International Center for Transitional Justice

REPORT

Core Report Fiscal Year 2025

April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

June 2025

ICTJ Justice Truth Dignity

Cover Image: Syrians celebrate the fall of Assad regime in Damascus on Friday, December 13, 2024. (Hussein Alioui)

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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

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This report covers the period from April 2024 to March 2025, our Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). In this period, human rights organizations like ICTJ faced an increasingly challenging global political and economic environment, where rising nationalism and declining international cooperation have threatened the foundations of transitional justice efforts. Some traditional supporters of international human rights have shifted their foreign policy priorities away from collaboration and multilateralism towards securitization, protectionism, and nationalism. Meanwhile, space for civic engagement has diminished under the growing influence of extreme ideologies, which have undermined democratic institutions, suppressed dissent, and rolled back protections for marginalized communities. These dynamics have created major barriers to ICTJ's work, limiting our engagement with key stakeholders, hindering our advocacy efforts, and challenging our programs' sustainability.

ICTJ has responded to such a challenging environment by continuously monitoring, reassessing and, when needed, adapting our strategies. That has allowed us to continue advancing our mission, standing side-by-side with victims and amplifying their voices, affirming their dignity, and advocating for their rights and inclusion in society. We worked closely with over 330 partner organizations in 19 countries to forge connections and share experiences across different contexts, and we created national, regional, and global platforms for marginalized communities to be heard.

In FY25, ICTJ continued to experience a rising demand for our work from victims, civil society actors, government representatives, and other relevant stakeholders working in societies around the globe to break the cycle of massive human rights violations and lay the foundations for peace, justice, and inclusion. As described below in greater detail, we have witnessed and responded to a growing interest in transitional justice across the African continent, after years of official hesitation to engage with such processes.

FY25 has also put into stark relief the importance and value of long-term partnerships and engagement even in contexts where violence and authoritarianism appear interminable. In Syria, the sudden and unexpected fall of the Assad regime marked the beginning of a long-overdue

transformation. For the first time in decades, space has opened in the country to speak freely about justice, accountability, reconciliation. It is a time rife with uncertainty and pain, but also one of immense hope.

The following report provides more details about our work at the local and global levels during FY25. ICTJ welcomes your inquiries about any aspect of our work, and we are happy to share additional information about any of the rich and complex contexts where we work beyond what this report provides.

Staff Demographics

During 2024-2025, ICTJ employed a multinational team of 73 permanent staff members and consultants from diverse professional backgrounds, including law, public policy, political science, anthropology, history, international development, and communications.

Figure 1. Staff by Gender

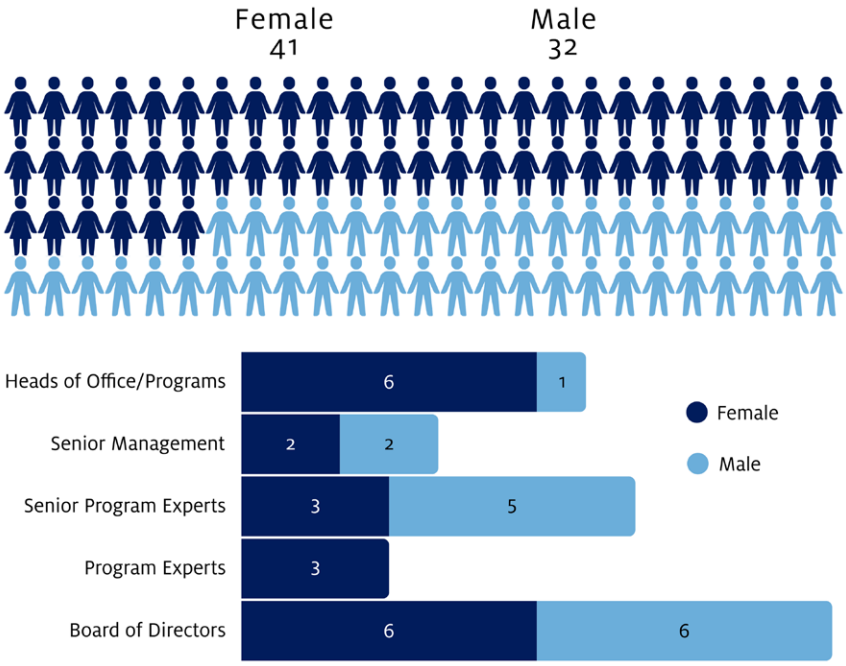
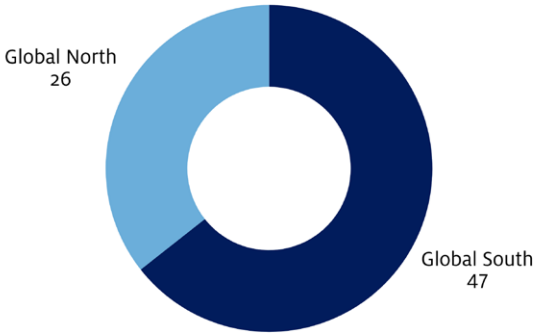


Figure 2. Staff by Location



Global Level

Leveraging Policy for Action

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Featured Impact: With its innovative program, the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa (ITJA), ICTJ contributed to a paradigm shift from longstanding reluctance among African Union member states towards greater acceptance and normalization of transitional justice. This shift is evident at multiple levels. At the continental level, it is reflected in the growing popularization of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP). References to the AUTJP as a continental standard for transitional justice in Africa are ubiquitous in AU documents, reports, and resolutions. At the regional level, it is seen in the active engagement of Regional Economic Communities in developing transitional justice frameworks modeled after the AUTJP, such as ongoing efforts to develop the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Framework on Transitional Justice, and the interest shown by the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community to do the same. At the national level, countries such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia, and South Sudan and are either contemplating or actively pursuing transitional justice processes. The ITJA program has proven instrumental in stimulating and supporting these institutional developments through technical assistance provided to Ethiopia, The Gambia, Lesotho, and IGAD, as will be elaborated in the relevant sections below. Beyond the direct results of these interventions, our work has helped reinforce transitional justice as an expected response to post-authoritarian and post-conflict transitions in Africa.

Lesson Learned: One important global lesson we have learned is the need to remain adaptable in the face of changing and often volatile political landscapes, particularly in the African region. Transitional justice processes in many countries that have expressed interest in the program are deeply influenced by shifting political dynamics—where windows of opportunity may open, only to later stall or reverse course due to political instability, leadership changes, or shifting priorities. This has underscored the importance of maintaining flexibility, building long-term relationships with local actors, and being prepared to recalibrate strategies as contexts evolve.

Addressing the Issues That Matter

Prevention and Sustainable Development

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Featured Impact: ICTJ's impact on international policy agendas was illustrated in multiple instances, through both our publications and our direct engagement with global policymakers. As a member of the Justice Action Coalition (JAC) ICTJ contributed to the JAC's Key Messages, ensuring that they included the need to invest in conflict-affected contexts and to integrate transitional justice in development agendas and policies.[1] ICTJ also contributed to the 2025 report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on transitional justice in the context of peace and development, which prominently cites reports of the ICTJ-convened Working Group on Transitional Justice and SDG16+ as informing its approach.[2] Finally, ICTJ met with and submitted written inputs to the UN special rapporteurs on transitional justice and on the human rights of internally displaced persons, both of whose reports and approaches to their mandates are informed by ICTJ's work and input.[3]

Lesson Learned: An important lesson in our work on prevention and sustainable development at the global policy level is about the way in which our influence is exerted. While standing forums such as the JAC provide important avenues for informing agendas, equally important are bilateral relationships with key policymakers and institutions. Our experiences with UN bodies and special procedures repeatedly demonstrate the value of actively and directly reaching out in writing and in person. Moreover, our impact on policy discourse does not happen through single interactions or within single years, but is cumulative and sometimes indirect, as we cultivate relationships and as previous reports and research are picked up and amplified by important policymakers. This is clear with regard to the impact of the Working Group on SDG16+, but also with the inclusion of transitional justice in the new UN Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement,[4] which does not reference ICTJ but whose Reference Group did include the special rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs.

Equity and Inclusion

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Featured Impact: Over the past year, ICTJ has provided tailored comparative experiences to U.S. advocates and activists to support their reparations efforts, and we have noticed an increasing interest among these advocates to learn from global experiences. A few years ago, U.S. advocates were largely uninterested in learning lessons from other countries, even harboring some reluctance and skepticism regarding their value. But now these activists are connecting their work on the legacy of slavery with global efforts for reparations, including addressing

1 Justice Action Coalition, "Justice Action Coalition Communications Working Group Key Messages on People-Centered Justice," January 2025.
2 UN Human Rights Council, "Human rights and transitional justice, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights," A/HRC/58/36, 9 January 2025.
3 UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence," A/79/180, 18 July 2024. UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur," A/79/334, 2 September 2024.
4 "Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement," prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement with Members of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), February 2025.

the legacy of colonization, creating opportunities to share lessons learned on equity and inclusion from other contexts that are relevant for the United States. For example, in November 2024, Liberation Ventures invited ICTJ to present a case study of reparations to a gathering of local reparations leaders, which was well received. ICTJ presented a story of Peru's reparations journey, tailoring the narrative to highlight moments that participants found relevant to the process in the United States (e.g., how government representatives use stalling techniques to make it appear as though they support reparative justice without actually implementing it). According to one participant, she felt "a sense of relief" hearing Peru's story and realizing that she was not alone in facing this hard work.

Lesson Learned: In responding to Liberation Ventures' request for comparative experience, ICTJ was initially tempted to include many examples to highlight different lessons from different contexts, which is a method we often utilize in our work. Ultimately, we decided to focus on Peru and to present an in-depth case study. After the event, we reflected on the utility of going in depth on a single case study. In doing so, we were able to highlight challenges faced along the way as well as show how those challenges were addressed and overcome. When we selected different examples to highlight specific points, we may lose some of this nuance that can be helpful for advocates seeking to learn relevant insights and see commonalities with their own work.

New Forms of Accountability

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Featured Impact: ICTJ has moved forward with its years-long effort to advance new forms of accountability by integrating restorative justice approaches into criminal processes within Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP). This year, ICTJ's impact took the form of technical support to the SJP's Section for Cases of Acknowledgment of Responsibility. That project, which was launched in October 2024, enhanced the Section's capacities in advance of the issuance by the SJP of the first restorative sentences in 2025. To do that, ICTJ conducted interviews with the Section's magistrates to anticipate and identify potential challenges, which were then systematized and are now being shared with magistrates during follow up sessions in FY26. That engagement helped to create the conditions that will be essential to meet victims' expectations for justice and to provide legal certainty to perpetrators who have acknowledged responsibility when the sentences are finally handed down.

Lesson Learned: Through ICTJ's efforts to support the SJP to fulfill the restorative justice component of its mandate, we have learned the importance of institutionalizing knowledge and approaches rather than simply providing training and capacity building to relevant staff. ICTJ organized exchanges with international experts and provided technical assistance to the Chambers of the SJP on restorative justice, but we also helped to ensure that the principles of restorative justice were institutionalized by the tribunal through the creation of official manuals and the establishment of a dedicated Restorative Justice Department. These institutional changes have helped to ensure that our technical assistance will have a lasting impact.

