility of the Court and States Parties to ensure sufficient financial aid for indigent victims. The revamped legal aid system should not be arbitrarily reduced at the expense of victims' fundamental Rome Statute rights. Instead, its development should aim to attract and retain highly skilled counsel, who are even questioning the viability of continuing their work at the Court due to inadequate remuneration, posing a potential risk of losing valuable expertise and institutional memory. This approach would not only benefit victims but also enhance the overall quality of legal representation before the Court, promoting fairness in its judicial processes.

#### **FIDH calls upon ICC States Parties to:**

- ▶ Adopt the long-awaited legal aid policy in the "omnibus resolution" at the upcoming 22<sup>nd</sup> ASP session, implementing "Scenario B+" for fair remuneration, while applying the necessary flexibility in funding to accommodate the unique circumstances of each case and the Rome Statute rights of participating victims.
- ▶ Ensure the revised LAP allocates adequate resources at each stage of proceedings and includes adaptable funding procedures, rather than rigid lump sums, with the possibility to adjust the allocated funds and provide additional budget for unforeseen situations when justified and required.
- ▶ Reevaluate the proposed lump sum amounts for victims' legal aid, including the EUR 30,000 cap during the early stages of proceedings and the EUR 60,000 lump sum during the implementation period of the reparations phase.
- ▶ Actively engage with ICC counsel, including LRVs, who possess on-the-ground expertise and essential knowledge to ensure their meaningful participation in the LAP reform process, fostering a collaborative approach that benefits from their valuable insights and experiences.
- ▶ Address concerns about potential arbitrariness, insufficiency, and the diverse complexities of cases, as well as the risk of prolonged proceedings.

### 3. Implement Gender-Responsive Policies and Budgeting

Over the past decade, there has been commendable progress among States in advocating for accountability in cases of sexual and gender-based crimes (SGBCs). The growing momentum has been evident in calls for enhanced gender equality and representation, including within international institutions like the ICC. Recognising the importance of these advances, some States have embraced Feminist Foreign Policies and incorporated a gender lens in budgeting and funding, which has led to more political and financial support towards gender-sensitive initiatives at the Court, including through innovations like gender responsive budgeting (GRB). To institutionalise these positive developments in order to see tangible results on the ground, States must not only sustain their efforts but also encourage those ICC States Parties that remain hesitant to follow their lead. Political and financial support for the Court is essential for enhancing accountability for SGBCs, and ensuring the mainstreaming of a comprehensive gender perspective across all aspects of its work and operations.

FIDH welcomes the engagement shown by several leading States, including [Canada](#), [Chile](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Mexico](#), [the Netherlands](#) and [Spain](#), to better understand, reflect and address gender in their policies. We encourage all ICC States Parties to take part in progressive and forward thinking initiatives such as the [Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference](#) which took place in The Hague, Netherlands in November 2023. The [International Gender Champions](#) network also “brings together decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence.” According to [Annika Markovic](#), former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden to The Netherlands: “As a committed International Gender Champion my priorities are to bring a gender equality perspective into international policy-making and to address destructive gender norms, with the overall goal that women and men shall have the same power to shape their own lives and our future societies.” Gender Focal Points serve as a valuable platform for individuals to become advocates within their own national authorities, pushing for improved policies, funding, and budgeting. By signing up to be Gender Champions, State representatives make a public and long-lasting commitment to advancing gender equality.

Moreover, States Parties must **support the implementation of gender-responsive policies and budgeting within the ICC**. This is crucial for several reasons: it promotes gender equality, enhances workplace culture, contributes to economic growth and development, addresses systemic biases, and ensures policies meet unique, intersectional, and evolving needs. Embracing these changes aligns with the ICC's [Strategy on Gender Equality and Workplace Culture](#), making it a responsibility for both leadership and personnel to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment.

In assessing the current situation at the ICC, however, a notable concern is the total absence of updates on implementing GRB from the Court. According to the Court's Strategy on Gender Equality and Workplace Culture, GRB “is a method that analyses budget allocations, public spending and taxation from a gender perspective and can be subsequently used to advocate for the proper allocation of budget line items to better respond to women's priorities as well as men's, making them, as the name suggests, gender-responsive.” The Strategy also mentions that the Court has “initiated reflections on the adoption of gender responsive budgeting as a methodological and practical tool to further support the implementation of this Strategy, and will continue to consult with relevant partners, including States and civil society,” yet there has been a lack of substantial progress in the implementation of GRB. The ICC Registrar also expressed his [intention to consider and implement GRB measures](#) during the Registrar elections. In September 2022, he stressed that “while a lot of work still needs to be done, planning is already underway to identify some key budgetary outputs and develop tools to analyse their implementation from a gender lens as of next year.” However, it seems that no concrete steps have been taken.

