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Liberian Journalists to Participate in Transitional Justice Training

Two-week Intensive Course Kicks off on August 6th in Monrovia

MONROVIA, August 6, 2007—In partnership with the BBC World Service Trust (WST), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) is launching the first in a series of intensive trainings for African journalists as part of its two-year “Communicating Justice” project. On Monday, August 6, 2007, a team of trainers from the Center’s Liberia office and the BBC WST will convene a group of approximately 20 Liberian journalists in Monrovia to conduct a series of workshops aimed at heightening public knowledge about justice-related issues after periods of conflict.

Journalists in four other African countries—Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and Uganda—will receive similar trainings over the next two years. Over the course of the project, a total of 150 journalists and editors are expected to have participated in the training series, which will include two-week intensive face-to-face sessions as well as an online course. All of the trainings have been tailored to reflect the unique political and transitional justice landscapes present in each country. In Liberia, for example, the training will focus on understanding and covering the trial of Charles Taylor at a special chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague, as well as reporting on the work of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and other transitional justice initiatives such as security sector reform and reparations.

By stressing the importance of informing the public about issues of justice and addressing past violations, these trainings seek ultimately to assist citizens in understanding and becoming involved in transitional justice efforts underway in their respective countries. To assess the impact of the trainings, the BBC and the ICTJ will conduct before-and-after population surveys in each country to determine how knowledge levels and perceptions of transitional justice have changed in response to improvements and increases in media coverage.

Background

The ICTJ is a human rights organization that assists countries pursuing accountability for mass atrocity or human rights abuse. Founded in 2001, the Center has worked in more than 30 countries around the world. The ICTJ provides support to human rights trials, truth commissions, reparations programs, judicial and security sector reform initiatives, and peace negotiations. Working with local actors, the Center provides comparative information, legal and policy analysis, and research to justice institutions, nongovernmental organizations, governments, the United Nations, and others.

The ICTJ has been active in Liberia since January 2004, when it started working with local partners to lay the groundwork for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) inaugurated in February 2006. To help with these efforts, the Center opened an office in Monrovia in January 2006. The ICTJ has active programs in the four other countries where the trainings will take place and has two other Africa offices, in Kinshasa and Cape Town. For more information, please visit www.ictj.org.

The BBC World Service Trust uses media to promote development and human rights. It was created by the BBC, with the aim of using the BBC's reputation, resources and expertise to help reduce poverty through the effective use of media. The Trust works in more than 50 countries worldwide. As of July, 2007, it is working in Africa, the Middle East, South and South-East Asia and the Former Soviet Union, using media creatively in the fields of health, livelihoods, governance, human rights and post-disaster rehabilitation.

The "Communicating Justice" project is made possible by generous grants from the European Union and the government of The Netherlands, with additional funds provided by Humanity United.

For more information on this project, please visit the [Transitional Justice page](#) on the BBC World Service Trust [website](#).

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