Going Digital

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Featured Impact: Over the past year, ICTJ continued to make meaningful advances in its internal digital transformation, laying the groundwork for a more agile, efficient, and secure institution. Taking advantage of the full migration of our data to the cloud and the elimination of outdated physical servers—a foundational step that enhances both the accessibility and security of our resources—we continued to improve our learning on collaborative digital tools and cybersecurity, modernized our equipment, and introduced process automation in key operational areas such as travel and payment requests. These improvements not only strengthened our institutional resilience and adaptability in a hybrid work environment but also brought us closer to a fully integrated digital infrastructure that supports the broader goals of transitional justice programming in a digital age.

Lesson Learned: Our attempt to initiate partnerships with major tech companies such as Microsoft yielded limited results, highlighting the challenge of aligning large-scale corporate interests with not-for-profit organizations like ours. While accreditation provided some benefits, deeper collaboration proved elusive. This experience emphasized the need to identify and engage partners—whether from tech, academia, or civil society—whose mission and timing are better aligned with the values and operational tempo of our work. This was a point of meaningful progress: ICTJ forged impactful partnerships with actors such as HURIDOCS, UC Berkeley's Human Rights Center, and Mnemonics, which enabled us to contribute to and learn from cutting-edge conversations on the use of digital tools in human rights documentation, memory, and accountability. Our engagement in broader coalitions—like the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa, which incorporates technology and human rights dimensions—also positioned us within active ecosystems exploring digital innovation for justice. These partnerships have proven far more aligned with our priorities and offer promising pathways for future collaboration and learning.

Advancing Gender Justice and Gender Equality

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Featured Impact: This year, as part of ICTJ's work to build trust in Colombia's peace negotiations and enhance civic engagement, we contributed to the implementation of Quick Impact Initiatives (QII) emphasizing the productive, organizational, and political advocacy processes of about 38 organizations and productive associations in the cities of San Vicente del Caguán, La Macarena, Buenaventura, and Quibdó. Most of the QII were led by women, Afro-Colombian communities, and peasant and indigenous associations, representing groups historically affected by the violence in the country. In San Vicente del Caguán, QII have sought to strengthen organizational and advocacy processes of organizations and initiatives driven by rural women, such as the initiative led by *Plataforma Municipal de Mujeres de San Vicente del Caguán*. Through the project, the platform was able to advocate and reach a historic agreement with the regional and local government to build the first women's house in San Vicente del Caguán. With support from the territorial entities, the Yariseña Women's House will provide assistance and services for the women, with a gender-sensitive approach, and will serve as a space to strengthen the social and political participation processes of the organizations and projects led by rural women of the municipality.

Lessons Learned: The platform's success in reaching an agreement to build a women's house has demonstrated the value of engaging with and gaining the support of the relevant authorities at all levels of government. In response to the platform's advocacy, the municipal authorities in San Vicente del Caguán agreed to provide the land for the women's house, and the Caquetá Governor's Office agreed to allocate funds for its construction. The project also has the support of the Territorial Renewal Agency, which coordinates the implementation of projects aimed at the socioeconomic recovery and institutional strengthening of rural areas affected by the conflict. The platform's success also reinforces the importance of giving women the space to not only have their voices heard but also to lead in the design of context-specific and holistic gender justice initiatives.

Addressing Corruption and Other Economic Crimes

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Featured Impact: In the Gambia, ICTJ's support for the Truth, Reparations and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Inquiry into the Financial Activities of Public Bodies and Offices as Regards their Dealings with Former President Yahya Jammeh meant that Gambian policymakers and activists could link the perpetrators of human rights violations, corruption or both with the assets they amassed and hid. In turn, this allowed Gambia to legislate a reparations policy and a Reparations Commission that can be funded with assets obtained through corruption that have been (or can be) recovered. We are now supporting the new Reparations Commission, which will also benefit from lessons in post-dictatorship asset recovery from Peru, the Philippines, South Korea, and Tunisia, among other examples.

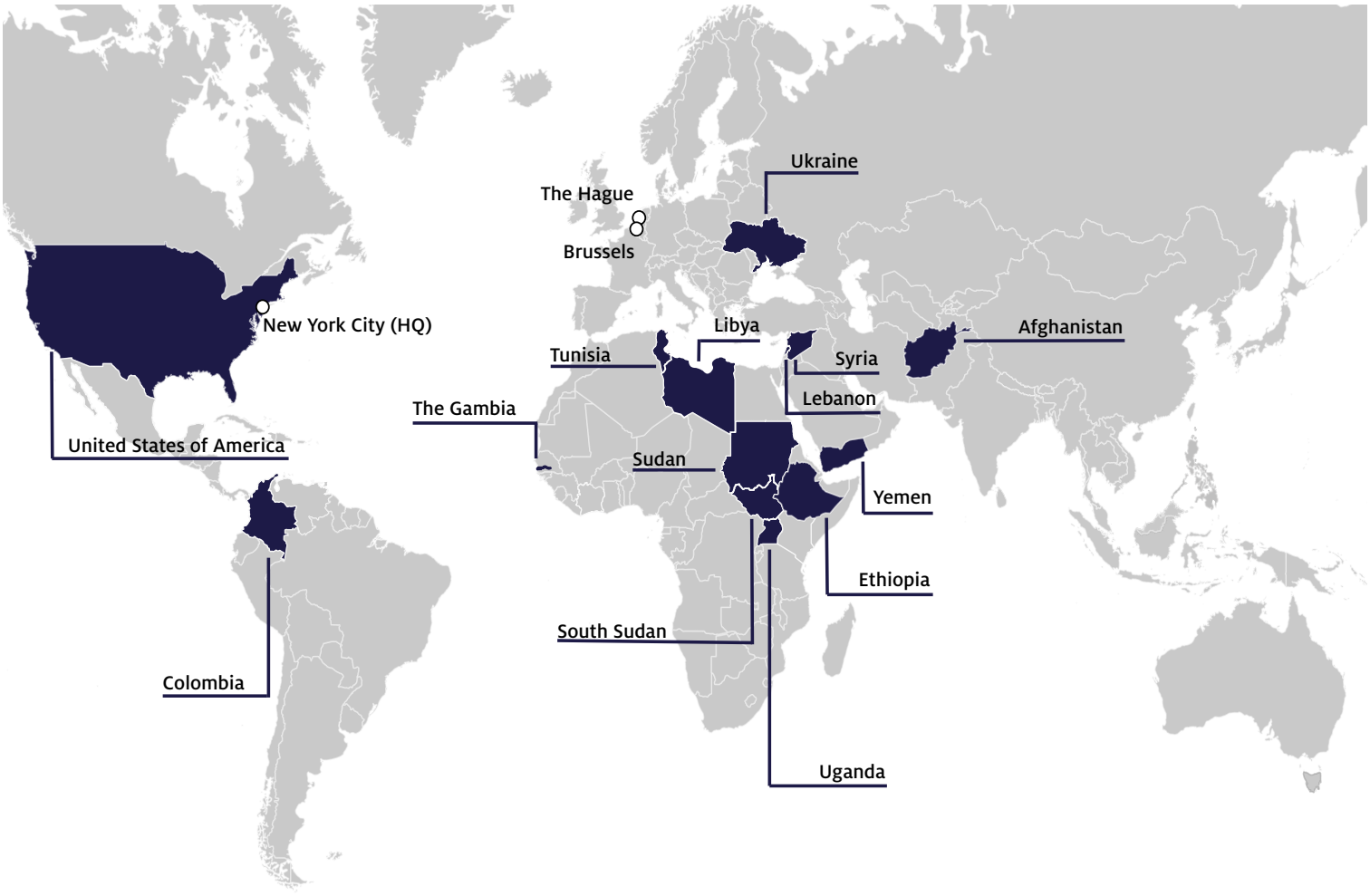
Lesson Learned: When corporations are decisively and systematically held accountable for enabling or profiting from human rights abuses, conflict-related crimes and legacies of injustice, States and international justice institutions help prevent corruption and promote ethical business practices, and just as importantly support the least powerful communities seek justice and reparations from the world's wealthiest and most powerful individuals and businesses. ICTJ has advocated for victims in Sweden's prosecution of Lundin Oil officials for enabling war crimes against people from Sudan and South Sudan. We helped Ethiopian victims in their ongoing case against Meta for not preventing the incitement of political killings during the country's recent civil war. Our recent research and previous comparative discussions on how boycott, divest and sanctions campaigns can lead to transitions, including those against apartheid South Africa and now Israel, highlighted the value of bringing transitional justice goals within economic, finance and trade policies.

Table 1. ICTJ's Contributions to International Policies, Procedures, Resolutions, and Proposals, FY25

1.	ICRC, "Guidance Notes National Mechanisms for Missing Persons," December 2024.
2.	Justice Action Coalition, "Justice Action Coalition Communications Working Group Key Messages on People-Centered Justice," January 2025.
3.	UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur," A/79/334, 2 September 2024.
4.	UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence," A/79/180, 18 July 2024.
5.	UN Human Rights Council, "Human rights and transitional justice, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights," A/HRC/58/36, 9 January 2025.
6.	UN Office of the Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement, "UN Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement," February 2025
7.	African Transitional Justice Forum, "The State of Transitional Justice in Africa," Report of the 8th Annual Forum, September 2024.

Country Level

Where We Work



NOTE: The map represents ICTJ's countries of operation at the end of fiscal year 2025 (March 2025).

Country Programs

Afghanistan

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Context: In Afghanistan, the human rights situation continued to deteriorate, especially for women and ethnic minorities like the Hazaras. The Taliban's new morality law expanded the regime's control over women, and human rights advocates continued to document a multitude of violations against women. Afghan refugees have also faced growing risks, including due to the suspension of the U.S. refugee relocation program and increasing deportations by Pakistan. Nevertheless, incremental progress has been made towards holding the Taliban accountable for its violations. For example, Australia, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands initiated proceedings against Afghanistan before the ICJ for alleged violations of CEDAW.

Featured Impact: ICTJ helped to build the knowledge of Afghan civil society actors on open-source investigations and survivor-centered documentation, enhancing their ability to safely and effectively gather information about the human rights violations taking place under the Taliban regime. We achieved this by organizing four closed-door sessions of the Documentation Working Group of the Afghanistan Human Rights Coordination Mechanism, a consortium of Afghan and international nongovernmental organizations dedicated to supporting Afghan human rights defenders.

Key Partnerships: ICTJ maintained our strong collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan and our longtime partnership with the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO). We also established new connections between the Afghanistan Human Rights Coordination Mechanism and two partner organizations with relevant documentation expertise: the UC Berkeley Human Rights Center and the Institute for International Criminal Investigations.