To address this, initial measures should involve the incorporation of more disaggregated data, encompassing gender and other relevant factors, in forthcoming reports from the Court, its organs, and the Committee on Budget and Finance (CBF). Furthermore, an analysis of gender-related gaps in the budget is essential, accompanied by preliminary recommendations to rectify these disparities. It is noteworthy that an ICC representative mentioned the availability of disaggregated data during the latest Geographical Representation and Gender Balance (GRGB) facilitation of States Parties, indicating that reporting on such data could be facilitated upon request from States.

Meaningful commitment to gender equality will require alignment with proper budgeting and planning. This serves as the crucial link between stated policies and their effective implementation, offering various avenues for realisation. States should prioritise achieving better gender representation and balance, especially in senior positions. This may [require adopting](#) “more drastic measures in terms of recruitment and promotion policies, flexible work arrangements and regular reporting by using diversity metrics to correct current imbalances.” Additionally, States must allocate funds to support gender-sensitive proposals and endorse budget requests aimed at strengthening the ICC’s comprehension, approach, and implementation of a consistent gender perspective.

FIDH further calls on States to provide **financial and political backing to developing and revising policies related to sexual and gender-based crimes** in support of the OTP’s “[Strategic Goal 6](#),” which is crucial for promoting gender equality, addressing systemic biases, and supporting victims of SGBCs. This support not only acknowledges the significance of addressing these crimes but also ensures the Office’s capability to conduct meaningful consultations with international and national experts. FIDH commends recent consultations led by the Prosecutor’s legal advisers in 2022 and 2023, resulting in the publication of the Office’s first [Policy Paper on the Crime of Gender Persecution](#) (2022) and the upcoming revision of its [Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes](#) (expected at ASP22 in 2023). The significance of these consultations lies in their far-reaching impact, extending beyond the OTP and resonating within the Court’s various sections, influencing domestic jurisdictions, political stakeholders, civil society, and practitioners at both local and international levels.

To illustrate, the OTP’s recent adoption of the Policy Paper on Gender Persecution sheds light on a profoundly serious crime that, until recently, remained largely overlooked or obscured in international criminal law proceedings. This is especially significant and timely given the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, where there is a clear pattern of [gender persecution](#) by the Taliban against women and girls. By endorsing such policies, States can play a pivotal role in enhancing the Court’s response to the crimes they publicly denounce.

States should also consider the Court’s essential need for **specialised and permanent positions**. The Court’s 2024 budget proposal emphasises the OTP’s need to bolster its internal capabilities in investigating and prosecuting SGBCs. This involves providing ongoing [core and specialised training](#) for staff, particularly to “enable them to interact with victims of these crimes while avoiding secondary traumatization.” Additionally, it requires appointing gender focal points within different teams and recruiting experts on SGBCs as permanent team members. Permanent staff, unlike secondments, enable more strategic and continuous engagement, a crucial factor in addressing SGBCs. In this regard, FIDH urges States to consider the OTP’s proposal to hire a Forensic Officer [specialising in SGBC and torture](#). Given that forensic evidence related to these crimes often requires careful intervention from well-trained forensic officers, this appointment is vital due to the sensitive nature of the evidence, the complexity of the cases, the time-sensitive nature of the evidence, the need for a trauma-informed approach, and the need for specialised skills.

FIDH also underscores the [pivotal role played by the Gender and Children Unit \(GCU\)](#) within the OTP in implementing a victim-centred approach to SGBCs and crimes against children. As highlighted in the Court’s budget proposal, the “experts in GCU help survivors overcome reluctance to speak out about their experiences. Such reluctance often stems from unfamiliarity with the process. To encourage participation, survivors must be provided with enough information about the investigations being undertaken, the possible implications of their cooperation and participation in an investigation or prosecution and, just as importantly, the subsequent stages.” This targeted, sensitive, sincere, and meaningful outreach and engagement with victims can only be conducted if the Office has the adequate means and personnel to do so.

In order to move these issues forward, States must publicly commit to gender equality and accountability for SGBCs which includes providing the needed budgetary support to the ICC for related initiatives, and adopting and implementing gender-sensitive policies domestically.