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ will continue to ensure that Afghan civil society have the capacity to document and preserve victims' stories with the aim of supporting justice efforts. We will assist AHRDO to extend the digital reach of "The Afghanistan Memory House", a virtual museum and database dedicated to Afghan conflict victims jointly developed by ICTJ and AHRDO.

Lesson Learned: Afghan civil society organizations' use of digital tools in documenting violations and advocating for justice and accountability has demonstrated their immense value in bleak and otherwise impenetrable contexts like Afghanistan.

Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa

Context: During the second year of the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa (ITJA), led by ICTJ in partnership with the African Transitional Justice Legacy Fund and the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, interest in transitional justice continues to grow across the continent despite violent conflict and political instability persists. The Central African Republic, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Liberia, Lesotho, and South Sudan actively pursued transitional justice processes, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia explored initiating such processes. Transitional justice processes have been pursued in volatile environments, with conflict breaking out in the DRC's North Kivu Province, continuing in Ethiopia's Amhara and Oromia regions, and escalating in South Sudan's Upper Nile State.

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Featured Impact: ICTJ and our ITJA Project partners helped to drive a marked shift in AU member states' attitudes towards transitional justice from distrust and evasion to cautious engagement and normalization, exemplified by Ethiopia's adoption of a National Transitional Justice Policy and South, The Gambia's selection of commissioners for its Reparations Commission, and South Sudan's passage of laws to establish a Commission on Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing (CTRH) and a Compensation and Reparations Authority (CRA), among others. We achieved this impact by providing technical expertise to African countries pursuing transitional justice processes, including Ethiopia, The Gambia, Lesotho, and IGAD; convening major policy events on transitional justice in Africa, including the AU-EU Expert Seminar and the African Transitional Justice Forum; advancing the production of knowledge on African transitional justice experiences; and supporting civil society organizations working on transitional justice throughout the continent.

Key Partnerships: Through our partnership with the African Transitional Justice Legacy Fund, the Project has provided financial support and mentorship to local civil society organizations in six countries, including the Central African Transitional Justice Observatory (OCA-JUSTE) in CAR, Africa Reconciled in the DRC, the Advocacy Center for Democracy and Development (ACDD) in Ethiopia, Beakanyang Kafo (BKK) in The Gambia, the Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (LCN) and Strategic Institute for Research and Dialogue (SIRD) in Lesotho; and the Tech Village Trust in Zimbabwe.[5]

Reem El-Gantri, then head of ICTJ's Libya Program, addresses the significance of educational reform in transitional justice processes at the ITJA-organized African Transitional Justice Forum, held in September 2024 in Port Louis, Mauritius. (ICTJ)

What's Next: In the third and final year, we will continue to provide technical support to AU member states; generate knowledge on African experiences, including by producing research reports on women and reparations and the use of technology in transitional justice; and provide financial support and mentorship to six additional civil society organizations, with two subgrants earmarked for projects that leverage digital tools to foster inclusive transitional justice processes.

5 OCA-JUSTE focuses on researching Transitional Justice mechanisms and aims to enhance the involvement of women and young people in these processes. Africa Reconciled focuses on educating and supervising youth from diverse backgrounds to promote peace and development through peace clubs across the DRC. ACDD's mission is to advocate for democracy, support sustainable development, and promote peace and security in Ethiopia. Beakanyang aims to empower citizens to understand and defend their human rights, focusing on women and youth. LCN serves as an umbrella organization for Lesotho NGOs, providing services such as networking, leadership, information dissemination, capacity building, coordination, advocacy, and lobbying. SIRD is a Pan-African policy think-tank focused on democracy and governance, peace and security, and socio-economic development. Tech-Village Trust supports entrepreneurs by providing infrastructure and services to build impactful solutions using technology.

Lesson Learned: Language inclusivity in regional convenings is necessary to ensure broad participation and avoid perceptions of exclusion. Francophone countries had less influence than Anglophone countries in designing the AU's Transitional Justice Policy, and by providing French interpretation during all high-level convenings we have endeavored to ensure that this trend does not continue in the policy's implementation.

Colombia

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Context: Peace processes under the Total Peace policy face immense pressure and setbacks, as violence persists, with rising displacement, extortion, and clashes between factions. In Catatumbo, clashes between the ELN and the EMBF triggered one of the region's most severe episodes of violence, with over 50,000 people displaced and around 100 killed. Negotiations experienced disruptions, such as the arrest of a key negotiator under an Interpol notice, exposing legal ambiguities in peace laws. The government has then pursued localized dialogues with armed groups, achieving partial successes like ceasefire extensions and crop substitution agreements. Urban truces in Buenaventura and Quibdó are succeeding in reducing homicides but remain fragile. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) has advanced cases, including indictments for child recruitment and extrajudicial killings, yet faces criticism for delays. Meanwhile, the Search Unit for Missing Persons recovered over 1,200 remains in 2024. As the current administration enters the final stage of its government and, with elections approaching, political tensions threaten to stall peace efforts amid legislative gridlocks.

Featured Impact: The defense team of the former FARC-EP received important support from ICTJ in the past years, to consolidate and incorporate a psycho-legal perspective in its work. Not only has this support strengthened mutual confidence, but it has also had a transformative effect on the team and the depth of the acknowledgments offered by perpetrators. As one beneficiary reflected, the project marked a "before and after" for the team, making psycho-legal support a "fundamental element" of their long-term strategy. "Working with former FARC members," they noted, "we moved from truth contributions largely based on justification to truth contributions that considered the 'other' and centered on the victims."

Thanks to our sustained engagement with the SJP, ICTJ is recognized as a trusted partner by the tribunal and key stakeholders, including former combatants, playing a role of impartial mediator when tensions have emerged. By March 2025, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) had accredited about 351,509 individual victims (including 357 collective victims), received 14,899

Women Take the Lead in the Search for the Disappeared

The "Red de Buscadoras y Buscadores del Sur" engaged Colombian Congress members to gain support for the search. ICTJ, in conjunction with other organizations and platforms in Colombia, contributed meaningfully to the enactment of Law 2364 of 2024, which recognizes and protects the rights of women searchers who are victims of enforced disappearance.

"All the women searchers also went to the Congress, it was a very important and very special thing for us, because we made ourselves visible, there we managed to get the law of the women searchers." — Staff member, ICTJ partner organization

pledges of commitment from alleged perpetrators, and issued sixteen rulings with preliminary indictments in six macro-cases.[6] ICTJ is currently working with the Court to address coordination gaps and streamline processes.

Key Partnerships: ICTJ has supported several victims' organizations recognized as subjects of collective reparations. Comadre, an organization of Afro-Colombian women victims of conflict, contributed to documenting and systematizing the socioeconomic situation of Afro-Colombian women victims of the armed conflict in five municipalities. This information will be key to informing the collective reparations process of the organization in the remainder of 2025. A project with an Afro-Colombian Community Council and another with a regional initiative in the Montes de María region are still ongoing. The latter, known as Ruta por la Vida (Path for Life), has already yielded interesting results and insights regarding the alignment of the collective reparation agenda with restorative sanctions within the SJP. Notably, the organization presented a proposal for a territorial restorative initiative to be implemented in the region in the framework of macro-case 08 on crimes committed by state agents in collusion with paramilitaries.

The exhibit "If There Is Truth, There Is Future", part of the Colombian Truth Commission's post-closure cultural and educational outreach activities supported by ICTJ, aimed to inform Colombians of all generations about its findings and inspire them to take action to prevent a recurrence of conflict. It ran from February to December 2024 at the Center for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation in Bogotá. (Maria Margarita Rivera/ICTJ)

What's Next: ICTJ's program in Colombia continues to play a pivotal role in all dimensions of the transitional justice process. One of the most promising lines of work is ICTJ's collaboration with the European Union on building trust in the peace negotiations and enhancing civic engagement through the implementation of Quick Impact Initiatives with emphasis on the productive, organizational, and political advocacy initiatives of about 38 organizations in the cities of San Vicente del Caguán, La Macarena, Buenaventura, and Quibdó. Most of these projects are led by women, Afro-Colombian communities, and peasant and indigenous associations, representing sectors and groups historically affected by the violence in the country. These initiatives aim to create demonstrative opportunities, benefiting 524 people and 1,500 peasant families. Additionally, 18 community initiatives in Quibdó and Buenaventura are providing economic opportunities for 294 at-risk youth.

With upcoming elections and subsequent government transitions the Colombia program's experience and institutional memory position ICTJ as the key reference for newly elected officials on these issues.

6 Data is available at the following link: https://www.jep.gov.co/jepcifras/JEP%20en%20cifras%20-%20MARZO%20-%202025.pdf

From Fragmentation to Coordination: A Restorative Route Through Montes de María

"*The Route for Life is the response of numerous communities in the Montes de María region to the Route of Death, which was violently imposed on us to drive us from our land. But we're still here—and our grandchildren will be born here.*" — Female leader from Montes de María, during a capacity-building workshop supported by ICTJ

Along the backroads of Colombia's Caribbean coast, communities once knew a single name for the highway that stitches their villages together: *Ruta de la Muerte* (Route of Death). Between 1985 and 2017, the Montes de María region witnessed 3,197 selective killings, 117 massacres, and the enforced disappearance of 1,385 people. In response, rural, Afro-Colombian, and Indigenous communities joined efforts in 2005 to reclaim the territory's meaning by confronting what was once known as the Ruta de la Muerte and renaming it *Ruta por la Vida* (Route for Life).

Nearly 20 years on, the banner still flew, but what was once envisioned as a network for collective advocacy and shared learning gradually fragmented into more localized and specialized efforts, with limited interaction and resource exchange among them. In 2024, ICTJ stepped in with a simple aim: help residents craft a shared, rights-based roadmap for the region. Over several months, more than 60 social leaders from the region gathered for workshops on advocacy, policy analysis, and strategic engagement. Together they mapped out food governance priorities, memorial initiatives, strategic engagement with state institutions, and collective reparation demands. Most importantly, they helped rebuild the trust needed to work as one.

As a result, a visible shift has taken place: once-fragmented organizations are working together again to reignite collective action. Representatives from over 40 communities and dozens of grassroots groups have revived Ruta por la Vida as a unified restorative justice platform. Fifty-five victims accredited before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) added a detailed proposal on issues such as good governance and community strengthening, and territorial historical memory, which the network submitted to the tribunal as a single, territorially rooted demand. The document is still under review, but its mere existence — collectively drafted, regionally endorsed — is proof of a changed landscape.

After two decades, Ruta por la Vida is no longer just a slogan. It has evolved into a concrete, rights-based roadmap for justice in the region. By putting forth a renewed approach to regional reparations, the initiative is not only reconstructing the social fabric of Montes de María, but also offering a reference point for other victim collectives seeking to turn memory into action and advance territorial and transformative forms of justice.

Ethiopia

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Context: In Ethiopia, the security situation deteriorated in the Amhara region, and volatility continued in the Oromia and Tigray regions, posing challenges to the implementation of the program. The closure of USAID in early 2025 cut off a vital source of humanitarian support in the country, especially in Amhara and Tigray, worsening living conditions for victims and making it more difficult to engage them. Amid these and other challenges, civil society organizations have continued to struggle to meaningfully participate in the transitional justice process. After Ethiopia's adoption of a national Transitional Justice Policy in 2024, the Ministry of Justice began to develop draft transitional justice laws, and the process has continued to progress deliberately since then.

Featured Impact: ICTJ helped to build the capacity of victims and civil society actors from Amhara, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray to meaningfully engage with the transitional justice processes in their regions and at the federal level. We achieved this impact by identifying victims' associations and civil society organizations in regions we had not previously reached (e.g., Amhara, Tigray, and southwest Oromia); helping victims to identify their grievances and justice priorities; providing local partners with technical assistance based on comparative experiences; building trust between different groups by encouraging collaboration and facilitating peer-to-peer learning; and building bridges between victims and relevant government actors (e.g., the Somali Truth Commission).

> "The MHPSS training and one-on-one session I had with the psychologist truly helped me see things from a new perspective and make important decisions. Previously, I hadn't been actively involved in the victim association for various reasons. However, after my sessions with the psychologist, I decided to become more engaged." — Female victim, Amhara Region

Key Partnerships: This year, ICTJ formalized a partnership with the Advocacy Center for Democracy and Development (ACDD), a local civil society organization dedicated to advocating for democracy, sustainable development, and peace in Ethiopia. We have conducted many joint activities with ACDD, including a recent workshop for victims' groups in Oromia and Tigray on psychosocial approaches to addressing trauma.

What's Next: In FY26, we will continue to build the capacity of victims' associations and civil society organizations to advance their justice needs and demands through meaningful engagement with transitional justice processes in Ethiopia.

The Gambia

Context: During FY25, transitional justice continued to occupy a prominent position in The Gambia's political agenda. The National Assembly passed laws establishing the legal framework for the post-TRRC criminal justice system, the Economic Commission of West African States formally approved the statute of the Special Tribunal (hybrid court), and the

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Gambian government finalized the selection of the Reparations Commission' members. Additionally, trials against former members of the Jammeh regime took place in Switzerland and the United States under the principle of universal jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the government announced the gazetting of a new draft constitution, which was criticized for being developed without public consultations. Finally, the Stop Work Order issued by the U.S. State Department immediately suspended many transitional justice-related projects (including ICTJ's largest project) in The Gambia. The United States has been the main funder of The Gambia's criminal accountability process, and this new policy could create major delays and roadblocks in its progression.

Featured Impact: ICTJ supported Gambian state institutions to implement the TRRC's recommendations, including by facilitating the Ministry of Justice's efforts to provide medical support for victims of serious human rights violations. We achieved this by working in partnership with the Association of Victim-Led Organizations (AVLO) to provide transportation and accommodations to victims from the regions to visit the doctors of the Interim Medical Board in Banjul. The Ministry of Justice established the Board to provide medical care to victims while they await the establishment and operationalization of the Reparations Commission. Together, ICTJ and AVLO enabled around 100 victims to access medical care during FY25.

Young women in The Gambia's Upper River Region participate in an ICTJ-organized caravan that toured the country in July 2024 to reach out to young people, educate them about the TRRC's recommendations and the process to implement them, and encourage them to get involved in this process. (Sukai John/Think Young Women)

Key Partnerships: ICTJ continued to provide capacity building support and financial assistance in the form of subgrants to local civil society organizations and victims associations. This year, we partnered with seven organizations – Fantanka, Think Young Women (TYW), Our Nation Our Voice (ONOV), Peace Ambassadors, Women's Association for Victims (WAVE), African Network Against Killings and Enforced Disapperance (ANEKED), and AVLO.[7] We provided these organizations and members of their communities with trainings on the various forms of accountability, increasing the knowledge of 587 participants of the various forms of accountability.[8]

7 Fantanka supports victims and holding perpetrators accountable for SGBV; TYW supports girls and young women to advance their collective interest through advocacy, research, education and networking; ONOV is a movement of young Gambian artists, activists, and advocates aiming to center young Gambians' voices in the country's transitional justice process; Peace Ambassadors is an education and advocacy organization focusing on young people and peace; WAVE supports the participation of women to become agents of change in their journey for healing, reconciliation, reparations, accountability and justice; ANEKED is dedicated to stopping enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings; and AVLO represents victims' interests in the implementation of the TRRC's recommendations.
8 Ninety-six percent of these beneficiaries, who came from all six regions of The Gambia, reported an increased capacity to participate in transitional justice processes and advance accountability.

"I can now say I am very comfortable voicing my concerns regarding issues of governance, reconciliation, and peacebuilding." — Participant, ICTJ-organized youth conference in The Gambia

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ will continue to empower Gambian victims and civil society actors to advance their rights by meaningfully participating in the implementation of the TRRC's recommendations, and we will continue to support Gambian state institutions to implement them. Notably, this will include the provision of technical advice to the Reparations Commission, once established. We will assist the commission to develop a strategic plan and standard operating procedures, based on lessons learned from commissions in other contexts. In parallel, we will ensure that victims are consulted and have a chance to provide their feedback on these documents.

Lebanon

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Context: During FY25, the war on Gaza spilled over into Lebanon, resulting in thousands of deaths and the displacement of over 1.2 million people, roughly 20% of the country's population. The assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah further destabilized Lebanon, and the fall of the Assad regime in Syria disrupted longstanding regional alliances. Despite a ceasefire in November 2024, ongoing Israeli military operations underscore the agreement's fragility. Additionally, in January 2025, after a long presidential vacuum, parliament elected a new president and appointed a new prime minister, raising hopes for stabilization and opening space for political dialogue, even as tensions persist.

Featured Impact: ICTJ strengthened Lebanese civil society's capacity to document past violations and enabled the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared (NCMFDL) to take concrete steps towards implementing its mandate to uncover the fate of the missing and disappeared. We achieved this impact by assisting the Committee of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon (CFKDL) to produce a digital archive and website and by providing technical support to the National Commission for its operationalization.

"ICTJ's support has been vital in preserving our history and right to know. Through the archive, website, and storytelling, they have helped us amplify our voices and reach new generations. This partnership has strengthened our ongoing struggle for truth and reconciliation" – CFKDL

Key Partnerships: ICTJ has partnered with the Committee of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon (CFKDL) for six years, helping to safeguard its decades of institutional memory and advocacy experience by investing in intergenerational capacity-building, digital preservation, and creative public engagement.

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ will continue to ensure that the National Commission and the Lebanese government have the information and capacity needed to meet victims' demands, and we will work to shape public discourse on accountability and reparations in Lebanon by conducting research on the impact of the Israeli war on victims.

Libya

Context: Rising and ebbing armed conflict and political violence among Libya's rival ruling factions and sub-factions continued throughout the year, mainly between the forces of Khalifa Haftar in the east where the House of Representatives is based and the "Government of National Unity" and Presidential Council in Tripoli. At the same time, these rivals have issued rival draft laws on transitional justice, effectively weaponizing transitional justice and the notion of "reconciliation" to mobilize support among Libyans who are exhausted by violence and instability. These developments have made it increasingly difficult to carry out human rights work in the country.

> "ICTJ's support has been instrumental in helping the Commission lay the foundations for its work. Their contributions have enabled us to begin fulfilling our mandate in a way that responds to the needs of families and the expectations of Lebanese society."
> — NCMFDL

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Featured Impact: ICTJ built the capacity of Libyan victims and activists, especially women and young people, to design their own transitional justice agenda and advocate for their priorities. We achieved this impact by 1) organizing focus-group discussions with Libyan women victims and activists to identify their justice needs and priorities, including with respect to the fulfillment of their socioeconomic rights and 2) providing advanced training on open-source investigation techniques for 54 Libyan civil society actors, who then passed on what they learned to young activists and journalist students.

Key Partnerships: ICTJ has built the capacity of three local civil society groups – two focusing on human rights (Asihar and Solidarity for Human Rights) and one focusing on women's rights (Atwar) – enabling them to collect victims' testimonies as part of our Libya Oral History Archive Project. The Libyans trained on open-source investigation techniques were members of Nuwazi, a human rights organization, and Bilady, an organization that supports the rights of migrants and asylum seekers.

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ will assist our Libyan civil society partners to initiate transitional justice processes that are not dependent on the agendas of rival political elites, prioritize victims' rights to truth and repair, and can catalyze transformative socioeconomic policies.

Lesson Learned: Recognizing the reality that women carry the burden of human rights violations experienced by a family, we need to empower women as activists because they can clearly and concretely identify why the fulfillment of economic and social rights is an integral part of the transitional justice agenda.

South Sudan

Context: In September 2024, South Sudan's transitional government extended the transitional period established by the 2018 Peace Agreement from 2025 to 2027 and rescheduled the national elections from 2024 to 2026. This fourth extension, driven by the political leadership's desire to retain power, was heavily criticized by the public and the international community. Since then, the Tumaini Initiative peace talks with the holdouts to the 2018 Peace Agreement collapsed; First Vice President Riek Machar was placed under house arrest; and violence escalated in the country, especially in the Upper Nile, Western Equatoria, and Western Bahr El Ghazal states.

Hostilities may develop into a civil war, despite ongoing efforts by the international community to deescalate the situation.

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Featured Impact: ICTJ increased the knowledge of South Sudanese victims, civil society actors, and government representatives in the security and justice sectors on core principles of transitional justice and lessons from other countries that have implemented truth seeking and reparations mechanisms. We achieved this impact by convening capacity enhancing sessions in Juba, including, among others, a workshop for the South Sudan Strategic Defense and Security Review Board on security sector reforms; a training to help victims, local civil society actors, and academics engagement with and monitor the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and Compensation and Reparations Authority (CRA), once established; and a workshop to enhance South Sudanese civil society's ability to engage with the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process.

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"Without the ICTJ capacity enhancing session, we were at a loss on how to deal with, amongst others, the amnesty dilemma. The session enabled us to come up with a compromise that was accepted by all the R-ARCSS principals, thus the approval of the [CTRH and CRA] Bills by the Cabinet and eventual assent into law by the President." — Representative, South Sudan Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

Key Partnerships: ICTJ partnered with the Center for Peace and Advocacy (CPA) to conduct our training on the CTRH and CRA for victims and civil society. CPA is a civil society organization dedicated to promoting human rights, good governance, and peacebuilding in South Sudan.

What's Next: In FY26, if the security situation allows, ICTJ will work to ensure that the establishment and operationalization of the CTRH and CRA is informed by comparative lessons and responsive to victims and other conflict-affected populations, including the displaced.

Sudan

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Context: During FY25, the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continued to fuel a humanitarian crisis and mass displacement. When the SAF gained control of Khartoum, many civilians welcomed them as liberators. Yet reports soon surfaced of the SAF committing extrajudicial killings and other crimes against civilians accused of supporting the RSF. Meanwhile, efforts by international actors to bring both sides to the negotiating table ended in a stalemate. Despite these challenges, Sudanese activists have continued to prioritize transitional justice, recognizing the roots of today's violence in unaddressed past injustices.