#### **FIDH calls on ICC States Parties to:**

- ▶ Actively participate in progressive and forward-thinking gender equality initiatives at the international, regional, and local levels to promote a comprehensive and inclusive approach.
- ▶ Embrace a Feminist Foreign Policy, designating focal points within national authorities responsible for advancing the gender equality agenda, and ensuring accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes.
- ▶ Adopt and implement gender-sensitive budgeting and budget planning strategies, allocating funds to support gender-sensitive initiatives within the ICC and domestically.
- ▶ Thoughtfully review the Court's budget proposal, and provide the necessary funds for the ICC to sustain its efforts towards victim-centred accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes.
- ▶ Encourage the appointment of Gender Champions within national authorities to advocate for improved policies, funding, and budgeting aligned with gender equality goals.

## **4. Defend the Defenders: Actively Support Civil Society & Human Rights Defenders Who Champion the Work of the ICC**

As we mark the [25th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders \(HRDs\)](#), it is imperative for ICC States Parties and the ICC to recognise and affirm their crucial role in supporting and protecting these individuals at risk. States must consistently denounce criminalisation, threats, and attacks faced by HRDs, who stand on the frontline of accountability efforts for core international crimes.

States Parties to the Rome Statute have consistently [acknowledged](#) the “[invaluable assistance](#)” provided by civil society to the ICC – including HRDs, many of whom are [FIDH members](#) – who represent victims, survivors and affected communities who work closely with the Court. Civil society groups fought for the ICC to be established, and continue to tirelessly advocate for the Court in the face of continuous political attacks. HRDs are often at the frontline of atrocities, gathering evidence of violations, engaging with those most affected and raising their voices against the impunity of perpetrators. They advocate for meaningful and victim-centred international justice, and they do so often at the expense of their own freedom, security, and even life.

Despite HRDs' crucial role in promoting human rights and documenting violations around the world, including providing vital materials and leads directly to the ICC, there has been a notable increase in attempts to constrict the space available for HRDs globally – with insufficient support extended to those affected. In 2022 alone, over [400 HRDs were killed](#) because of their human rights work – and this is just the number of confirmed killings. One current example: for the [first time in history](#), staff from FIDH member organisations in the Gaza Strip are almost entirely inoperative. As their lives are at risk, they cannot document ongoing human rights violations, reinforcing the cycle of impunity for international crimes. This demands urgent attention and concerted efforts from ICC States Parties,

to do more to protect and champion the essential work undertaken by HRDs which includes supporting active investigations and cases. States must strengthen the collaborative relationship between the ICC and HRDs, promoting an environment where their contributions are not only acknowledged but also safeguarded against attempts to undermine their central role in pursuing justice and accountability.

During last year's ASP session (ASP21), nearly 200 CSOs from around the globe [denounced the targeting of HRDs](#) because of their cooperation with the ICC, and called for support from the Court and States Parties. At the closing session of ASP21, ASP President, Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi [addressed](#) the security risks CSOs face "by virtue of their work in support of the Court or accountability in general", and stated that "you can all rest assured that the concerns that have been expressed are being taken very seriously."

In the so-called "omnibus resolution", the ASP has repeatedly [expressed concern](#) about "the recent reports of threats and intimidation directed at some civil society organisations cooperating with the Court." The ASP also [compiled "good practices"](#) in December 2022 to counter the threats and attacks against the Court and those cooperating with it, including civil society and HRDs. Consistent with these good practices, the ASP Presidency made strong public statements ([here](#) and [here](#)) in 2023 denouncing the targeting of the Court and its officials. The same is required for HRDs who are also targeted. States should use similarly **strong language supporting HRDs who put themselves at risk** by cooperating with the Court in this year's "omnibus resolution". In October 2023, the ASP took an initial step by adopting guidelines to bolster the security of those who participate in the Assembly's work. These guidelines advocate ongoing collaboration with States Parties, the Court, and civil society to develop further measures in the coming year.

As highlighted by the [UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders](#), States have a duty to protect HRDs "against any violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action." State obligations are both negative and positive: States must refrain from violating human rights as well as prevent violations of the rights of HRDs in their jurisdictions. This is particularly important given that in most situations, the ICC heavily relies on HRDs to conduct its investigations and outreach activities, and to establish or maintain contact with victims and witnesses.

It must also be stressed that the **pivotal role of civil society organisations and HRDs** extends beyond mere protection – States Parties should actively recognise and enhance their involvement in ASP events and meetings. Persistent barriers, maintained by some States Parties, seeking to restrict participation and minimise influence within the ICC's mandate, highlight the need for the ASP to proactively enhance civil society's engagement more broadly and consistently within the Rome Statute system.