Featured Impact: ICTJ increased Sudanese civil society actors' ability to advocate for a credible, victim-centered transitional justice process for their country, helping then to keep justice and accountability on the public agenda even while the conflict remains ongoing. For example,

our support resulted in the formation of the Youth for Transitional Justice Network, which has been advocating for victims' rights since its creation (described in further detail below). We achieved this impact by convening in-depth and issue-based discussions with Sudanese civil society actors who have fled to Kampala. The discussions aimed at 1) enhancing participants' knowledge of transitional justice and 2) building bridges of trust and dialogue across Sudan's deep political and social divides.

> "I never imagined that I would sit in the same room discussing transitional justice issues with representatives of armed movements that we previously considered part of the problem. This workshop opened new horizons for me and gave me hope that true reconciliation is possible in the future." — Sudanese civil society activist

Key Partnerships: ICTJ has established a strong partnership with the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), a non-governmental organization that employs its specialized training on MHPSS to assist victims of human rights violations like torture. This year, we partnered with CVT to provide participants with psychosocial support and integrate a trauma-informed approach during our workshops on institutional reforms and gender justice. In a post workshop survey, a remarkable 100% of participants noted that this approach helped them to meaningfully participate in the event.

Empowering Youth for Justice: A Success Story from Sudan

In the midst of Sudan's ongoing conflict, a quiet but determined movement has taken root. After the 2019 Revolution, ICTJ stepped in to help the country reckon with its violent past, offering a series of trainings on truth-seeking, accountability, reparations, and institutional reform. Sudanese youth, who have been long sidelined from political dialogue, filled the rooms, eager to claim the voice they had been denied for decades.

Over three intensive courses, participants absorbed the principles of transitional justice and honed practical skills in advocacy, communication, and community mobilization. Just as important, they found one another. By the final session, the group had drafted a common vision and chosen a name: the Youth for Transitional Justice Network.

The Network moved quickly. Members fanned out across Khartoum and beyond, running peer-to-peer workshops, designing social-media explainers, and coaching new trainers. They forged partnerships with established civil-society groups, persuaded international donors to back their plans, and carried victims' demands for truth and reparations into town-hall meetings and radio call-in shows.

Less than a year later, the Network is recognized as Sudan's leading youth voice on justice. Its calm, issue-based advocacy cuts through the polarized rhetoric of the old elites and keeps victims' rights on the national agenda. ICTJ's role was catalytic, but the driving force is the young Sudanese who now believe (because they have proved it) that they can remake their nation on more just and inclusive terms.

What's Next: In FY26, ICTJ will continue working with civil society groups from all states of Sudan to ensure that the plurality of their experiences is valued and to foster a national dialogue. We will also continue to prioritize engagement with women and young people, the key drivers of the 2018-2019 Revolution, in shaping Sudan's transitional justice process.

Syria

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Context: FY25 was transformative for Syria. At the outset, many Syrian refugees were facing deportation, with many host countries erroneously declaring Syria safe to return. In response, ICTJ and our partners initially focused on advocating against these forced returns. Everything changed in December, when rebel forces took Damascus and Assad fled to Russia. After nearly 14 years of conflict, cruelty, and human rights violations, the regime's collapse and the political transition were exhilarating, yet painful, especially when the prison doors opened and families of the missing and disappeared began searching for their loved ones. Within hours, ICTJ pivoted to respond to a new, fluid landscape. For the first time, we undertook operations inside Syria, including engagement with representatives of Syria's new government to help advance justice, acknowledgment, and redress for victims; hold those responsible accountable; and build a just and peaceful Syria.

Featured Impact: ICTJ created an opportunity for families of the missing and disappeared in Syria to share their needs and priorities directly with representatives of the transitional government, including President Ahmad al-Sharaa and Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani. ICTJ leveraged our years of experience collaborating and building trust with the families of the disappeared to organize an unprecedented and historic meeting between the families and the government at the Presidential Palace in Damascus in February 2025. We worked closely with the families and the government in advance to ensure a structured, safe, and victim-centered conversation in which, for the first time, they were given space to voice their demands, concerns, and expectations for truth, justice and protection.

Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa (center left) and Minister of Foreign Affairs Asaad Al-Shaibani (center right) meet with families of the missing and detainees and ICTJ's Nousha Kabawat at the Presidential Palace in Damascus on February 1, 2025. (Syrian Presidential Palace)

Key Partnerships: This year, we continued our close partnership with the Bridges of Truth, a coalition between ICTJ and seven Syrian civil society organizations based in Turkey and Lebanon dedicated to advocating for comprehensive justice for the victims of conflict and oppression in Syria.[9] Together, we delivered an

9 The coalition includes Badael, an organization with a mission to foster transformative justice as the basis of a sustainable peace in Syria; Center for Civil Society and Democracy, an organization whose mission is to support and strengthen civil society and democracy and promote freedom, justice and coexistence; Dawlaty, an organization that supports civil society in becoming active participants in Syria's transition to a justice and democratic state; Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights, an organization dedicated to supporting civilians in crisis and combating human rights violations; Syrian Institute for Justice, an organization that documents violations of human rights law in Syria; The Day After, an organization dedicated to supporting a democratic transition in Syria; Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of

impactful international advocacy campaign to challenge repatriation narratives and reframe refugee return as a matter of justice and protection, not just logistics. We launched our report, "The Accelerating Tragedy of Syria's Displaced," during a high-profile event in The Hague.

What's Next: In FY26, ICTJ will address the most critical and immediate transitional justice issues – including preserving evidence, collecting documentation, protecting mass graves, supporting former detainees and families of the missing and disappeared, building transitional justice awareness and community engagement, designing amnesty policies, facilitating inclusive reconciliation centers, and addressing the justice needs of the displaced – while helping to build the capacities and institutions needed to advance sustainable peace and social cohesion in Syria.

Lesson Learned: Political transitions are often impossible to predict, making it vital to prepare stakeholders before an opening emerges. ICTJ was able to act quickly after the unexpected fall of the Assad regime due to our 9+ years of preparation. Our work to build the capacity of Syrian activists and victims and to advocate with policymakers to keep justice for Syria on the global agenda built our credibility and opened the right doors for us when the time finally arrived.

Tunisia

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Context: In FY25, President Saied continued to strengthen his authoritarian grasp on Tunisia. Saied was reelected with 90% of the vote, but over 70% of registered voters did not vote, either in protest or fear of the government's repressive tactics. The regime arrested 40 Tunisian dissidents, including politicians, business leaders, lawyers, and journalists, accusing them of conspiring against the state. Additionally, security forces escalated their campaign to collectively deport migrants and refugees and arrest landlords for renting to migrants without a permit. The transitional justice process remains effectively suspended, with the Specialized Chambers and the National Commission for Penal Settlement continuing to limp on without meaningfully implementing their mandates.

Featured Impact: Against this backdrop of repression and xenophobia, ICTJ helped young activists, students, scholars, practitioners, and government officials to reframe Tunisia's migration discussion in terms of the need to redress the roots of marginalization. We achieved this impact by organizing two dialogues on conflict, marginalization, and migration in Tunis and Gabes. These events brought local stakeholders together to discuss the links between migration and marginalization, which is driven in part by the absence of a development model that helps to mend the scars inflicted by decades of turmoil and conflict. We also ensured that the dialogues were widely accessible in the marginalized rural areas by partnering with five local radio stations in Tunis and the regions to transmit the discussions.

A participant (center) in the advanced open-source investigations training for Libyan and Tunisian activists and journalists, held in Tunis in July 2024, receives her certificate of completion. (ICTJ)

Expression, an organization seeking to build a society that guarantees freedom of expression and belief, human rights and justice.

Key Partnerships: ICTJ organized the dialogues in Gabes and Tunis in partnership with the University of Tunis' Department of Sociology and the University of Gabes' Laboratory of Arts, Music, Heritage, Environment and Society, which gathered prominent academics from across the region (Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, etc.) to contribute to the migration discussion.

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ will leverage the potential of artistic production and expression to amplify the stories of the forgotten, combat societal amnesia, advocate for victims' rights, and advance the fight for justice amid a regressive transition.

Lesson Learned: In contexts of repression and hostility to civil society, partnerships with academic institutions can provide spaces for peaceful resistance to authoritarianism, especially when engaging student through artistic and creative means of expression.

Uganda

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Context: State-led repression and systemic human rights abuses have continued across Uganda, with the government intensifying its crackdown on free expression and peaceful assembly ahead of the 2026 elections. Opposition leader Kizza Besigye was arrested in Kenya and transferred to a military detention facility in Uganda. Meanwhile, after a 13-year trial, the International Crimes Division of Uganda's High Court sentenced former LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo to 40 years in prison for 44 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity and issued a reparations award for his victims. Additionally, after years of advocacy, MP Charles Onen introduced a private members bill on transitional justice, generating momentum for implementing Uganda's National Transitional Justice Policy.

Featured Impact: ICTJ helped to transform Patongo, a town with a history of conflict and lingering trauma, into a place for dialogue, healing, and youth engagement.We achieved this by collaborating with the Patongo Town Council to rehabilitate a youth sports and recreation center in Patongo, which once hosted one of the largest IDP camps during the conflict. Patongo is still grappling with the legacy of the conflict, and victims continue to face significant challenges in reintegrating into their communities. The center, commissioned in February 2025, will serve as a learning, recreation, and development hub, offering a safe space for young people and war-affected community members to build skills, restore confidence, foster social cohesion, and healing from past traumas.

> ICTJ helped us a lot working together with other partners like ASF and created a robust victim referral mechanism that helped us with the victims at the inception of this [Kwoyelo] case, to understand who the victims are, where they are and to align them according to the data" — Counsel for victims' representative

Key Partnerships: This year, ICTJ provided mentorship and subgrants to six local civil society organizations: Watye Kigen, Women's Advocacy Network, Lwala Girls Abducted Survivors Association, Golden Women Vision Uganda, Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization, and War Victims and Children's Network. Our support has enabled these partners to implement different projects to advance victims' rights.[10]

10 Watye Kigen's project focuses on fostering sustainable livelihoods and peaceful reintegration for young people and children born in captivity; Women's Advocacy Network's project aims to enhance MHPSS for CRSV survivors; Lwala Girls

Even the Deepest Wound Can Heal: Restoring Hope in Northern Uganda

"I felt like I was useless, incapable of nothing good, and that mindset drove me to attack anyone without any regret, including my own children." Priska's[i] words capture the unseen scars that conflict left on thousands of women in Uganda's Acholi and Lango sub regions. During the Lord's Resistance Army's 20 year war, an estimated 25,000 girls were abducted and subjected to rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage, giving birth to thousands of children born of wartime rape.[ii] Years later, survivors like Priska still carry trauma, stigma, and crushing social and economic burdens.

It is against this background that the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN), with support from ICTJ, launched, 'Rebuilding lives and restoring hope through mental health and psychosocial support,' a mental health and psychosocial support project tailored to local culture. After meeting with community leaders, therapists expanded the initial intake from 15 to 20 women when assessments showed deeper need than expected.