In this regard, a "Review Mechanism" roundtable was held on 6 April 2023 with States Parties ICC officials and civil society, focusing on the implementation of the Independent Expert Review (IER) recommendations on "[Relations with civil society](#)" (R153 to R162, except R157 and R160). Court representatives "underlined the importance of the recommendations related to working with civil society" but explained that a lack of adequate funding made it difficult to fully implement them. CICC and other NGOs actively participated in the roundtable, stressing the need for timely and meaningful engagement between civil society and the Court. They urged the Court to consult with them during policy and strategy development, promoting early involvement. NGO representatives highlighted the importance of referencing civil society and HRDs in Court and ASP statements and on social media to support open civic spaces and protection strategies. Inclusivity, equity, and language accessibility were deemed crucial. They urged States Parties to address current challenges including inadequate outreach, language barriers (especially the absence of materials in Arabic), lack of genuine field presence, one-sided engagement, and a lack of cultural sensitivity. The Review Mechanism stressed the importance of continuing discussions to improve the ongoing implementation of recommendations, recognising the need for sustained efforts.



FIDH is co-sponsoring two related side events at ASP 22 with NGOs and ICC States Parties, titled (1) “Protecting and Defending Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society: What Role for ICC States Parties and the Court?”, on 7 December 2023, from 13:15 to 14:30 in Conference Room 7 at UN Headquarters in New York; and (2) “Paving the way to justice: the role of civil society in documenting international crimes” on 11 December 2023 from 13:15 to 14:30 in Conference Room 11 at UN Headquarters in New York.

#### FIDH calls on ICC States Parties to:

- ▶ Issue public statements and include strong language in this year’s “omnibus resolution”, recognising the crucial role of civil society and HRDs and expressing solidarity with them, when their security is jeopardised as a direct result of their accountability work and engagement with the ICC.
- ▶ Support the protection of HRDs and ensure a safe space for them to conduct their accountability work which supports the Court.
- ▶ Provide adequate funding to the Court so IER recommendations on “Relations with civil society” (R153 to R162, except R157 and R160) can be fully implemented.
- ▶ Safeguard against the continued shrinking of civic justice space for civil society and HRDs, and defend two-way engagement with CSOs, both within the ASP and the broader Rome Statute system.

## 5. Uphold the ICC's Promise to Victims: A Pivotal Call to States Parties for Cooperation and Complementarity

Under the Rome Statute, States Parties bear the obligation to cooperate with the ICC, recognising that such cooperation is imperative for the Court to fulfil its mandate. Indeed, the ICC’s effectiveness and legitimacy hinge on their robust support and active collaboration. Despite this, **non-cooperation** persists as an ongoing challenge. To date, States Parties have failed to execute 14 outstanding warrants of arrest, even when some suspects have travelled to their territories. This lack of cooperation significantly impedes the Court’s pursuit of justice and its mission to combat impunity. It not only affects the Court but also hampers the dedicated efforts of victims, affected communities, and civil society, who often work at great personal risk to support ICC investigations. FIDH emphasises the critical importance for States Parties to actively cooperate with the Court while upholding its mandate and independence. This includes providing access to territory and information, collaborating during investigations, and taking all necessary measures to execute arrest warrants and transfer suspects to the seat of the Court.

FIDH commends certain States for their recent strides in cooperating with the ICC and supporting initiatives aimed at accountability. Notably, FIDH welcomes the ongoing collaboration and coordinated justice efforts between Ukrainian authorities, the [Joint Investigation Team](#) and the ICC since the [initiation of investigations by the OTP in Ukraine](#). Additionally, FIDH acknowledges Colombia’s commitment, evident in the [signing of the Action Plan by the Colombian Government and the OTP in June 2023](#). This plan outlines various cooperation activities, including the provision of technical expertise and support by the OTP, along with the exchange of good practices in priority thematic areas. This step follows the earlier signature of the [Cooperation Agreement between Colombia and the OTP](#), reinforcing domestic accountability efforts. Similarly, following a new referral by national authorities in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), an important [memorandum of understanding](#) has been concluded between the DRC authorities and the OTP. This agreement aims to expedite the implementation of the DRC national

strategy through prioritised cases, and to enhance the capability of national accountability institutions to effectively address allegations of international crimes. While these agreements can represent encouraging steps forward, the lack of information and transparency on the content of these memoranda of understanding is to be regretted, since it increases the gap between the Court, concerned State authorities and civil society and affected communities.

These activities are being implemented in conjunction with the ICC Prosecutor's new approach aimed at having a more limited number of open preliminary examinations at the OTP and in turn placing increased emphasis on support for complementarity and cooperation activities. In this context, in October 2023 the OTP launched a public consultation on the Office's new [draft Policy on Complementarity and Cooperation](#) detailing a range of integrated measures and policies to operate the shift. FIDH welcomes the OTP's new approach, as reflected in the draft policy, which emphasises the importance of the support of "national authorities in shouldering greater responsibility with respect to the investigation and prosecution of core international crimes". FIDH has consistently advocated bringing justice closer to victims and called on States to comply with their international obligations to investigate and prosecute crimes committed on their territory. Supporting States in their accountability efforts is a key responsibility of the OTP. This objective, however, should not be followed at all costs. While domestic justice is ideal in theory, this holds true only if it is delivered in a timely, genuine, and meaningful manner. State cooperation and willingness to receive support from the OTP must not serve as the sole justification for refraining from investigations within the cooperating state, nor should it be perceived by States as "sufficient accountability efforts" relieving them from the above-mentioned obligations. In order for this new approach to cooperation and complementarity to be successful, States Parties should encourage the Prosecutor to adopt **clear benchmarks** on how their efforts will be assessed. This, in turn, will help States Parties to better understand the OTP's expectations.

With regard to the costs of cooperation and complementarity activities, FIDH calls States Parties' attention to the fact that while **voluntary contributions and secondments of national experts** can prove efficient and facilitate some activities, they should be the exception rather than the rule. At this stage, it appears that complementarity activities as envisioned would be implemented through extra-budgetary resources, while the **regular budget** would be dedicated to core activities. To support this, the OTP and the Registry are working towards the establishment of a Trust Fund in support of Complementarity and Cooperation Activities. However, the establishment of a trust fund and voluntary contributions, both financial and through national secondments, should not infringe the independence of the OTP or the Court. Voluntary contributions should not come at the cost of the Court's annual budget, nor should they aim to advance States' individual interests. States Parties should ensure that the OTP is able to maintain its independence and the balance of its work between situations, while strengthening cooperation with national authorities.

To do so, and to avoid perceptions of double standards and selectivity in the situations and cases the OTP prioritises, States Parties should support civil society's **call for increased transparency in the OTP's work**. Transparency through detailed and regular reporting can be a key vehicle for the Office to bring justice closer to communities and to uphold the Court's legitimacy. This would encourage more understanding and cooperation from all stakeholders – not just national authorities – including victims and civil society organisations that might greatly contribute to fill the potential information and evidence gaps. Civil society play a key role in providing the OTP with information on the situations of interest to the Court and in facilitating access to victims and affected communities, often taking significant safety risks while doing so. Therefore, they should also have access to this kind of information from the OTP through a two-way dialogue. FIDH also considers that the OTP should reflect upon enhancing and equalising baseline support offered to all situations where serious international crimes are committed. For the purposes of transparency and consistency, FIDH invites States Parties to engage with the OTP on this point and to insist that the Draft Policy should provide clarification, to be made available to civil society, on how the Office prioritises situations and cases, in terms of engaging in complementarity activities and offering support to national authorities, including by indicating the criteria taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

Finally, in line with the need for increased cooperation in relation to accountability, FIDH welcomes the adoption of the [Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes And Other International Crimes \(MLAT\)](#) on 26 May 2023. This new instrument constitutes a significant milestone in international cooperation

and a historic step forward in the fight against impunity for international crimes and delivering justice to victims. FIDH particularly welcomes the inclusion in the treaty of several recommendations formulated by NGOs, including FIDH, prior to its adoption, focusing on ensuring a [“meaningful implementation of victims’ rights in investigations and prosecutions for international crimes”](#). FIDH now calls on States Parties to give effect to this powerful tool to enhance justice avenues for victims, by signing the MLAT at the signature ceremony on 14-15 February 2024 in The Hague and ratifying and implementing it effectively through its integration into domestic law.

#### **FIDH calls upon ICC States Parties to:**

- ▶ Actively cooperate with the Court at all stages of ICC proceedings, including by providing access to information and a country’s territory, executing arrest warrants, transferring suspects to the seat of the Court, complying with cooperation agreements, and publicly reiterating their commitment to defending the Court’s mandate and independence.
- ▶ Undertake meaningful complementarity and cooperation efforts, and encourage the OTP to critically assess States’ efforts according to clear and public criteria and benchmarks.
- ▶ Improve and apply ASP procedures on non-cooperation, directly address instances of non-cooperation during the standing ASP agenda item on cooperation and envision adequate measures and sanctions.
- ▶ Reflect on enhancing and equalising baseline support offered to all situations where large-scale international crimes and serious human rights violations are committed.
- ▶ Support an increased and needs-based regular budget of the Court, and move away from repeated voluntary contributions.
- ▶ Support the OTP’s transparency through increased engagement with civil society in the context of its cooperation and complementarity activities.