Over eight weeks the participants took part in individual and group counselling, art therapy workshops, peer support circles, and skills sessions that taught them to spot triggers, replace destructive reactions with healthy ones, and challenge suicidal thoughts.[iii] By the program's end, counsellors (as well as families) saw a marked change. One husband phoned the Executive Director of WAN to say, "Her behavior has changed so much. She is now peaceful and cares for the children. The whole family is happy."

Priska's own turnaround is emblematic. "I used to flog my children … because I blamed them for my pain," she recalls. Today neighbors remark on her calm, and her children marvel at the transformation. "They ask what made me change so much," she says, lighting up with a smile.

Priska is one of the lucky few survivors who have had access to this type of transformative care to address the horrors of their experience during the conflict. While the value of mental health and psychotherapy for survivors of conflict is widely acknowledged, funding and access to these services remain limited. Culturally grounded, trauma-sensitive mental health support is not just a luxury; it is critical to the healing and reintegration of survivors of conflict. This pilot shows what is possible: even the deepest wound can heal when survivors receive the right support.

NOTES: i. Name changed for confidentiality purposes.

ii. ICTJ and GSF, "Uganda Study on Opportunities for Reparations for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: We Cannot Survivor on Hope and Promises Alone", May 2022.

iii. Women's Advocacy Network (WAN), "Rebuilding Lives and Restoring Hope Through Mental Health and Psychosocial Support" (evaluation report), March 2025, project funded by ICTJ.

Abducted Survivors Association's project promotes victims' access to socioeconomic services; Golden Women Vision Uganda's project focuses on advocating for reparations, healing, and justice for CRSV survivors and their communities; Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization's project seeks to empower children born of war and women survivors to advocate for their justice needs; and War Victims and Children's Network's project focuses on increasing duty bearers' responsiveness to survivors' needs and priorities.

What's Next: ICTJ will support inclusive and citizen-driven transitional justice processes in Uganda, including by holding dialogues to ensure victims are informed, engaged, and meaningfully contribute to the design and implementation of the reparations order from the ICD and by conducting outreach to increase the public's awareness of the reparations process and victims' rights.

Lesson Learned: Sustained engagement with government stakeholders is often necessary for achieving a lasting impact, demonstrated through ICTJ's five-year collaboration with the National Identification and Registration Authority. Through continuous engagement, we have transformed the Authority's passive indifference to active ownership of the registration process for children born of war.

Ukraine

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Context: In FY25, Ukraine's transitional justice landscape continued to evolve through fragmented efforts shaped by shifting dynamics amid the ongoing war. While the government has not resumed work on a comprehensive transitional justice framework, elements of a survivor-centered approach have gradually emerged through legal reforms and reparations initiatives (e.g., an urgent interim reparations program for CRSV survivors), as well as persistent civil society efforts to advocate for memorialization, reparations, and truth-seeking. The spread of disinformation complicates efforts to establish a unified narrative for justice, underlining the importance of truth-telling as foundational for reconciliation. These developments reflect the limits of a prosecution-focused model and a growing recognition of the deep social divides and long-term needs the war has exposed.

Featured Impact: ICTJ enhanced policymakers' and civil society actors' knowledge of comparative experiences on transitional justice and their applicability to the Ukrainian context, with a focus on victim-centered justice measures and accountability measures beyond criminal justice. We achieved this by convening a series of five online dialogues in collaboration with Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies at NYU's Center on International Cooperation. The series brought together representatives from the Ukrainian Government, experts with experience from other countries (particularly from the global south), donors, multilateral agencies, academia, and civil society to have a frank exchange of ideas on program and policy recommendations for victim-centered national and international justice responses to the ongoing war. Each dialogue covered a different topic: 1) MHPSS for victims of the conflict; 2) people's daily justice needs during conflict; 3) victim-centered reparations for Ukraine; 4) bridging silos in emergency response; and 5) maintaining social cohesion to strengthen Ukraine's continued efforts to build a democratic and pluralistic society.

Key Partnerships: ICTJ partnered with the three local civil society organizations (Zmina, Media Initiative for Human Rights, and Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group) and three international non-governmental organizations (World Organization Against Torture, the International Federation for Human Rights, and Physicians for Human Rights) to convene a hybrid event in Kyiv and online, "Torture and Persecution of Civilians as Crimes Against Humanity by the Russian

Authorities in Ukraine: Ways to Ensure Accountability". At the event, ICTJ presented on the differences between investigating and prosecuting crimes committed in an international conflict versus an internal conflict.

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ's will support the development of a holistic, victim-centered, inclusive transitional justice strategy for Ukraine that complements legal accountability with truth-seeking, reparations and reintegration.

Lesson Learned: Having a local consultant who speaks the relevant language(s) is vital to building a country program, especially when security concerns make travel to the country risky. Our 2024-2025 work plan was constrained by our lack of a local consultant, preventing us from engaging much beyond the dialogue series. We hired a local consultant in early 2025, whose strategic analysis and relationships with actors on the ground have already helped us to design more comprehensive programming for 2025-2026 and beyond.

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Context: In the United States, President Donald Trump's election to a second term poses a significant risk to all facets of work addressing the legacy of slavery and structural marginalization. His executive order on Restoring Truth and Order to American History has threatened efforts to acknowledge and learn from the past, especially shameful historical moments, by accusing them of being part of a "revisionist movement" seeking to "undermine the remarkable achievements of the United States". Efforts to shut down progress towards a more inclusive democracy have caused a chilling effect, evidenced by corporations' voluntary scaling back of DEI initiatives. Despite this hostile environment, truth and reparation efforts continue to be established and advance at the city, county, and state level. It remains unclear whether some of the achievements made before Trump's inauguration can be sustained, even if on a lower scale, until more favorable conditions return.

Featured Impact: ICTJ strengthened the capacity of three stakeholders to implement their mandates and missions to advance justice and accountability, including the Washtenaw Advisory Council on Reparations (ACR), the New York Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and the Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission (VTRC). We achieved this by providing ongoing strategic accompaniment to the ACR, including by holding a retreat to build trust among its members and establish a common understanding of different forms of reparations; holding three training workshops for OAG staff on incorporating a victim-centered approach and a past-sensitive lens to their work to address present injustices; and providing guidance to the VTRC ahead of its upcoming public hearings, highlighting lessons from other commissions that have implemented them.

> "Everything I've read from ICTJ has been top notch." — Equity officer, ACR

Key Partnerships: ICTJ continued to support our partner organization FirstRepair, which works to advance local reparations policy in the United States. This year, at a FirstRepair monthly strategy session, we were invited to present recommendations to local reparations leaders from across the country on how to address the challenges of pursuing reparations in a consolidated democracy, including 1) recognizing the challenge of addressing systemic harms in a system of ongoing harm, 2) creating a process that itself is reparative, and 3) embedding government accountability in the process.

What's Next: We will continue to strengthen the capacity of state and local actors to advance reparative and truth-seeking initiatives, including by 1) providing strategic accompaniment to the New York City Commission on Racial Equity as well as the ACR, OAG, and VTRC; and 2) sharing relevant comparative experiences and insights to advance reparative justice with advocates in the United States and the African Union, given the latter's priority on Reparation for African descendants.

Yemen

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Context: In FY25, shifts in the political, operational, and socio-economic environment have hindered transitional justice efforts in Yemen. The Yemeni Presidential Council has continued to suffer from internal divisions and complex power dynamics in the country, hampering its attempts to consolidate authority and provide basic services, let alone advance transitional justice. The Houthis' involvement in the Israel-Gaza conflict has undermined ceasefire negotiations and delayed progress toward a comprehensive political agreement, and the abduction of UN staff in Sanaa has added further obstacles to humanitarian aid and development work. Despite this challenging environment, civil society groups and the National Commission for Investigation of Human Rights Violations (NCIAVHR) have continued to document human rights violations, offering a critical pathway toward accountability.

Featured Impact: ICTJ, together with our partner the UC-Berkeley Center for Human Rights, built Yemeni victims' and civil society actors' knowledge of open-source investigation methodologies, leading to their development of an investigative report on the use of trenches in the Yemeni conflict and their impact on civilian displacement, access to essential services, and overall safety. The report, which is now being finalized, demonstrates how open-source methods can be applied in Yemen and other contexts, and its findings will provide concrete evidence for justice mechanisms. We achieved this by facilitating five days of intensive training on open-source investigation methodologies, complemented by a series of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) sessions to strengthen the emotional well-being of participants, many of whom are victims or work closely with traumatized communities.

> "The workshop encouraged deep discussions and valuable reflections, and it united us with a shared commitment to truth and justice." — Participant, Non-violent communication workshop

Key Partnerships: In partnership with UNDP, ICTJ produced a research report, "Opening Space for Transitional Justice in Yemen," that explores pathways for transitional justice in Yemen, emphasizing victims' experiences, political dynamics, and existing justice mechanisms. Additionally, ICTJ continued to support the work of the Yemeni Victims Network (YVN), the first of its kind in Yemen, which we helped to establish. In partnership with Forum Civil Peace Service, a German organization with expertise in conflict transformation, we organized a five-day workshop on non-violent communication for YVN's members.

What's Next: In the coming year, ICTJ will continue to strengthen the capacity of Yemeni civil society organizations and victims' groups to establishing the foundations for an inclusive transitional justice process in Yemen.

Other Activities and Impact Around the World

ICTJ also responded to ad hoc requests for analysis and technical assistance to domestic and international stakeholders as well as monitored developments in Armenia, Central African Republic, Haiti, the Korean peninsula, Liberia, and Sri Lanka, among other countries.

Table 2. ICTJ's Contributions to Laws, Policies, and Mechanisms in FY25

COUNTRY	LAW, POLICY, OR MECHANISM
Colombia	1. Search Unit for Missing Persons 2. Special Jurisdiction for Peace 3. Peace negotiations with Segunda Marquetalia 4. Peace negotiations with Estado Mayor de los Bloques y Frentes (EMBF).
Ethiopia	5. National Transitional Justice Policy by the Council of Ministers
The Gambia	6. Reparations Commission 7. Medical support for victims through the Ministry of Justice post-TRRC Unit medical board 8. Special Prosecutor Office
Lebanon	9. National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared
South Sudan	10. Commission of Truth, Reparations and Healing Act 11. Compensation and Reparations Authority Acts
Syria	12. Syrian Fact-Finding Committee on the March 6 coastal massacre
Uganda	13. International Crimes Division conviction of Thomas Kwoyelo and reparations order 14. Children Born of War registration process underway by National Identity Registration Authority 15. Patongo Youth Center 16. Reparations order enforcing state liability to victims of the Ongwen case
United States	17. Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Yemen	18. Yemeni National Commission to Investigate Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Table 3. ICTJ's Contributions to Initiatives Implemented by Civil Society Organizations in FY25

COUNTRY	TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE
Afghanistan	1. Afghanistan Memory Home, Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization
ITJA	2. Truth Hive Digital Archive, Tech Village Trust
Lebanon	3. Digital Archive, Committee of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon
Libya	4. Libya Oral History Archive, members of the Oral History Program

Strategic Communications

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ICTJ's communications team continues to amplify the impact of our country, policy, and research work. By nurturing relationships with journalists and media outlets, targeting materials to key audiences, and elevating victims' stories, the team broadens ICTJ's reach and offers technical guidance to field staff on media and civil society engagement.