## **6. Adopt the Historic Permanent Due Diligence Process for all ICC Elections at ASP22**

The urgent need for [vetting in all ICC elections](#) is rooted in the widely documented dysfunctional workplace culture at the ICC, and the fact that the responsibility for finding a solution lies chiefly with the Court’s leaders, most of whom are elected by States Parties to the Rome Statute. It is essential that elected officials not only possess the readiness and capability to address shortcomings in the work culture but also have impeccable records to ensure that they do not engage in abusive behaviour themselves. This has been long in the making. Following the ASP Bureau’s introduction of groundbreaking and ad hoc vetting procedures for candidates participating in the elections for deputy prosecutors (2020), registrar (2021), and judges (2022), the natural next step is to introduce a permanent process for all ICC elections. This is the opportune moment, with dedicated due diligence co-facilitators (Ecuador and Chile), impressive momentum and collaboration at the working level, and the necessary time available to design the procedure’s implementation before the next ICC elections (judicial elections in 2026).

The critical need for vetting became crystal clear in 2020 when allegations against candidates in elections for ICC Prosecutor arose, but there was no reporting mechanism available. In the [words of one complainant](#): “Unless something is really done to change the reporting mechanisms, and not only during election periods, strong women will continue to hide their stories and sexual predators

will continue to abuse their power and make more victims." A permanent vetting procedure for all ICC elections is necessary to protect the wellbeing of ICC staff, as well as the credibility of the Court itself as an institution.

The ICC's legal and policy framework also requires the introduction of a permanent vetting procedure. Beyond the requisite qualifications and experience for high level ICC officials, the Rome Statute mandates that judges, the prosecutor, deputy prosecutors, and the registrar are "chosen from among persons of high moral character". The impactful 2020 [Independent Expert Review \(IER\)](#) of the ICC and the Rome Statute System also delivered a wakeup call when it reported the Court seems to "suffer internally from distrust" and a "culture of fear." IER experts reported disturbing complaints of an adversarial and implicitly discriminatory workplace culture, with reports of "uninvited and unwanted sexual advances from more senior male staff to their female subordinates."

In response, the ICC launched its first [Strategy on Gender Equality and Workplace Culture](#) in December 2022 which includes the aim to "[c]reate and support a culture of respect and accountability for any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority [...]."

The [ICC Leadership Framework](#) further advises senior ICC leaders to prioritise creating a healthy and safe workplace, building trust, and embodying ethical behaviour. The framework's principles emphasise the importance of senior leaders as role models for these values.

Regrettably, the **working culture** in many of the Court's offices remains far removed from these aspirational policies. A 2022 ICC staff survey revealed that only 40% of respondents believed that the ICC takes allegations of discrimination, harassment, or abuse of authority seriously, and a mere 28% agreed that the ICC has an open and honest culture. Another troubling concern is the presence of PTSD among some ICC staff, including investigators, interpreters, and those working with victims, due to exposure (without sufficient support) to challenging cases and graphic evidence. Additionally, some staff members, having experienced direct trauma from situation countries, lack adequate internal support at the Court.

In June 2022, the Court's Independent Oversight Mechanism (IOM) also issued its evaluation of the [Workplace Culture in the ICC Judiciary](#) which "found that there existed a perceived atmosphere of impunity created over many years with regard to harassing and bullying behaviour from judges" and that "[a]lthough staff demonstrated awareness of the IOM investigation mandate, there was reluctance to formally report matters to the IOM for fear of retaliation." This report left no doubt that there was a need for judicial candidates to be vetted to ensure they have a high moral character. It also underlines the gap between the principles espoused by the Court and States Parties, and the actual experiences of ICC staff.

The **new due diligence procedure for all ICC elections** marks the beginning of a new era for the Court and for States Parties – it is a moment to celebrate a historic innovation and a first-of-its-kind vetting process at any international justice institution. Vetting will help boost the Court's credibility and protect its reputation by preventing the appointment of individuals with a history of misconduct that could tarnish the ICC's standing in the international community.

Looking ahead, FIDH calls on States Parties to design a concrete **implementation plan** for the permanent procedure following its adoption, which should include: adaptation of the procedure to the various election processes; defining the roles of various internal ICC entities involved in the procedure, including the IOM, Safety and Security Section and Human Resources; detailing the relationship between the procedure and related ASP bodies, such as the Advisory Committee on Nominations of Judges (ACN); and a coordinated communications strategy with the Court, legal profession, and civil society actors to ensure the wide circulation of the confidential reporting channel, and ensure these communications are translated into the languages spoken by candidates. States will also need to allocate sufficient funds to the IOM to effectively administer the due diligence procedure in the annual ICC budget, which according to the IOM will be between EUR 30,000 and EUR 50,000 per election.

This historic adoption also marks a new momentum towards comprehensively addressing the serious harms the due diligence procedure has been set up to address. Vetting is not a panacea for resolving the Court's broader workplace culture crisis, nor the myriad of other critical challenges in ensuring the [election of the best ICC and ASP leaders](#) – including nominating judicial candidates of the highest calibre [at the domestic level](#). Concretely addressing the Court's problematic workplace

culture must remain a top priority, as well as strengthening the overall assessment of candidates, in terms of their qualifications, management skills, and expertise in international criminal law and victims' rights for instance – to ensure the most highly qualified candidates are elected in senior ICC roles, which requires more ingenuity and commitment from States. The new procedure should eventually also apply to applicable ASP elections, namely for the [ACN](#) and the [Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims](#), which also require members to possess a "high moral character. As a member of the CICC Elections Team, FIDH stands ready to continue supporting States Parties' upcoming work in these areas.

#### **FIDH calls on ICC States Parties to:**

- ▶ Finalise and adopt the permanent due diligence procedure for all ICC elections at the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASP session.
- ▶ Design a concrete implementation plan for the permanent procedure following its adoption.
- ▶ Allocate sufficient funds in the annual ICC budget to the IOM to administer the due diligence procedure, in a range of EUR 30,000-50,000 per election, in close consultation with the IOM.
- ▶ Expand the application of the due diligence procedure to ASP elections, starting with the Advisory Committee on Nominations of Judges (ACN) and the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims.
- ▶ Together with the ICC leadership, urgently address and rectify the reported toxic workplace culture, and prioritise remedies for secondary trauma, in order to promote a healthy, safe, and supportive work environment.

# Annex: Main FIDH Publications on International Justice in 2023

## Reports

1. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [April 2023] (FIDH with TRIAL International, Civitas Maxima, Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), and REDRESS) Universal Jurisdiction Annual Review (UJAR): Highlighting 2022 Universal Jurisdiction Cases
2. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [April 2023] In eastern DRC, civilian hostage to eternal war
3. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [June 2023] Guinea: Reconstructing past and future at the trial for the 28 September 2009 massacre

## Open letters

1. [\[EN\]](#) [May 2023] Ten NGOs share key recommendations ahead of MLA Diplomatic Conference
2. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [October 2023] Open letter to the European Union on Israel/Palestine
3. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [October 2023] Victims' meaningful participation at the International Criminal Court: Legal aid reform
4. [\[EN\]](#) [October 2023] The International Criminal Court must intervene to deter potential genocide in Gaza

## Statements

1. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [March 2023] Guinea: Victims' testimony at the 28 September 2009 Massacre Trial
2. [\[EN / AR / FR\]](#) [April 2023] UN rights body fails to further justice in Libya
3. [\[ES\]](#) [April 2023] International Criminal Court delivers summary of opinions of Venezuelan victims to the Court's judges
4. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [May 2023] Adoption of the Mutual Legal Assistance Convention on international crimes: a milestone in the fight against impunity for international crimes
5. [\[EN\]](#) [June 2023] Al-Haq and FIDH Welcome EU Statement of Threats against the ICC and Call for a Consistent and Global Support of all Investigations
6. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [June 2023] Violence in northeast DRC: The authorities and the international community must act now
7. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [June 2023] Happenings in The Hague: Spotlight on Needed Improvements to Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes Investigations and Prosecutions at the ICC
8. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [July 2023] FIDH commemorates the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Statute of the ICC
9. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [July 2023] Colombia: one year of silence from the International Criminal Court
10. [\[EN / UK\]](#) [July 2023] Ukraine/Russia: FIDH Statement on Accountability Avenues for the Crime of Aggression
11. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [August 2023] Afghanistan: Call for justice, accountability and effective response to ongoing violations and gender persecution
12. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [September 2023] Guinea : the fight continues at the trial for the 28 September 2009 massacre
13. [\[EN / AR / ES / FA / FR\]](#) [October 2023] Israel/Palestine: FIDH condemns the escalation of violence and double standards
14. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [November 2023] Alarming increase of human rights violations against Palestinians in the occupied territory and against Palestinian citizens of Israel

## Press Releases and Questions and Answers

1. [\[EN / ES / FR / RU\]](#) [February 2023] No global peace without justice in Ukraine
2. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [March 2023] Arrest Warrant Issued Against V. Putin: FIDH Urges States to Cooperate with the ICC
3. [\[EN / ES / FR\]](#) [April 2023] Sudan: As violent clashes continue, Sudan's international partners must call for accountability and justice
4. [\[EN / FR\]](#) [September 2023] Mali: The attack against the civilian boat "Tombouctou" constitutes a war crime
5. [\[EN\]](#) [September 2023] Sudan's Darfur Conflict : Two decades of suffering and the quest for accountability
6. [\[ES\]](#) [November 2023] Venezuela in The Hague: Hearing at the International Criminal Court

This document was produced with the support of the *Agence française de développement* (AFD) and the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content of this publication lies with FIDH, and it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the AFD or the European Union.