This year, our team implemented a special institutional communications campaign, "Reparations Build Justice", with an accessible messaging style. Dozens of dynamic posts, animations, expert interviews, and infographics explained how reparations underpin sustainable peace and justice and directed followers to ICTJ's vast resources, inviting our followers to share their reactions. This campaign resulted in growth of about 10% across several platforms, reaching new audiences.

Other major campaigns this year included, among others:

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- coproducing and launching the docuseries "Zyara to Yemen" about Yemeni refugees living in Oman;
- publicizing an ICTJ-led caravan that toured The Gambia to encourage youth to get involved in the country's transitional justice process;
- promoting the ICTJ co-organized annual AU-EU Experts' Seminar on Transitional Justice in Brussels; and
- showcasing ICTJ's new report mental-health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in post-atrocity settings.

In alignment with ICTJ's Going Digital priority, the team refined web-analytics tools to track performance and sharpen dissemination strategies, upgraded our website's search engine, and bolstered cybersecurity after resolving a bot attack. Our online growth remained steady and encouraging – our LinkedIn

followers surpassed 24,000, Instagram topped 1,000 followers, and our new BlueSky account, opened in January 2025, already has nearly 250 followers.

ICTJ's website welcomed about 350,000 unique users in FY25–a 25 % increase from FY24–reflecting richer digital content, highlighting major ICTJ products and events, and increased activity on LinkedIn and Instagram.

Key Results

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Transitional justice processes vary greatly in the different countries where ICTJ works. Our approach and its success depend on factors like state capacity, government will, coalition strength, societal support, urgent needs, security concerns, and the influence of international organizations and foreign governments.

ICTJ uses a series of indicators (a results framework) to organize its work and measure its impact. We use qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and focus on meaningful results, looking for verifiable contributions and observable changes on the ground.

Our indicators focus on initiatives that our partners were able to carry out with our contribution, results of our technical support being taken up by governments and international organizations in their policies, laws and actions, outreach of communications campaigns and its effects in public discourse about justice in society. We also look for meaningful participation in terms of facilitating dialogue between officials and those pursuing justice for themselves or for their families. Ultimately, the mission of the ICTJ is fulfilled when policies, measures, reparations and other solutions are implemented to address the justice needs of victims.

Next are some highlights regarding ICTJ's work in the past year, the infographics present quantitative data to provide a picture of the breadth of ICTJ's work (outputs) and the outcomes we are observing according to surveys among beneficiaries, documented policies and law the organization contributed to and other results on the ground.

Figure 3. ICTJ's Work with Civil Society Organizations

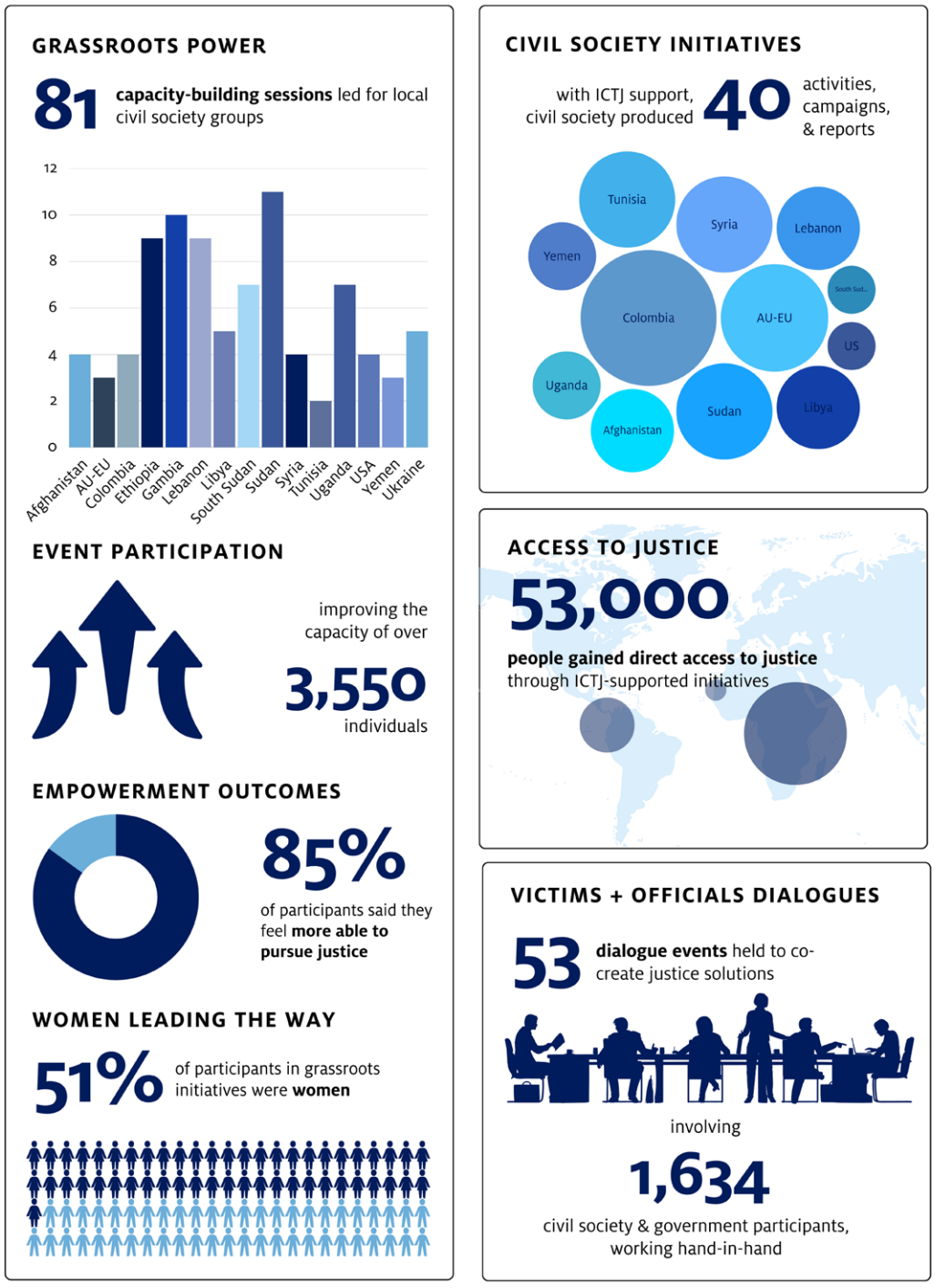
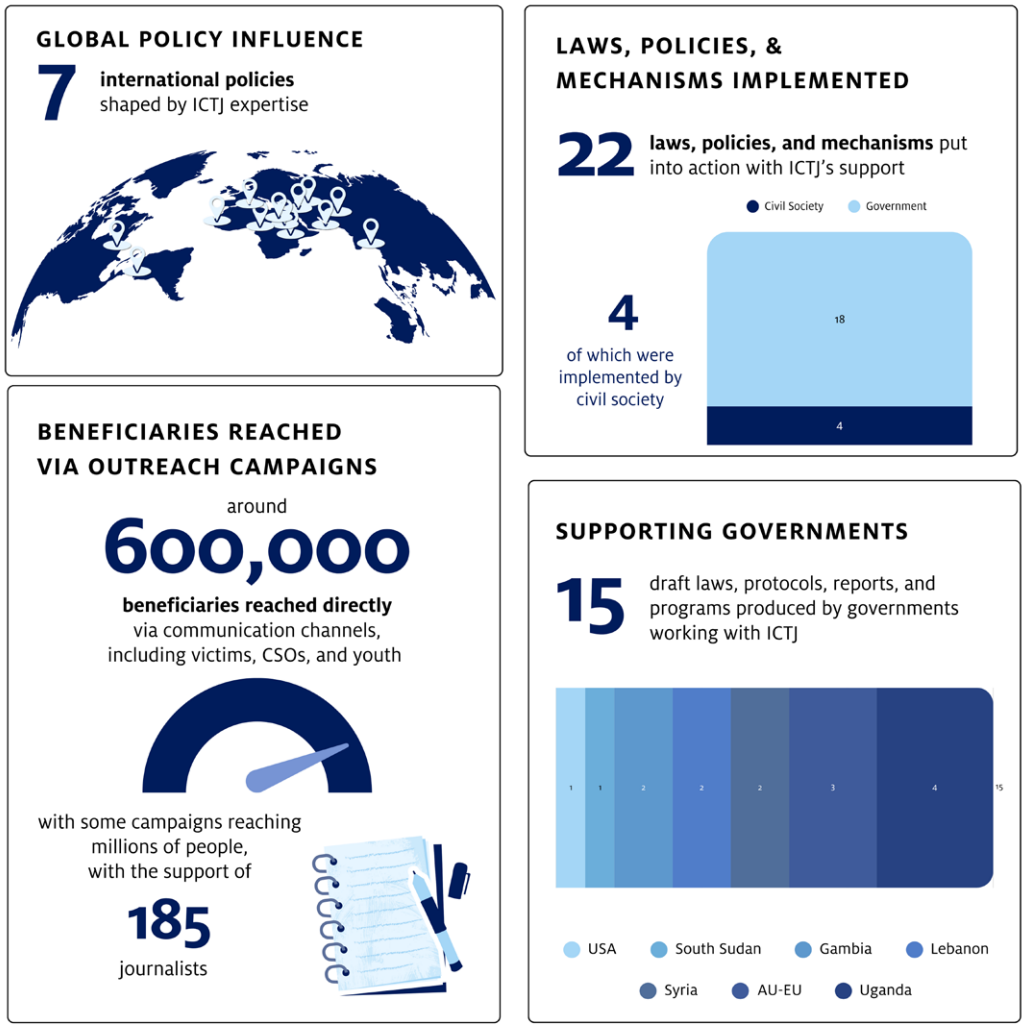


Figure 4. ICTJ's Policy- and Outreach-Related Work



Lessons Learned

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Transitional justice confronts wicked problems rooted in shifting systems of power, layered histories, and complex stakeholder dynamics—challenges that rarely allow for simple solutions. At ICTJ, we recognize that addressing these challenges requires a systems-thinking approach. By examining how stakeholders, policies, and context interact, we adapt our strategies, anticipate unintended consequences, and amplify collective impact.

Our programs regularly assess their approach to identify patterns and bottlenecks, feedback loops, and gaps between intended results and actual outcomes. Below, we highlight some key lessons our country teams have drawn from their work:

1. **Value of investing in readiness before the policy window opens:** Years ago, a colleague working for a truth commission told us: "I wish we had started work much sooner." When the peace process began, the scale of decades-old crimes and violations overwhelmed their capacity—deadlines loomed, and time was scarce. This lesson has shaped ICTJ's approach: **Transitional justice work must begin long before transitions are underway.** That experience colored our approach in Syria, where years of relationship-building, strategizing, information gathering, and trust-building positioned ICTJ and our partners to respond quickly and seize the moment once the regime fell. We took a similar approach in Ethiopia and The Gambia. Today our current work in Yemen and support for Afghanistan's digital archive reflect this same mindset–because when opportunity comes, it comes fast.