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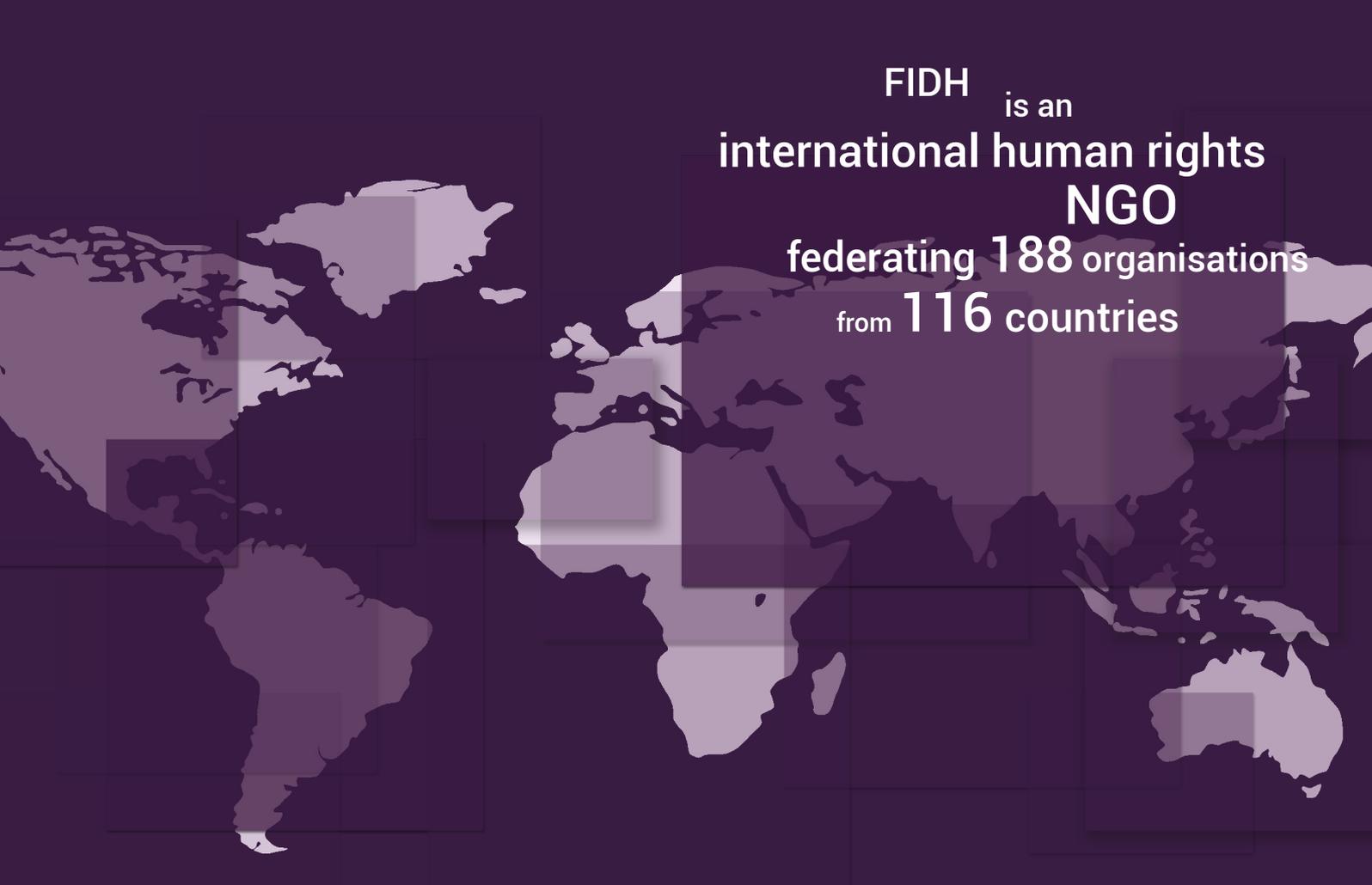
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## ABOUT FIDH

FIDH takes action for the protection of victims of human rights violations, for the prevention of violations and to bring perpetrators to justice.

### **A broad mandate**

FIDH works for the respect of all the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

### **A universal movement**

FIDH was established in 1922, and today unites 188 member organizations in 116 countries around the world. FIDH coordinates and supports their activities and provides them with a voice at the international level.

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