2. **Agility and flexibility in volatile contexts:** Today's transitional justice landscape is defined by rapid change and uncertainty. ICTJ has long practiced adaptive management, but this approach is even more important nowadays. Our reflection is to also encourage funders **to design flexible support that allows programs to pause, re-sequence, or pivot when conditions shift.** The following are four examples from the past year, displaying quick responses and unplanned work that is paying off.

    a. Colombia's program adapted its approach to engage in peace negotiations with criminal groups, with our Colombia head seconded to the government to participate in peace talks.

    b. The Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa routinely responded in real time to changing demands across African Union countries.

    c. In Uganda, we helped launch a Youth Center in Patongo with one key donor in the country, responding quickly to specific needs of a community.

d. In Yemen, ICTJ found an opportunity to collaborate with the UN to identify critical gaps in the needs of victims and propose actionable steps for documentation and peacebuilding.

3. **Boosting the reach of cultural interventions with smarter partnerships.** A 2021 independent evaluation recognized ICTJ's growing use of communications and recommended: "Invest in communications and outreach but be mindful about scale and reach."[11] While ICTJ was increasing our use of outreach interventions to influence public and political endorsement in promotion of justice processes, it did not have sufficient independent capacity to carry this out. Rather than building large in-house teams, ICTJ has formed **strong partnerships with media and civil society.** In Colombia and Yemen, these partnerships have helped shift narratives, expand reach, and build public and political engagement. They allow us to "punch above our weight," strengthen coalitions, and stretch limited resources further.

11 Monzani and Marinello, "Final Report, External Evaluation of the Policy-Influencing Interventions of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)," 2021.

Institutional Progress

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During FY25, ICTJ continued to adapt to the complex funding environment that has upended the justice ecosystem, with many European governments directing development aid mainly to conflicts with global consequences, domestic needs, and bilateral cooperation, and the U.S. government dramatically shifting its aid priorities. Against this backdrop, we balanced our budgets, delivered healthy internal audits, commissioned external evaluations, and developed new approaches to long-term sustainability.

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ICTJ's funding model is anchored in strategic partnerships with the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden and Luxembourg. Our sustained engagement with the European Union has now produced three major grants, and in FY25 we secured nearly $1 million in new funding from public institutions, foundations, partnerships with other NGOs, and gifts from our Board of Directors and a growing network of individual supporters.

Our strategy prioritized developing new relationships and strengthening existing partnerships with the governments of Austria, Canada, France, Norway, and the United Kingdom. To mitigate the environmental impact of international travel, ICTJ and the government of the Netherlands agreed to rotate online and in-person presentations of our Annual Roundtable on Transitional Justice. The 2024 Roundtable, held online, drew participants from donor states, multilateral institutions, foundations, and civil society organizations seeking new approaches to advance justice during this period of recalibration.

The new U.S. administration's shift in aid priorities conditioned institutional development during the final quarter of FY25. ICTJ's program in The Gambia, supported by a major grant from the U.S. State Department, was particularly impacted—first by the temporary stop-work order and then by the cancellation of the grant. ICTJ set out to protect justice gains achieved in The Gambia through multi-sector outreach, creating new proposals for several government and charitable entities.

The fall of the Assad regime created a window to leverage ICTJ's long-term Syria work. With funding from our four-year partnership with the government of the Netherlands, ICTJ was able to meet the moment by creating and beginning to implement an ambitious and flexible two-year

action plan for our Syria program. ICTJ ended FY25 with a multi-year proposal invited by the government of France and two major gifts from members of our Board of Directors, whose timely investments helped us to pursue further support for this essential work.

ICTJ's Board action and giving during FY25 has reflected its growing philanthropic capacity. We produced the "January for Justice Leaders" benefit dinner in New York, testing a new fundraising approach. Honoring Kofi Appenteng, ICTJ's former Board Chair, the event focused on art and justice, featuring a screening of our award-winning short film on the search for the missing and disappeared in Syria. Leveraging ICTJ's Board and Honorary Council networks, the event exceeded its financial goal by 90%, raising over $92,000. In addition to increasing giving from existing supporters, the event enabled us to forge new relationships that delivered several first-time gifts. The event provided sufficient evidence for making informed decisions on how to grow this new revenue stream and build a pipeline of supporters.

Table 4. ICTJ's Major Donors, FY25

Governments	Foundations and Individuals ($10,000+)
Austrian Development Agency	Anonymous
Finland Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Alice and F. William Barnett
France Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs	Charina Endowment Fund
The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Cranemere Group
The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassy in Colombia	Humanity United
Liechtenstein Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport	Joan and Michael Spero Family Charitable Fund
Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs	The J.M. Kaplan Fund
Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Pierre Keller
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	The Kimball Foundation
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Embassy of Sweden, Bogotá, Colombia	Legal Horizons Foundation
United States Department of State, Office of Global Criminal Justice	Mai Family Foundation
	Ursula and Barron Tenny
	The O'Hagan Family Fund
	Open Society Foundations
	The Skoll Foundation
	Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
Multilateral Organizations	**Other Organizations**
United Nations Development Programme	Center for Justice and Accountability
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund	Center for Research and Policy Development
The European Commission (3)	Yoorrook Justice Commission, Australia

Annex A: Publications and Selected Editorial Content

Reports

Opening Space for Transitional Justice in Yemen (March 2025)

Arabic

Of Two Minds: Sanctions as a Form of Accountability and the Dilemmas for Transitional Justice (January 2025)

The Accelerating Tragedy of Syria's Displaced: Failed Commitments, Forced Returns, and the Normalization of International Crimes (December 2024)

[Some Level of Peace: Addressing Intercommunal Violence Through Customary Justice in South Sudan](#) (November 2024)

[Juba Arabic](#)

[Reports That Transform: Reporting Truth and Making Impact](#) (October 2024)

[Arabic](#)

[The Search for People's Well-Being: Mainstreaming a Psychosocial Approach to Transitional Justice](#) (September 2024)

[Arabic](#) [Spanish](#)

[Transforming Social Relations: Restorative Responses to Massive Human Rights Violations](#) (April 2024)

[Spanish](#)

Expert's Choice

March 2025	**Anna Myriam Roccatello and Alec Knight,** Truth Telling in Ukraine Amid Widespread Disinformation and a Weakened International System
February 2025	**Nousha Kabawat,** Hopes Heighten for Justice and Accountability in Syria
January 2025	**Agatha Ndonga,** Justice and Democracy are Taking Root in South Sudan
December 2024	**Comms Dept.,** The Expert's Choice 2024 Year in Review
November 2024	**Sarah Kasande,** Amplifying Redress: The Ongwen Reparations Order and Justice for Victims of International Crimes in Uganda
October 2024	**Fernando Travesí and Nour El Bejjani,** From Gaza to Lebanon: The Conflict's Heavy Toll on a Fragile Country
September 2024	**Alec Knight,** International Criminal Justice for Ukraine Must Be Accessible to Victims
August 2024	**Fernando Travesí,** When Windows of Opportunity for Peace and Justice Close
July 2024	**Veronika Hoelker and Danna Ramírez,** The Steadfast Bilateralism of Colombia's Peace Agreement
June 2024	**Virginie Ladisch,** For Juneteenth, Celebrating Wins in the United States
May 2024	**Nour El Bejjani,** A Revitalized Peace Process in Yemen Must Include Victims
April 2024	**Sarah Kasande and Tafadzwa Christmas,** Thirty Years On, Lessons from Rwanda on Transitional Justice and Atrocity Prevention in Africa

Annex B: An Independent Evaluation of ICTJ's Impact

In late 2024 and early 2025, ICTJ commissioned an independent evaluation, "Contributing to Victims' Rights and Transitional Justice Effectiveness," featuring case studies in Colombia, Syria, and Uganda (but drawing conclusions relevant across all ICTJ country programs). The evaluation's findings complement ICTJ's own monitoring, underscoring key features that have accelerated on-the-ground impact:

Expertise in Transitional Justice

ICTJ's accumulated field-tested knowledge has been continuously recognized as a distinctive asset allowing it to translate international standards into practical tools for emerging justice bodies.

"Practically all agree that ICTJ's expertise in TJ has been a strong and unique added value compared with support from other donors and international organizations." — Evaluation report

Victim-Centered Approach

The report finds that ICTJ places those most affected at the heart of its programing, working together with survivors, rather than for them. This participatory approach not only allows ICTJ to build trust and ownership among victims but also ensures that policies and reparations mechanisms respond directly to lived experiences and needs.

"In whatever ICTJ does, the victims are at the center. We are always invited to participate in their planning sessions. They invite us to their planning sessions or come to us to plan together or engage in anything concerning TJ." — Woman victim, Uganda

Comprehensive Support to Civil Society, a Key to Sustainability

ICTJ's support to civil society goes beyond financial grants to offer political accompaniment, operational guidance, and capacity-building. In doing so, the organization helps transform these groups into self-sustaining actors in their own justice processes. In Colombia, partners described this "acompañamiento" when ICTJ organized security-focused meetings elevating local NGOs' concerns on disappearance risks into diplomatic dialogue. This integrated, multi-level backing has helped ICTJ enable partners to better navigate complex institutional landscapes and advocate effectively.

"The accompaniment of the project was not only economic, but also a political accompaniment." — Colombian partner

"I consider the administrative and operational support to be important, as they were always ready to provide induction and presentation support, and to be clear about what they demanded from us, it was also a guide for us to be able to direct our actions, so that both the technical and operational aspects would flow." — Colombian Partner staff

The study indicates how this approach contributes to sustainability long-term.

"Despite funding fluctuations and political instability, ICTJ's emphasis on knowledge transfer, capacity-building, and advocacy has provided a strong foundation for the continuation of TJ efforts in the three countries." — Evaluation report

Networks That Connect Locally and Globally

ICTJ's convening power brings local grassroots groups into international and regional coalitions, amplifying local voices and fostering cross-pollination of strategies. Syria's Bridges of Truth consortium, under ICTJ's coordination, joined global campaigns that successfully contributed to secure a UN Commission of Inquiry mandate renewal, ensuring continued international scrutiny of human rights abuses

"Strategy of engaging partners in global and national networks where advocacy and sharing of experiences has empowered victims." — Evaluation report

Opening Doors: Access and Credibility

As a trusted intermediary, ICTJ can open doors to high-level decision-makers that local actors alone often cannot reach. By linking victim organizations with global advocacy platforms and donor networks, ICTJ helps sustain momentum for reform and equips partners to share lessons across borders.

"There are many things we cannot do ourselves. If we want to speak to the German Government or a specific person in the US Government, ICTJ helps us." — Syrian organization staff member

ICTJ Justice Truth Dignity

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